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Back to Manchuria—A Prisoner

THE RUSSIAN TRAIN THAT WAS USED TO TRANSPORT US arrived at the Sino-Soviet frontier on the evening of July 31, 1950. The captain in charge explained that he would have to wait until morning to complete our transfer to the Chinese government officials and exhorted me to sleep well and with a composed mind. Ever since boarding the train I had been separated from my family and placed in a compartment with the Russian officers. Although they had joked with me and given me beer and candy, I still felt that they were sending me to my death. I was sure that as soon as I set foot on Chinese soil my life would be finished.

I kept my eyes open and could not sleep. Later, I sat up to repeat some Buddhist prayers and heard footsteps approaching the train from the station. They sounded like a company of soldiers, but when I looked out, I could see no one. After a while, the sound went away and all that was left was a distant electric light glinting with an ill-omened beam. I sighed, turned over in my berth and stared absent-mindedly at the empty wineglass on the table near the window.

The captain had said to me, while he had been drinking, "By daybreak you will see your homeland. It is an important event in one's life to return to one's motherland and you can rest well. The Communist Party is the most civilized in the world and the people of China are, of all peoples, the most broad-minded." I stared maliciously at him. He was in the opposite berth and had begun to snore.

Your words, your wine and your candies, they are all lies, I thought to myself. My life is like the dewdrops on the windowpane. Once the sun comes up, everything will evaporate. *You* surely sleep very soundly!

In my mind, I had no motherland, only ancestors. To me the Communist Party could only be associated with "raging floods and wild beasts" and it was absurd to speak about civilization in the same breath. Admittedly the Soviet Russians had not given me inhuman treatment. However, Soviet Russia was one of the Allies and could not do what it wished, but as far as China was concerned, the situation was different. The Communist party of China had defeated Chiang Kai-shek and could do whatever it liked without restrictions or fear. Once I fell into the hands of these people, there would be no way for me to stay alive.

The following morning, when the captain asked me to follow him to the Chinese representatives, I wondered whether I would have the courage, once I reached the moment of truth, to shout "Long life to the ancestors of the Great Ch'ing." It was in such a state of mind that I was led into a compartment in which there were seated two Chinese, one in civilian clothes and the other in a khaki uniform without insignia or rank but with a label on which was written *Chinese People's Liberation Army*. The two stood up and said a few words to the Soviet captain and then the one in civilian clothes turned around and said to me, "I am here by order of the Prime Minister, Chou En-lai, to receive you. Now you have returned to your homeland."

I bowed my head waiting for him to handcuff me, but he only stared at me emotionlessly. They know I cannot escape, I thought.

Later, I followed the Soviet captain out of the compartment to the station platform, where there were two rows of soldiers drawn up; on one side Russians, on the other, Chinese. We walked between them toward a train on the opposite side of the platform. In the short moment it took to cross the platform I thought of the 8,000,000 soldiers of Chiang Kai-shek who had been eliminated by these people and felt, as a result, that in their eyes I was perhaps no more important than a tiny insect.

As soon as I boarded the train, I saw my family and the

other Manchukuo detainees. They all sat straight, but they were neither handcuffed nor bound with rope. I was led to a seat near the end of the car where one of the soldiers placed my leather suitcase on the baggage rack overhead. After I sat down, I tried to see what the troops outside were doing, but discovered that the windows had been pasted over with newspapers. When I looked at the ends of the car I noticed a guard at each end with a rifle and fixed bayonet.

The atmosphere was so ominous that my heart nearly came to a stop, and when I looked at the prisoners near me I saw on their faces the color of death. After a while, a man who was not carrying a rifle, and who seemed to be an officer, walked to the center of the car.

"Well, you have rejoined the homeland," he said. "You people can rest assured that the Central People's Government have made proper arrangements for all of you. There are medical attendants on the train and whoever feels ill may visit them for treatment."

What did this mean? "The homeland!" "Proper arrangements; rest assured that if you feel sick you may see the medical attendants." Oh, I understood. It was to calm our minds in order to avoid an incident while en route!

Later, several soldiers brought in a basket of rice bowls and chopsticks and distributed a set to each of us. "Take good care of these and don't break them because they cannot be replaced en route," they explained.

I immediately concluded that the road to the execution site would be a long one. Otherwise, why should they be so solicitous?

For breakfast, there were preserved vegetables, eggs and congee. Our appetites were aroused by this Chinese food, our first in a long while, and, in a very short time, the whole pail of congee was consumed. The soldiers then let us have another pail which they themselves had been eating. This puzzled me, since I knew that there were no cooking facilities on the train and that they would have to wait for the next stop until they could get more to eat for themselves.

After breakfast, quite a few of the prisoners in the car began to talk about this incident. They concluded that since the soldiers had let us have their breakfast they were well

trained and disciplined and would not maltreat us during the journey.

But I did not share their opinion. I thought just the opposite. I felt that the Communist Party people hated me the most. It was impossible for me to believe that they would not do something to me before the coming night was over.

Although many of the other prisoners began to nap after breakfast, I was unable to put myself at ease. I desperately wanted to find out from those who held me prisoner whether I would meet death or not. A very young soldier sat opposite me and, after looking him over, I chose the emblem on his chest as a device with which to start a conversation.

"The Chinese People's Liberation Army," I said, pointing to the emblem. "You are a soldier of the Liberation Army. You know," I continued, "that the word 'liberation' is really excellent. I am one who believes in Buddhism and even we, in our Buddhist classics, have that same word, 'liberation.' Buddha was devoted to benevolence to the extent that he sought to 'liberate' all living creatures."

The young soldier did not utter a sound, and when I reached the point in my discussion where I explained that I had never killed a living thing, that I had never even swatted a fly, the expression on his face became so blank and his eyes so wide with confusion that I found I could not continue.

Thus, my despair became even greater, and even the clicking noise of the car wheels on the tracks made me feel that death was coming closer and closer. I left my seat and aimlessly walked down the corridor until I reached the other end of the car and then began to walk back again. In the middle, I thought I heard my nephew, Little Hsiu, say the words "democracy" and "monarchy" to someone in a low voice.

Suddenly I began to shout. "How can you talk about monarchy at such a time as this," I screamed. "If there is anyone in this car who still believes in monarchy I will be happy to fight a duel with him!"

Everyone was both astonished and stupefied, but my hysterics continued. "Why should you people stare at me? I am the one who will be shot; you others don't need to worry."

A soldier came up and dragged me back to my seat. "You should take a good rest," he said.

But apparently I had become completely bewildered, for I held on to the soldier and whispered, "That was my nephew. His thoughts are very bad; he opposes democracy just like someone else aboard this train, a former Manchukuo army officer who, while we were in Soviet Russia, said all sorts of things against democracy."

The soldier forced me down into the seat and although I closed my eyes, my lips continued to move in ranting phrases. But finally, perhaps because I had not slept in several nights, I fell into a deep sleep.

When I awoke it was already morning of the following day and the train had reduced its speed. After it came to a stop, I thought I heard someone in a low voice say "Changchun." I jumped up like a coiled spring that has suddenly been released and tried to peer through the window, but, of course, I could see nothing. All I heard were people outside, singing. This, I thought, is my place of execution. Here I was once Emperor. Now everyone is preparing to give me a public trial.

When I was in Soviet Russia, I had read in the newspaper *Trud* about the campaign against landlords, and the procedure for public trials raced through my mind. First, the militia would escort me to the public trial grounds. Just at this point in my thoughts it so happened that two soldiers entered the car together and almost overwhelmed me with fright, but as it turned out, they had come with a bucket of congee for breakfast and soon the train started to move again.

A short while after we reached Mukden a stranger came into the car with a note in his hands. "Since this has been such a hot journey," he explained, "the older people will follow me to take a rest." He then read off a list of names from the paper he still held in his hand. One of my nephews and I were both on the list, and although I was forty-four years old and could thus fit into the category of older people, it was clearly improper to include on such a list the name of my nephew, Little Hsiu, who was about thirty. I decided, therefore, that it was a trick. I was the Emperor, the rest were former high officials, and my nephew had been in-

cluded because he had been denounced by me. We would soon be shot as a group, in Mukden, where my ancestors had founded the Ch'ing Dynasty.

Those of us whose names had been called were put into a big sedan and the soldiers, who followed in another car, all held rifles with bayonets at the ready.

"Everything is finished! I am taking you to see our ancestors," I said to my nephew. His face became deathly white, even though the man who had read the list laughed and asked, "What are you afraid of? Didn't I tell you this is to take you for a rest?"

I paid no attention to him. I merely kept muttering, under my breath, "A trick, a trick, a trick."

Upon our arrival at a large building, a soldier came up to the car and guided us through the gate. "Go upstairs," he said.

I was sure I would die and decided that I might as well get it over with quickly. Thus, with my coat under my arm, I walked faster and faster up the stairs so that the soldier who was leading us was forced to increase his pace in order to keep up with me. Once upstairs, we stopped at a door and the soldier told me to enter. The room was large and in its center was a long table with chairs on both sides and on it were cigarettes, fruit, and pastry. I threw down my coat, picked up a big apple, and took a bite. "This is my last supper," I said to myself. "I might as well finish it in a hurry."

Before I had half finished the apple, other people in both civilian clothes and military uniforms began to enter the room and it was soon crowded. Not far from me, a middle-aged man in uniform began to talk. But since I was trying hard to swallow what was left of the apple, I couldn't hear a thing he said. With difficulty I finally finished the apple, and I then stood up.

"You don't need to talk," I said. "Let's go."

Several of the people started laughing. The one who had been speaking also laughed. "You are too tense," he said. "You don't need to be afraid. Later when you arrive at Fushun, take a good rest and start studying diligently and faithfully."

I was utterly astonished at his words. Was this true? Were they not going to execute me? What was it all about?

Just at this moment the man who had brought us from the train approached me. In his hand he still held the list of names and explained to the man who had been talking to me that all of us who needed a rest were present and accounted for except for one who was ill.

Upon hearing this, I completely disregarded all formality and grabbed the list from his hands. Even though my conduct made everyone laugh, I didn't care, for I was still sure that the list contained the names of those who were sentenced to death.

At this point, however, another prisoner arrived. He had been among those who had been sent back to China before us and he told us what had happened to his group and their families. When we learned that they were all still alive and that their families were either in school or at work, our faces lit up. Tears came to my eyes and I began to weep.

Although this relief from tension did not last long, only for about an hour, the time it took to travel from Mukden to Fushun, it still allowed me to relax for a bit. Otherwise, I should have gone insane, because from the time I had boarded the train in Russia five days previously, I had thought only of death.

When we returned, we found the atmosphere on the train completely changed. Everyone was smoking cigarettes and chatting gaily. Some thought that we would be sent to the most exclusive and lavish club in Fushun where we would be held for a few days of study, after which the Communists would send us home. Others told of how, after our arrival, they would send telegrams to their families saying that they were well and asking their relations to get ready to welcome them. Others spoke of taking a bath once we got to the club. Illusions of all kinds and colors prevailed.

When the others spoke of their former fears, it turned out that they had all felt as I had. We could not help laughing about it. But as soon as we left the train at Fushun, we noticed that we were surrounded by sentries in uniform and we could no longer laugh and smile.

We were escorted to some trucks and from this time on I

again became sick with fear. I lost all sense of time and only knew that when the truck stopped I would find myself surrounded by walls. They would not only be high, but there would also be barbed wire on top and sentry towers at the corners.

After I got down from the truck, we walked some distance until we came to a row of one-story buildings. There were iron bars at all the windows. I began to understand—it was a prison. My fears had been correct.

The soldiers led us inside through a long, narrow passageway until we came into a large room. Here we were searched and later we were taken outside in groups. Several others and I followed a soldier down a passageway into a small room. Before I had a chance to see exactly what sort of room it was, I heard a noise behind me. It was the bolting of an iron door.

There was a long wooden *kang* in the cell and also a long table with two benches. The few who had come in with me were all former army officers of the Manchukuo government. I did not know them well and did not wish to talk with them.

A few hours later, the cell door was pulled open and a guard entered. He asked me to follow him to another cell. Here, to my intense joy, I found my three nephews, my brother Pu Chieh, and my father-in-law, Jung Yuan. They had just received new blankets, new mattresses, washbasins, and other necessities, and had taken one of each for me.

"This is a military prison," my father-in-law explained, as he touched the iron bars. "Everyone here is in uniform. I do not think we are in immediate danger. Otherwise, why should they have issued us toothbrushes and towels? Also, when we arrived, a receptionist gave us each a receipt for the personal possessions they took from us. This is not the treatment accorded ordinary prisoners. Furthermore, the food is not so bad."

By the following day I began to believe that what my father-in-law had said was true. Not only were the meals about the same as the day before, but we were also given a thorough physical examination, and were issued new white underwear and black jackets and, surprisingly enough, cigarettes. This was clearly not the treatment for prisoners awaiting death. A few days later, a somewhat stout man of

about forty came to our cell and asked our names and what kind of books we had read in the Soviet Union and whether or not we had studied hard while there. Upon hearing our replies, he nodded his head. "Well," he said, "I'll issue you some books and newspapers right away and you people can learn some new ideas."

A few hours later books, newspapers, chessboards and playing cards were brought in. At the same time loudspeakers, in the passageway outside the cell, were connected. Broadcasts were transmitted twice a day; one was news and the other consisted of operatic and theatrical music.

Besides listening to these, we were allowed to walk in the courtyard for a half hour each afternoon. Meanwhile, my nephew, Little Hsiu, had found out that the man who had told us to study hard was the Director of the War Prisoner Thought Control Center in which we were held and the man who had actually brought the books, who was named Li, was the Deputy Director. At the time we had addressed him as "Mister" since we didn't know what we were supposed to call him. We also addressed all the guards as "Mister" too.

Li had brought us three books: *The New Democracy, The History of China's Last 100 Years* and *The Revolutionary History of the New People's Democracy*. He had told us that since he did not have enough books to go around, we should rotate them, or, better still, one of us should read aloud to the others. He explained that there were many new terms in these books.

Although there was much that was strange and novel in the books, actually the most novel thing of all was that they made us, as prisoners, study. One of my nephews was the first to become interested in the books. He read much faster than the rest of us and would often ask us to explain things to him. If we could not answer him, he would go to the Center Director and ask. My father-in-law castigated him for this.

"Don't think for a minute that this is a school," he explained. "It is a prison."

"But didn't the Director tell us we should start to learn?" my nephew asked.

"To learn . . . yes. To learn that this is a prison," my

father-in-law answered. "Yesterday," he continued, "when we went outside for exercise, I heard someone say that this was formerly a prison under the Manchukuo regime. It formerly was and it still *is*, even with books and magazines."

One day, not long after this, when we came back from our stroll in the courtyard, Pu Chieh hurriedly began to scan the newspapers. With some excitement, he said that he had overheard a discussion outside about an article in the paper that had explained the reason why the government was asking us all to study. We immediately circled around him in order to help him find it. Although I have forgotten the title, I do recall that it made the point that the new China was in need of all kinds of talent.

All of us, except my father-in-law, read the article and Pu Chieh explained that this was exactly what he had overheard; namely, that the reason the government let us study and had treated us so leniently was because the country was experiencing a shortage of talent and that it wished to be able to make use of all of us.

When I recall this incident today, his opinion seems laughable. Yet, at the time, it was actually the way the majority of us felt. In our cell, despite my father-in-law's doubts, the others seemed to go along with this line of reasoning and from this day on a great change was evident, inasmuch as all of us became devoted students. Prior to this time, with the exception of my one nephew, the rest of us had shown an interest in the propaganda pamphlets and daily study period purely as a means of demonstrating to the guards in the passageway outside the cell door what model prisoners we were.

We did not have a member of the Communist Party cadre from the prison's central office with us. Our study was thus limited to memorizing the terminology and learning its meaning. My father-in-law, of course, wasn't interested and when the rest of us studied, he would close his eyes and repeat Buddhist incantations. But this blind optimism on our part did not last very long. Like a flower that blooms for just a few hours, it soon faded away, for shortly afterward the prison announced a readjustment of cell arrangements and separated me from my family.

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Isolated

ALTHOUGH, IN MY BRAINWASHING, THIS WAS ONE OF THE most important steps, I did not understand it at the time. I thought that the Communist Party still regarded me as the arch-enemy and was preoccupied with my past, not with how I should be reformed vis-à-vis the future. I believed that it had separated me from my family in order to facilitate my eventual prosecution.

Ever since my detention in Soviet Russia, I had consistently tried to explain away my conduct as something I had been compelled to do under pressure. Thus, I had claimed that the plot between Doihara and me had been a case of kidnapping and I had covered up my relations with the Japanese.

I had also warned the adult members of my family to cover up for me while in Soviet Russia, and now that I had returned to China it was more necessary than ever to keep the true story of my relations with the Japanese a secret. I would have to be very careful to avoid a slipup—especially with my nephew Little Hsiu. On the first day of our arrival at Fushun, I discovered that he harbored some sort of resentment against me because of the incident on the train. Soon after we were locked in our cell, I felt something crawling on my neck and I asked him to see what it was.

If this had happened in the past, he would have come over to me promptly. But on this occasion, he pretended not to hear me and did not make a move. Later, when he finally

did come and discovered that it was a caterpillar and brushed it off onto the floor, he muttered under his breath, "What is the use of liberating a living creature, if, after liberation, it may be destroyed by someone else?"

I felt very much upset by his remark which was so clearly meant for me. A few days later, when Little Jui was tidying up my blanket and mattress, I asked him to pick up the blanket and shake it out. This was somewhat distasteful to the others in the cell because it was filled with dust. Pu Chieh frowned and another of my nephews put his hands on his nose and said to Little Jui, "Be kind to us. This will choke us to death."

Little Hsiu, at this point, immediately stopped what he was doing, took the blanket from Jui, and tossed it on the *kang*. "This cell is not only for you," he said. "We have to live here too. Why don't you think about us? This will not do."

"What do you mean by 'we' and 'you?' " I said, frowning. "Don't you have any manners left?"

He did not answer me, but turned his head away and sat at the table without saying a word. After a while, I noticed an angry expression on his lips as he scribbled on a piece of paper. I wanted to see what he was writing and did not anticipate that as soon as I reached for it he would tear it to pieces. But I felt sure I had seen a line which read, "Wait and see who will come out on top."

Since the incident on the train, I had tried my best to show goodwill toward him and I had talked to him in a most amicable way. Later on, I had had an opportunity to talk to him alone, specifically about the train incident. I told him that it had not been done with malicious intent; that I had loved him all the time, that I had been hysterical and had not slept for five days. Since that time, whenever I had a chance, I had explained to all of my nephews about the importance of a close family relationship according to Chinese traditions. Confronted by an emergency, we should cooperate fully. Whenever Little Hsiu was not around, I would say to the others, "Watch out for Little Hsiu. Be careful not to let him do anything wrong. Try to please him."

Thus, by the time the newspaper article had aroused hope in our minds, Little Hsiu's attitude had become completely

normal and when the guard ordered me to another cell, it was Little Hsiu who, along with another nephew, Little Ku, picked up my bedding and suitcase and carried them for me to my new cell. They left immediately after they had put my things down.

I felt so desperately alone before my new cellmates that I did not know whether to sit down or stand up. There were eight prisoners besides myself in the cell and when they saw me enter, they remained silent and their attitude was very formal. Later, one of them took my bedding and placed it in the corner. At the time, I didn't realize that this was a gesture of respect since the spot they had chosen was the best in the cell, warm in winter and cool in summer. I could only think that the separation from my family was fraught with danger.

I sat down silently for a while and then stood up and paced back and forth. Finally I walked to the door and knocked several times.

"What is it?" a rather stout guard asked as he opened it.

"May I talk to the Center Chief about something?"

"What do you want to talk to him about?"

"I wish to tell him that I have never been separated from my family and I feel most distressed and uncomfortable."

The guard nodded his head and asked me to wait. Upon his return he told me that the Center Chief would allow me to go back to my original cell. This made me extremely happy. I folded my bedding myself, and one of the guards helped me pick up my leather satchel. In the passageway, I ran into the Chief. "There is a higher standard of food for those of you who are a little older," he explained. "We felt that if you continued to live with your family and I gave you better food it might have had a bad effect on them."

I refused to believe that this was the real motive and thus, without waiting for him to explain further, I immediately said, "Never mind; I guarantee that they won't be upset."

I nearly said, "How could you have supposed they would be like that?"

The Chief grinned and asked me if I had ever thought that the time might come when I should have to learn to take care of myself. "Yes, yes," I replied, immediately. "But I have to practice it slowly, bit by bit."

"All right." The Chief nodded. "But you should begin practicing right away."

By the time I had returned to the cell with my family it seemed as if the half-day separation had been for a whole year. When I explained to them how the Chief had told me to "practice bit by bit," they interpreted his remark as indicative that the government did not intend to maltreat me.

Ten days later, a guard again ordered me to pack up my things and I decided that I would take the opportunity, while Little Jui was packing for me, to pass on a few words to my family. But, fearing the guard might hear, I decided it would be best to write a note. Also, since there were two men in the cell who were former Manchukuo officials and not family members, it seemed safer to write. The note was purposely vague: "We have lived very well together. After I leave I hope you will continue to help one another. I am very much concerned for each and every one of you."

I gave the note to Pu Chieh and told him to pass it around to the others. I felt that after they had seen it they would be able to understand its meaning—to have one heart and to remain united.

My nephew again took my bedding and carried my suitcase to the cell I had been put in the previous time, and the occupants again placed the bedding in the same place as before. Unable to sleep well, I paced back and forth for a while and later knocked at the door until the same short stout guard opened it. His name was Liu.

"Mr. Liu, I have something . . ." I said.

"You want to see the Director?" he asked before I had finished my sentence.

"I wish to talk with you first. I . . . No, it isn't that I wish to move back to my old cell. I want to ask if I can meet with my family once a day. So long as I can see them, I'll feel much better."

"Every day during the exercise period in the courtyard, won't it be possible for you to see them?"

"But I wish to talk to them privately. Do you think the Director will permit this?"

"According to regulations, people are not supposed to talk to one another who do not live in the same cell. But I'll ask for you."

I got permission and, from that day on, when I took my stroll in the courtyard each day I could meet with my family and talk with them for a while. My nephews would then tell me what was going on in their cell and whom they had talked with. Little Ku still maintained his carefree attitude, Little Hsiu did not show any sign of bitterness and Little Jui still continued to wash my clothing and darn my socks. Thus, one problem that had bothered me was solved.

But meanwhile new problems had arisen. For the past forty years, I had always reached for the clothing that had been readied for me and eaten the food that had been placed in front of me. Now these habits were a great hardship. Things like a rice ladle, a carving knife, a pair of scissors, a needle and thread were utterly foreign to me. I had to do everything myself and I was trapped in a very distressing situation. In the morning, by the time everyone else had finished washing their faces, I would just be ready to dress; and by the time I was ready to wash, everyone else had finished. When I brushed my teeth, I would realize that I had forgotten the tooth powder, and by the time I had finished dressing everyone else had already eaten breakfast. I was always late and always behind schedule and yet was always rushing about the cell like mad.

But what bothered me the most was that I knew my cellmates, all of whom were former military officers of the Manchukuo imperial regime, were laughing at me behind my back. In former times, these people had not been qualified to raise their heads in front of me, and when I had first arrived in the cell, even though they did not call me the "Upper One" as my family members did in private, they had not dared to use the familiar "you." They had either called me "Mister" or some other title in order to show their respect for me. But now I knew they were joking silently about my predicament and this made me ill at ease.

There was also something else that made me feel even more uncomfortable. Since the first day of our arrival at Fushun, each cell had established a "duty" system by which the cleaning and honey bucket chores were rotated. Before I had been separated from my family, I was not required to do this, but now, what would I do if I had the "duty"? Should I empty the honey bucket for everyone? It seemed

to me that this would be an insult to my ancestors and to my nephew's ancestors and their heirs. Fortunately, the Center solved the problem for me. Two days after I had been moved to my new cell, a man who was an active member of the Communist Party cadre in the Center came to the door. "Pu Yi," he said, "will not get cleaning duty." To me, these words made me feel as if I had stepped from a corner of death.

One day, while we were taking our daily walk by twos and threes, when the Center Chief appeared, as he did every day to say a few words, I noticed that he looked at me closely as if he were sizing me up. Finally, he called out my name, "Pu Yi."

"Yes," I answered as I walked over to him.

"Your clothing was issued at the same time as the others. Why is it that your suit is not in the same condition?"

He spoke quietly and in an amicable tone. I looked at my clothing and that of the others. Everyone else was neatly dressed; their suits were pressed and clean; and yet mine was rumpled; a pocket was torn, a button missing and there was an ink spot on the lower part of my jacket. My pants legs seemed of different lengths and my shoes were improperly tied.

"I'll tidy up right away," I replied in a low tone.

"You should watch more carefully how the others manage their daily lives," the Chief said. "If you learn from others, then you'll progress."

Even though the Director's tone was not unkindly, I felt embarrassed and angry. This was the first time I had ever been reprimanded in public as incompetent and it was the first time that I had ever been exhibited before the eyes of so many people as a useless thing.

Desperately embarrassed, I turned around in order to avoid having to look at my fellow prisoners, and I went to the foot of the courtyard wall and stared at its gray stones. I was seized with a terrible depression and I felt that in all my life I had never been able to get away from gray walls; all my life I had been a prisoner. But heretofore I still had some kind of dignity and position. Even in my little circle in Changchun, I had still maintained some special privileges. Now, within this particular set of walls, all was gone. I was

treated as everyone else and had been humiliated before everyone else as incompetent. Thus the gratefulness that I had developed for those who had allowed me to be exempted from cleaning duty was washed away from my heart forever. It was in this mood that I spent more than two months in Fushun. By the end of October, the Center was moved to Harbin.

On the train, en route to Harbin, only a few of the younger people still had some interest in conversation. The others had little to say and if they did talk it was always in a very low tone. I was silent most of the time. Quite a few other prisoners, I noticed, could not sleep at night and could not eat properly in the daytime.

I was not as apprehensive as I had been when I had first returned to China, but I was still more tense than anyone else. This was the time that the American armies were approaching the Yalu River, during the Korean War, and it was not long after the Chinese People's Volunteer Army had left China to enter the Korean campaign. I noticed that Pu Chieh could not sleep either and I stealthily asked him how he felt about the war situation. "To leave the country to participate in war is like making an offering of incense before ghosts," he replied in a dull tone. "The end is soon in sight."

What he meant was that China would soon be defeated and Manchuria would be occupied by the American Army. Pu Chieh feared that when the Communists realized that the situation was hopeless and the country would soon be lost, they would kill us to prevent our falling into American hands. Later I found that this was how all the other detainees felt.

When we arrived in Harbin, I felt even more hopeless after seeing the new Thought Control Center which was a prison, originally built by the Japanese to house those who had opposed their regime. It was two stories high and in the center was a watchtower; circling it were two fan-shaped buildings. The gates were all made of iron bars one inch in diameter. The cells were partitioned by cement walls; each could accommodate seven to eight persons, but in my cell there were only five. Owing to the Japanese design there

were no *kangs* and we had to sleep on the floor. I stayed in this prison almost two years.

One night, in the city nearby, there was an air-raid alert and the wailing noise of the sirens stayed in my mind a long while before it was erased. At this time, I believed that the Chinese would be defeated and, as a result, I would die. I still remember very clearly that when we learned about the first victory achieved by the Chinese People's Volunteer Army on the Korean front none of us chose to believe it. By the end of that year, when we learned that the Chinese and Koreans had driven the American Army to the 38th parallel we were very suspicious. After the New Year, when a member of the Center's Communist Party cadre got up on the watchtower and announced the news that the Chinese and Korean armies had retaken Seoul, I still held to my belief in a United States victory. In February, when the press announced new regulations for punishing antirevolutionaries, the Center feared that we would become unduly alarmed if we should read them and withheld the newspapers from us. We, of course, who did not know the real reason, supposed it was because of a defeat in Korea and were thus strengthened in our conviction that the earlier reports of a Chinese victory had been false. I came to believe that I was approaching a period of great danger. At night, I was afraid to hear the sound of the cell doors and, in the daytime, the sound of automobiles. Whenever I heard them, I suspected that soldiers were coming to take us to a public trial.

My cellmates' situation was no better than mine. Like me, their appetites became smaller and smaller and their voices lower and lower. I remember that at this period whenever there were sounds on the stairway, all of us tried to peer through the iron bars of the cell door to take a look. If a stranger appeared, all the occupants of the cell became stony silent. It seemed as if each and every one of us were facing his last day of judgment.

Just at the point when all of us were plunged into the deepest despair, the Chief of Public Security came to the prison to give us a talk. From his speech, which lasted over an hour, we got some hope. He told us that the People's Government did not wish to send us to death; it only wished us to pass through a reorientation and re-education process

in order to be reformed. He said that the Communist Party and the People's Government believed that the majority of us could be remolded into new men, and that the ideal of Communism was to reform the whole world, society and the human race.

"You people," he explained, "have only thought of death and you people seem to believe that all the arrangements we have made for you are preparatory to your execution. But you should realize that if the People's Government wished to eliminate all of you, we would not have let you study.

"All of you seem to have developed many illusions regarding the Korean War. Some of you have thought that the People's Volunteer Army would most certainly lose and that the Americans would come to Manchuria. Therefore, you have been afraid that the Communist Party would kill you first. Some of you have had blind faith in the military power of the United States, but I can tell you categorically that the Chinese and Korean people will triumph.

"The reform policies of the Chinese Communist Party will be vindicated on the battlefield. Victory is assured. The Communist Party never engages in empty talk!

"Perhaps you people say to yourselves; All right, then, if you don't wish to kill us, why don't you let us out? But if we were to let you out without remolding your personalities, not only would you again commit crimes, but the people of China with whom you must live would never forgive you. Therefore, you must study hard and achieve complete reform."

At the time, none of us paid any attention to the Chief's remarks about being remolded through study and learning. As I saw it, it seemed absurd to suppose that by reading a few books one's thoughts could be changed. And as for the possibility that the American soldiers could be defeated, this was preposterous. My cellmates, who were military men, all agreed that even if the United States did not use the atomic bomb, its superiority in conventional weapons was sufficient for it to be without equal in the world.

But not long afterward, we were again allowed to read newspapers and we came to the conclusion that the information from the Korean War theatre was not entirely untrue. The ex-officers pointed out that although the number of

casualties on both sides could easily be falsified, gains and losses of territory could not be altered indefinitely and that the news that the U.S. Commander in Chief had indicated his willingness to negotiate could not be a fabrication. Furthermore, they thought the reports that the Americans were talking about a cease-fire were significant. As a result, the ex-officers began to have doubts about a U.S. victory and, needless to say, I was thrown into complete confusion. In one way, however, I began to feel more comfortable. For if the Communist Party were not to collapse, then it would not execute me before its dissolution.

Meanwhile, our study and brainwashing routine was changed. Previously our studies had seemed to be on a *laissez-faire* basis and the Center did not interfere with us. Now, however, Communist Party cadre members who were in charge of the Center personally took a hand and guided us. We were given topics to study such as "What is a feudal society?" and we were required to discuss them and to take notes. Later, one of the cadre said, "As I have mentioned before, in order to remold one's thoughts it is necessary to understand what one's original thoughts were. Each man's thoughts are inseparable from his past history and from the position he held when he started out in life. Therefore, you must begin with your own history in order to conduct an analysis. To achieve thought reform, each one of you must, without any hesitation, and with complete objectivity, reflect on your own history and write an autobiography."

Is this what they call reform? I thought to myself in silence. It is no more than a pretense at using "thought reform" in order to secure a confession. Perhaps the Communist Party feels that now the war situation is more or less stabilized it will have time to try us publicly instead of lining us up against a wall and shooting us.

My former attendant, Big Li, had been the actual witness of my departure from Tientsin for the Northeast. Before I had left, he had prepared all my baggage and clothing and when I had hidden in the rumble seat of the car, it had been he who had closed it over me. If this were to leak out, no one would believe my kidnapping story at the hands of Doihara. It was thus imperative that I see Big Li, but this

could be handled only during our exercise period in the courtyard when I had the privilege of meeting with my family group.

At this time the routine was somewhat different than before. With the exception of my father-in-law, who had died, and my former physician, who had arthritis, the remaining members of our group all participated in service work, such as carrying water or rice, helping in the kitchen, and doing other menial tasks. It was therefore not easy for me to meet them all at once since they had to be at different chores. However, there were some benefits from this arrangement, since it meant that their movements were comparatively free and they could relay messages. I thus utilized this situation to ask Little Jui to tell Big Li to come and see me quietly.

Big Li approached me in a very obedient manner, as if he were waiting for my instructions. I lowered my voice. "Do you still remember when we moved from Tientsin?" I asked him.

"You mean when we actually left for Manchuria, or slipped out of the gate, or when I packed up your things?" he asked.

"If the Center should ever ask you about how I left Tientsin, you should say you don't know a thing. It was *after* I left that you packed my things; do you understand?"

"After you left."

"Yes, after I left. You took orders from another man that you should pack my things and send them to Port Arthur."

Big Li nodded and left quietly. The next day, Little Jui told me that Big Li had asked him to give me this message: The previous night he had told one of the clerks of the prison that when I was in the Northeast I had been kind to my servants and I had never scolded people or beaten them. Also, he said that when I was in Port Arthur, I locked my door for a whole day and refused to see the Japanese.

When I heard this, I felt that Big Li was fabricating a little too much. Why should he mention Port Arthur? I told Little Jui to tell him not to talk any more and that if anyone should ask about the situation in Port Arthur he should say that he knew nothing.

I was most satisfied with Big Li's loyalty and felt secure.

Meanwhile, I reminded my nephews again that I had commenced to write my autobiography. I wrote down my genealogy, how Tzu Hsi had designated me Emperor, how I had spent my youth in the Forbidden City, how I had to seek refuge in the Japanese Legation, how I had spent my life in Tientsin. Then I wrote about my "kidnapping" and the unfortunate years in Changchun.

This draft of my autobiography, after much editing, was finally put in its final form and presented to the authorities. From the way I had written it, I was sure that everyone would see that I was a repentant man. But after I had delivered it, I felt that my writing was not a sufficient demonstration of my repentance. I ought to think of another way to prove to the government my "sincerity" and "progress." What should I do?

At this time the prisoners felt that they only needed to demonstrate repentance in order to dupe the authorities. But even from this standpoint, I did not think I could compare favorably with the others. There were three phases of work in which the prisoners could demonstrate their repentance: study, "duty" functions and daily life. In my cell, the best performance in the study phase was shown by our Section Chief, Wang, a former major general in the legal division of the Manchukuo army. He had studied politics and law in Peking. His cultural standards were comparatively high and he could comprehend new terms and new ideology faster than the rest of us. The other three ex-officers in my section were like me. They could not understand terms like "subjective point of view" and "objective point of view." But still their progress was faster than mine.

During discussion sessions they all could repeat set talks. What was most difficult for me was that after we had completed talks on, for example, "a feudal society," each of us had to write a summary of what he had learned. During the discussion period I managed to talk simply about what I knew of the subject, but writing down my own understanding was not so simple. In addition, the process added to my fears. For example, a feudal emperor was the biggest landlord and this fact seemed to contain a judgment against me personally. If I had been the biggest landlord, then not only could I be punished from the standpoint of being a traitor to

my country, but it also meant that I could be executed from the standpoint of land reform and there would be no way out for me.

I also had difficulty with my "duty" functions. After I had arrived in Harbin, I had volunteered to participate in these, but this act of volunteering was really the only evidence of my progress; my actual work was without any such indication. This was the first time in my life that I rendered service to others. But the first time that I served meals in the cell, I nearly spilled a bowl of vegetable soup on someone's head. Thereafter, whenever it was my turn to serve, there was always someone else who volunteered to help me. They did this not so much out of kindness, but because they did not wish to run the risk of having food spilled down their backs.

My living habits were not comparable to the others. My dress was still untidy and I still had to depend on my nephew Little Jui to wash and mend for me. Since the time the Center Chief had pointed out my untidiness in public, I had a feeling of shame. I tried to look after myself and to wash my own clothing, but I always made myself wet. When I found I could not control the soap and the scrub board, I felt resentful. And when I waited in the courtyard for Little Jui to do the job for me and saw how other people looked at the clothing and socks in my hand while I waited for my nephew to wash them, I felt ashamed.

Thus, after I finished my autobiography, I decided to try once more. I felt that I must at least try to do my own washing even though it was so difficult for me. Otherwise, the Center would never believe in my reform.

After I had worked myself into a "great happy sweat" washing a white shirt, I noticed that once it was dry it had become a colored shirt—like a watercolor painting. I was shocked. Later, Little Jui came over and took the "ink painting" from the line and tucked it under his arm. "This should not be handled by the Upper One; it should be done by me," he said in a low voice.

His remark was pleasing to my ears and I felt that he was right. It was not good for me to do the washing. Even if I tried, I could never do it well. But if I did not do this kind of thing, how could I demonstrate my reform to the Center? I must find something I could do extremely well.

I still had some jewelry and treasures left; more, in fact, than anyone else. Even the items not concealed in the bottom of my suitcase were worth quite a bit of money. Among them was a set of seals used by Emperor Chien Lung (1707–1799), after his son had taken over the throne. They were invaluable and consisted of three separate seals carved on precious stones which were linked together by three carved chains made of precious stone. The workmanship of the carving was beautifully done. I decided to use the seals to show my "self-enlightenment" and "self-awareness."

It so happened that on this day some government officials came to conduct an inspection, and through the iron bars of my cell, I saw the man who had told me, when I was in Mukden, not to be too tense.

By the manner in which the Center Chief accompanied him, I decided that he must be of a higher rank. Even though he did not wear an army uniform, I felt that if I should present my contribution to him, it might have a beneficial result. I waited until he passed in front of my cell. Then I bowed and said to him, "I request your permission, Mr. Chief; I have something that I wish to contribute to the People's Government."

I tried to hand over the seals of Emperor Chien Lung, but he did not take them. "You are Pu Yi, I presume," he said. "Well, you should take up the matter with the Center here." He then asked me a few personal questions and left.

I thought that if he had actually bothered to examine my gift he would have appreciated its value and would not have been so casual. However, I had no alternative but to discuss it with the Center Chief and so I wrote a letter and asked one of the guards to pass it along with the seals.

For days I had no news. I couldn't help but become suspicious. Could it be that the guard had taken the treasure himself? However, a few days later, the Center Chief came up to me in the courtyard and spoke about them. "Your letter and seals of precious stones reached me," he said. "Also," he continued, "the contributions you made while in Soviet Russia have been turned over to us here. But regardless of this, I think you should know that from our standpoint, men are more valuable than treasures and

a man who has been reformed and remolded is even more so."

The real meaning of his words was not understood by me for many years. At the time, I only thought that since he had mentioned the need for reform, it meant that I was in no immediate personal danger. I never dreamed that real danger had come.

One day the earpiece of my eyeglasses broke and I asked the guard to take them to Big Li to be repaired. Big Li could fix anything and whenever I had had trouble with my glasses in the past he had taken care of them for me. I never expected that his attitude would change.

It was characteristic of the Control Center that voices downstairs could usually be heard upstairs. Not very long after the guard had taken my glasses, I could hear from below the rumbling of Big Li's bass voice and even though I could not make out his words, I could tell that he was not happy. After a while, the guard brought back my glasses and, in an apologetic way, asked, "Could you think of some way to fix them yourself? He said he has no way of repairing them for you."

I felt angry and disgusted and told the guard, "If I could have repaired them myself, I wouldn't have asked him. Last time they broke he repaired them for me. I hope you will ask him again."

This time Big Li did not refuse, but I noticed the job was done carelessly; he had only used string and the original hinge was missing. Upon deliberation, I realized that Big Li had changed and that the change had not occurred suddenly.

A short time previously, because I had not seen Big Li for several days, I had sent Little Jui to fetch him during our exercise period. On Jui's return he said, "Big Li is busy and has no time."

This incident had occurred shortly before New Year, 1952. Another was to occur at the New Year celebration party itself, for which the Center had asked us to prepare some theatrical programs for our own amusement. The theatre was the empty space in front of the sentry post and the program was a play written and performed by my nephews, Little Ku and Little Hsiu, and also Big Li. My other nephew,

Little Jui, did not take part. They used a question and answer form to make jokes about the happenings among the prisoners and also imitated their gestures. I knew it had mainly been written by Little Ku and at first I thought it quite humorous; but later, I stopped laughing.

They had begun to make sarcastic remarks about people who were suspicious and who believed in ghosts, spirits, prayers and divinations of the future. Later, they talked about a man who had begun to understand lots of things in prison, even though he "still wants to be a servant to others" and "wants to serve other people obediently." As a result, he was aiding another to maintain an attitude of master and to resist reform.

Upon hearing this, I immediately understood that the one who was being castigated and the one they had in mind was me. Also, I understood why Little Jui had refused to participate in the program and became worried for fear that he might not be able to carry on in the face of this.

Actually, however, even Little Jui began to show changes. Big Li, Little Hsiu and Little Ku had been continuously absent from the courtyard, and now even Little Jui reduced his presence there. My dirty clothing had accumulated and, after the New Year party, Little Jui stopped coming to pick it up.

Then another incident occurred. It was my duty day and I was waiting to receive the food outside the cell door. Little Jui was distributing it. After he had given everything to me, he handed me a note folded into a small square. I immediately put it into my palm and then passed out the food as if nothing had happened. When the meal was finished, I pretended that I wished to go to the men's room, where I secretly opened the note and read it. "We have all committed crimes," it said. "We should confess everything to the government. In the past I have hidden things for you. Confess what you have in the bottom of your suitcase. If you can take this initiative, the government will be lenient with you."

At first I was so angry I felt as if a flame had burst in my chest. But in a while my anger subsided and I was overcome by a chill of loneliness. Everyone was leaving me. It was some sort of omen. I tossed the note into the toilet to be

flushed away, but I could not erase the sentiment that the note had brought to me. I deliberated about the past and the present of these four young men and I felt that the change in them was unbelievable.

Big Li's father had served in the Summer Palace, and had waited upon the Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi. Because of this, when the palace had dispersed the eunuchs, Big Li had been allowed to become a servant at the age of fourteen. Later, he had accompanied me to Tientsin and was in my service, along with some other boy servants. Later on, he had formally become my personal attendant. When I left Tientsin, I had taken Big Li with me. In Soviet Russia, he had nearly fought with a Japanese who had refused to step aside for me. He had always been respectful and willing to listen. When he had taken my instructions to destroy the jewelry and treasures he had done it thoroughly. I could not figure out why he had changed.

Little Ku was the son of Pu Wei. When his father, as Prince Kung, had died, I had given him the title and had tried to build him up as one of the hopeful elements for the future restoration, and he had felt that this was his lifelong wish. When we had been in Soviet Russia, he had written a poem to show his loyalty. He had been educated by me to become a devout Buddhist and had become attracted to a branch of Zen Buddhism. Upon our arrival in Harbin, he still had shown his loyalty to me. I hadn't expected a man like him to have written a sarcastic program containing innuendoes against me. Apparently his loyalty was not in existence any more.

What was completely unforeseen was the change in Little Jui. I could explain the changes in others like Big Li, who did not belong to the royal family, or Little Hsiu who was still upset because I had denounced him on the train, or Little Ku who had become infatuated with Zen Buddhism. But what was the reason for the change in Little Jui? Little Jui was the descendant of Prince Tuan of the Ch'ing House. His family had declined in importance after his grandfather and uncle had become involved in the Boxer Rebellion. But Little Jui, at nineteen, had been sent for by me to come to Changchun, and I had allowed him to study along with the other members of the royal family, under the same tutors.

Among the young students of the Inner Court he was considered one of the most trustworthy and sincere. I realized that he did not have as high an I.Q. as the others, but he was not tricky and it had been better for me to have someone steady like him about.

During our five years in the Soviet Union his loyalty had been complete and, thus, when I was about to return to China and feeling that my life would be in danger, I had discussed with my brothers-in-law and my brother the problem of "selecting an heir to the throne," for I had decided to choose Little Jui. After he had learned of this decision, needless to say, his devotion was really beyond words. But now this young man had told me I was "guilty."

The unimaginable change in my nephews, and above all in Little Jui, raced through my mind. I sought to discover the reason for it in the events that had occurred since our return to China, but I found that I could find no valid reason even if I were to admit to myself the supreme power of the Communist Party.

And so I leaned for a moment against the wall and tried to find some small comfort out of what had happened. I found that my only consolation was that my brothers-in-law and my brother had not shown any signs of change, but even this could not erase my worry over whether Little Jui would actually denounce me before the prison authorities.

If he were to tell of what I had in the double bottom of my satchel, my future seemed most uncertain. This treasure consisted of 468 items of gold, diamonds, pearls, etc. I looked upon them as my livelihood for the second half of my life. Without them, even if I were set free, I would have nothing to live on. It never occurred to me that I could support myself and, furthermore, since I had hidden the jewelry for such a long time, if I were to surrender it at this late date, it would only prove how long I had been cheating. In view of this, I finally decided that all I could do was let the problem ride and do nothing.

But about a week later, when it was Little Jui's turn to bring our food to us, I noticed that although his manner was dignified, he didn't look at me. Instead, he stared at my leather suitcase. Two hours later, after we had begun our studies in the cell, he suddenly came back again and stood

in front of the cell door, and then, just as suddenly, left again.

I saw clearly that his eyes had stared at the suitcase and I concluded he was about to go and see the Center Chief. I could no longer remain calm. I knew that instead of waiting to be exposed, the time had come for me to assume an active role.

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Intensified Brainwashing

"I, PU YI, HAVE NO CONSCIENCE. DESPITE THE FACT THAT the government has given me humane treatment I have nevertheless concealed things and violated prison regulations. I have committed a crime against the State. These jewels were never mine; they belonged to the people. Until now I never understood this."

I stood in the reception room of the Center Chief with my head bowed. On a desk near the window were the 468 pieces of jewelry shining with a brilliance that would make anyone wish to possess them.

The Chief stared at me attentively as I spoke. Then he nodded his head. "Please sit down," he said. "You must have gone through a great deal of mental anguish regarding this affair."

I replied that I had been very uneasy and then went on to elaborate my difficulties, but in all that I said at that time, only the last sentence was important. "I didn't dare to be frank with you because I was afraid that even if I should confess, I still might not receive lenient treatment."

"Why was that?" the Chief asked as the trace of a smile darted across the corners of his mouth. "Was it because you were an emperor?"

I hesitated for a while and then admitted he was right.

"I don't blame you for entertaining this kind of thought," the Chief continued with the smile still on his lips. "You have a special history and naturally you have many special

thoughts. However, I wish to tell you once more, the Communist Party and the People's Government are always true to their word. It doesn't matter what kind of status you once had; after you have confessed and if you can reform yourself more completely, you may even receive a reduced sentence. If you should be able to achieve an act of genuine merit you might even receive a reward. It's always up to the individual. The fact that you did not surrender these jewels prior to this time, means that you have committed a violation of prison regulations. But now, since you have confessed voluntarily and recognized your mistake, this indicates that you show regret for your previous conduct. I definitely will not give you hard treatment."

After he had finished speaking he ordered the guard outside the door to summon someone from the Custodial Section whom he asked to inventory the jewelry and to provide me with a receipt. "Even if the government is unwilling to confiscate them," I said, "I myself would like to contribute them to the State."

"No, it's better for us to keep them for you," the Chief explained. And then, just before walking out of the room, he turned to face me and said, "As I have told you previously, insofar as we are concerned, a man who has been reformed is more valuable to us than jewels."

When I returned to my cell with the receipt for the jewelry, my cellmates gave me an unprecedented welcome and congratulated me on my progress.

"Oh, Pu, we never thought of you showing such bravery, we do so admire you," they said. They had all stopped calling me Mr. Pu for some time, and I now found this familiar form of address most comforting.

This sort of praise from them was unprecedented, for since I had started to wash my clothing and do my mending myself, my appearance had become so sloppy that the respect my cellmates had shown me had been greatly reduced. Some had given me the nickname of "secondhand shop." Also, whenever I had made a mistake in class, I would at once become the object of unreserved laughter. Now they embraced me, and I immediately felt proud.

Later, during the rest period in the courtyard, I overheard our former Ambassador to Japan talking about the case in a

way that touched my heart. "Pu is really not so dumb," I heard him say. "He has gained the initiative by confessing his ownership of the jewelry. What he did was correct. Besides, I don't think he could have concealed them much longer. The information the government holds in its hands today is simply unimaginable. You can understand what I mean if you consider all the cases reported in the press. Tens of thousands of people have supplied information to the government."

Hearing his talk made me think about the lies in the draft of my reminiscences and feel that I could not fool the government officials. But if I were to speak out, perhaps I could pass through this ordeal peacefully, just as had been the case with the jewelry. Of course, this was a political problem rather than an economic one and the Center Chief had said nothing about it. But, nevertheless, it made me wonder if I would receive the same kind of treatment.

According to the exposures of anti-Communist activity reported in the press, those who admitted their guilt by confession were being treated leniently. News regarding the settlement of these cases was becoming more and more frequent. I had talked many times with my cell section chief, Wang, a former judge of the Manchukuo regime, about these cases, and his analysis of them always had the effect of making me see the relationship between my particular case and the ones receiving such publicity.

Not long after this, the Center asked us to supply material on the criminal actions of the Japanese in the Northeast for use in connection with its proceedings against them. When the Communist cadre in the Center announced this to us someone asked whether, besides the behavior of the Japanese, we should write about something else.

The cadre member replied, "Of course, you can, but the main thing we want to know about is the criminal action of the Japanese bandits."

Upon hearing this exchange, I couldn't help but become worried again. What did this mean, writing about "something else"? "Something else" clearly meant the Chinese, and the war criminals among the Chinese meant me. Would my own family write about me?

When my fellow prisoners wrote about criminal action

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regarding the Japanese in Manchukuo they were very accurate. In my own section, on the first day, more than ten copybooks of material were produced, and Wang, after collecting all the material submitted, said, "Our result is very good. Tomorrow I'm sure we'll produce even more."

On the second day we wrote all day long. I, however, had produced much less than on the previous day. But as Wang collected it, he still seemed satisfied, at least with what the others had produced.

"You people can well imagine," he said, "how much more material the people in the Northeast themselves will write. Thus, you can estimate the enormous amount of material in government hands. Those of you who have had judicial experience will know how it works. Once you have evidence you need not worry about those who do not talk. In the old days, the judicial organ of government felt that it was very difficult to gather evidence, but now, in the People's Government, the common people all gladly supply material. The situation is completely different."

My heart nearly jumped through my throat on hearing this. It was not the first time I had heard how the government was in possession of lots of material. That very morning we had discussed an item in the newspaper about the arrest of a counter-revolutionary in Hunan who had assassinated a Red Army general way back in 1935, and who had hidden in the mountains for many years. How had they found his hiding place? Perhaps the Communist Party had been collecting evidence on this man for years and had it available in its files, pending investigation.

On the third day of our writing about the Japanese in the Northeast, I heard footsteps at the foot of the stairs. Turning around, I saw a middle-aged stranger who was followed by the Center Chief. Based on previous experience, I judged that he was someone from high up in the Public Security Organization who had come for an inspection of the prison.

The inspector examined each and every cell and also listened to the names of the prisoners as read off by the Chief. His face remained expressionless and, although he did not wear an army uniform, he looked like a military man.

"What are you doing?" he asked as he stopped outside my cell. His eyes bored into me.

I stood up and reported that I was writing about the criminal actions of the Japanese. He seemed interested in my reply. "What kind of criminal actions of the Japanese bandits do you know of?" he asked.

I told him about a report I had once received on the execution of workers at a construction site of a secret base. Perhaps it was due to my supersensitivity, or perhaps it was really the case, I do not know, but I sensed that the trace of a smile that had originally shown on his face seemed to disappear. His eyes became stern.

"At the time I originally heard the story I was much agitated. I had never expected the Japanese to be so cruel," I added, most uncomfortably.

"Why didn't you protest to the Japanese?" he asked, as he looked straight into my eyes.

I felt that he was very angry and immediately I bowed my head. ". . . I . . . didn't dare," I replied.

"You didn't dare? Were you afraid? Was that it?" He did not wait for my reply. "Fear . . . fear, to think that fear could change a man to this extent."

"No," I answered. "It was not fear. . . . It happened as a result of my own crimes and mistakes. I can only admit my crimes to the people. Even if ten thousand deaths were meted out to me, I could not wash away my guilt."

"You don't need to be like that," he said quietly. "Don't try to take everything on your own shoulders. You can only be responsible for what is yours. You should deal with facts. What is yours you cannot erase, but what is not yours, you should not assume."

But I still continued to talk on about my guilt and how I had made up my mind to reform. Meanwhile, I noticed that he was conducting an inspection of my cell. He even asked one of my cellmates to hand over his mouthwash cup for inspection. After I finally finished speaking, he shook his head and said, "We must depend on facts. So long as one can really admit guilt and show by facts the degree of his guilt he will receive very lenient treatment. You must use facts to explain and illustrate your progress and not empty talk. Do your best."

He then glanced casually at the things I had written and went to the neighboring cell. From this time on, the inspec-

tor's pair of stern eyes stayed with me, as well as his words: "You must base your story on facts, not empty talk."

He had made me feel that I myself was confronted with an irresistible and driving and thrusting force, the kind of force that was able to get to the bottom of everything. It was because of this same force that a man who had murdered a Red Army Chief in 1935 could not escape his fate, even though he had hidden for years deep in a mountain. I now felt that because of this thrusting force, nothing could escape revelation.

A few days later, I took up my pen and put down in detail, far greater detail than heretofore, all the facts about my activities in Tientsin and the relationship between me and my courtiers on the one hand, and the Japanese on the other, as well as my meeting with Doihara.

Two days later, our Section Chief told me that the Center authorities had read what I had written and felt I had shown important progress which should be commended.

At the end of 1952 we moved to another building with larger rooms where there were new wooden boards for beds, as well as tables, wooden benches and bright windows. I began to feel that what the Center Chief had said about my reformation was true, especially since I had received no punishment, but rather a commendation for what I had written about my collaboration with the Japanese.

In the spring of 1953, the Center entered into a working agreement with a pencil factory in Harbin. The prisoners pasted up the paper boxes that contained the pencils and, from this time on, every day, we would work at making paper boxes four hours a day and would study four hours.

The authorities explained that this arrangement would be useful in breaking the monotony of our lives and, furthermore, since we had never before worked as laborers, it would be good for us.

These words were to have a particular meaning for me. Needless to say, in the past I had never even sharpened a pencil, to say nothing of having pasted a pencil box. I had never paid any attention to the boxes pencils came in and I did not know how much trouble it took to make them. But after a while, all my curiosity over the process was lost.

Pencil boxes and paste became synonymous and I was reduced to a state of confusion. By the time others had finished several boxes, I had not yet completed one of them. I had no concept of manual work.

"What have you done to this one?" Hsien, who had been Chief of Military Hospitals in Manchukuo, asked me one day as he picked up one of my boxes. "How come it cannot be opened? What do you call it?"

Hsien was the son of Prince Su. He and several of his brothers and sisters had been educated in Japan and he had studied medicine there. Lady Yamagishi was his younger sister. One of his brothers had been mayor of Harbin and his whole family was pro-Japanese. When we had met for the first time in Soviet Russia, he had knelt before me, saying, "Your slave now has the opportunity to see his master."

Now he was in my section and enjoyed picking bones with me. He was a very irritable man, easily aroused against others, and, yet, if he got into an argument, he could never win it. Since my work was incomparably poorer than others and since I never had the courage to argue, I had become the escape hatch for his own emotions.

Hsien's meddling in my affairs aroused the attention of the other workers in our section and they came over to observe my problems and began to laugh. I grabbed the box from Hsien and threw it on the discard pile. "Why do you set yourself up arbitrarily as the official reporter on waste?" I asked him.

"Who has reported waste?" he answered as he stared at me and opened his eyes wide.

"Even though my pasting is a little inferior, it doesn't mean that the boxes can't be used," I muttered. Then I picked up the pencil box from the waste pile and put it back on the pile of finished boxes.

"And even though you put it over there," he answered, as he pointed at the box, "it's still a waste item."

I became so angry that I began to tremble uncontrollably. "You can only cope with me. You are someone who always jumps on a weak person. I'm about the only man you can handle."

This remark touched him on his raw spot and he blushed. "Who have I bullied? Who am I afraid of?" he shouted.

"You still think you are the Emperor; do you want people to worship you?"

Fortunately, none of the workers paid any attention to him and he stopped shouting when the Section Chief came up, but this did not end the quarrel because Hsien was not a person to give up easily. The following day when we went to work, he selected a seat next to me. From the moment we commenced, he began to look at my work with a critical eye. I turned my back on him and, even though my day's work could not compare with the others, at least it showed some progress.

The Center used the money it obtained from our labor to buy candies and sweets for us. This was the first time in my life that I enjoyed something as the result of my own physical labor and I felt that the candy I received was really better than any I had ever tasted. But, unfortunately, as soon as it was issued to us, Hsien started talking, "Today Pu Yi's results have not been so bad."

"Not bad, nothing was wasted," I answered him.

"You would do better to be more humble," he said, chuckling.

"Am I not humble when I say I did not have any waste?" I was really angry at heart and the candy no longer seemed sweet. What I disliked the most was that Hsien had a compulsion to be critical when others were happy. "If I produce any more waste items, you can be critical of me again," I added.

I hoped that when I said this he would stop and I would not have to talk to him again. I did not expect that he would pick up one of my finished boxes, hold it up in the air, and say to everyone, "Please look at this!"

As I raised my head to look at it, I nearly swallowed my candy. I had pasted the label on upside down. I became so mad, I felt like taking a box and throwing it at Hsien's face. "Do whatever you wish to do," I growled after a while.

"Uh, now look at all the big talk! Still showing the smelly pomp of an Emperor," he droned on. Then he raised his voice. "When I criticized you it was for your own good. Why don't you admit it?" As he heard the footsteps of the guards outside the door, he raised his voice even louder.

"Do you still entertain the illusion of becoming an emperor again?" he asked.

"You are talking utter nonsense," I said. "I am dumber than you; I cannot compare with you in either talking or working. By nature I am not as able as you. Now, will that do?"

Everyone had left their benches and come over to try and stop our quarrel. Our workroom held eighteen people. There were, besides me, three former Manchukuo civilian high officials and fourteen military officers. Our Section Chief, Wei, was a former military man and Chang Ching-hui, the former Premier of Manchukuo, was one of the three civilians, but he had become senile and did not study or work and seldom talked.

That evening, with the exception of Chang Ching-hui, the others participated in a discussion regarding the now famous "paper box incident." One man criticized Hsien saying, "He should not have raised his voice." Another criticized me saying, "If I had not pasted the box right, I should have admitted it at once and not taken an unfriendly attitude." A Mongol named Kuo felt that the attitude of Hsien was wrong from beginning to end and that I was entirely justified in getting angry. Another, who was friendly with Hsien, opposed Kuo and another believed that the whole incident should be discussed at our Saturday review and self-criticism session with the prison authorities.

As the talk went on, neither side would give in. But all of a sudden, everyone became quiet. I turned my head and saw that Chief Li, a cadre member in charge of our study section, had come into the room. After he heard the story, he picked up the paper box on which I had pasted the label upside down, and said, "This is a very small item; it's not worth quarreling about. Since the label was pasted upside down, paste another label right side up on top of it."

The suggestion quieted everyone, but the incident was not yet finished. A few days later, Little Jui, who was responsible for distributing paper box material to us, told us that several of the working groups wanted to start a labor competition and asked whether we wished to participate. All of us indicated our approval. Little Jui also told us that the group to which Little Ku belonged had initiated a "speedy

pasting process," the efficiency of which was 100 percent higher and thus our group felt that if we were to join the competition we could no longer use our old method and that we would have to devise a newer and more efficient one. Someone advocated a "water flow" or mass production system by which each man would specialize on one phase of the work; one would paste the bottom of the box, another put on the paper, another the label, etc., etc. We all agreed to try it out and I was pleased because I felt that, in this division of labor, the work would be simpler and less confusing. I didn't foresee that new problems for me would develop.

Under this new "water flow" system, everything piled up on me and the "water" could not flow through my hands. Hsien noticed it at once. "If one of the workers on the production line is not up to scratch, then what do we do?" he asked.

On this occasion, I did not pick a quarrel with him. I looked at the pile of half-completed boxes in front of me and, when I heard one of my colleagues say that my production was not up to standard and that the waste rate was high, I knew that this time neither the Mongol Kuo nor our Section Chief would oppose Hsien.

Thus, I decided to withdraw from the "water flow" process and undertook to labor alone. This was the second time since my return to China that I endured the horror of loneliness. The first time had been when I was separated from my family members. I felt as if I had been stripped naked in front of everyone and this emotion was made doubly acute when I saw on Hsien's face, which was like the rough skin of an orange, his satisfaction over my misery. I wanted to find someone sympathetic to talk with, but in my unit everyone was working and not interested in talking.

Soon after this, I caught the flu and the night I came down with it I had a nightmare in which I saw Hsien's orange-skin-like face approaching me. "You are a good-for-nothing man, you are only fit to be a beggar," he said.

Then I dreamed I was standing on a bridge. The scene was exactly like the ones the eunuchs used to describe to me of the Peking beggars standing on the bridges of the city. Suddenly someone put a hand on my head and woke me up.

In a blurred way, I was aware that a person in white was standing over me and feeling my forehead with his hands. "You have a high fever; your flu is getting worse. Let me examine you," a voice said.

I was dizzy and my head felt as if my blood vessels were jumping. As I pulled myself together, I began to understand what had happened. The prison guard had heard me talking and shouting in my sleep and had tried to wake me, but couldn't, so he had reported my condition to the Center Chief who, in turn, had asked the military doctor to come and see me.

The doctor took my temperature and a nurse gave me an injection. I fell asleep again immediately and didn't even know when they left. I was sick for nearly a half month. During this period, I spent most of my time in bed. I neither studied nor worked.

I did more thinking during this half month than I had during the past few years. My mind raced back and forth between the paper box incident and the face of the Dowager Empress Tzu Hsi, which had frightened me as a child and made me cry. Heretofore, whenever I recalled that blurred image, I had only felt that the Empress Dowager had been someone to be feared. But now I felt that she was to be hated. Why should she have chosen me Emperor? I was an innocent and pure child at the time. My natural disposition and endowments were no different from those of my brother, Pu Chieh. But since I was to become an emperor, I had been raised in a vacuumlike atmosphere and no one had taught me the basic things of life. Thus, today, my practical knowledge and ability could not be compared with Pu Chieh's; in fact, they could not be compared with a child. Because of this, I now received insults, jeers, sarcasm and bullying from men like Hsien. I really didn't know how I could go on living.

In the past, whenever I had heard jeering or suggestive innuendoes, or whenever my lack of ability was pointed out by others, my heart had been filled with hatred. But now I began to feel that I should not hate them, for I was no longer in a position to avoid being laughed at and scolded.

In place of this hatred, a new kind of hostility developed in me against the Forbidden City. Shortly before my recovery, the Center Chief sent for me and we discussed my

health and the quarrel with Hsien, as well as the education I had received as a child.

I said to him, "At the time the quarrel occurred, I was really very much agitated, but now I'm no longer angry and can only blame myself for being so difficult. Also, I blame the people in the Peking Palace."

"Very good; you have recognized your weakness! This is progress. Inability is not something to worry about, so long as you are willing and able to recognize it and turn it into ability. It is even more important that you have found out the reason for it. Can you think why the princes and high officials educated you as they did?"

"They were only thinking about themselves," I answered. "They disregarded me. They were selfish."

"I'm afraid it wasn't at all like that," the Center Chief replied, not unkindly. "Can you honestly say that your father and your tutor Chen Pao-shen purposely tried to harm you?"

I couldn't reply.

"You may take time to think about this problem. If you can understand it, then your illness will have had great value for your future life."

After I returned to my cell from the Center Chief's office, I could not dismiss the problem from my mind and, by the time I attended our regularly scheduled self-criticism review session, the first I had gone to since my illness, I had been over it several times. During this meeting, someone criticized Hsien, saying that he was unfriendly and had purposely sought to attack me. A majority seemed to be against him and there was one person who even laid the responsibility for my illness on him. Based on their self-criticism, I gathered that they all felt Hsien was having a bad effect on our reformation and remolding. Hsien, who was present, clearly became worried about this and his face turned gray; he stuttered as he sought to deliver his own self-criticism.

I did not say a word during the session, but I continued to think about my own family. When someone suggested that I should say something, Hsien's face became ashen. "I don't have any opinion," I said in a low voice. "I blame my own lack of ability."

Everyone was taken by surprise at this and Hsien's mouth

fell open. Then, all of a sudden, I began to shout and my voice became strident. "I hate the place I was born and raised in! I hate that devilish system! It was designed to ruin a person when he was young. I hate it! I hate it!" Then my voice cracked as if my vocal cords had been seized by a sudden cramp. I could no longer speak or even hear what others said.

From the end of 1953 until early 1954, we were assigned the subject of imperialism to study intensively, and in March, our Center was moved to Fushun. Shortly thereafter a working group of specially trained investigation specialists arrived to commence processing the confessional material we had produced.

At our particular Center for the Manchukuo detainees this processing was opened with a big meeting at which the responsible personnel of the investigating group addressed us.

"You people," they explained, "have gone through several years of study and re-education. Now, the time for admission of guilt has arrived. By this time you should have arrived at a very accurate understanding of your past conduct. You should be able to recognize what has been criminal in your past and be able to supply information on the criminal actions of the Japanese and of other Chinese traitors. The ultimate treatment you will receive from the Government will be based, on the one hand, on your own criminal conduct; and, on the other hand, on your attitude. The policy of the Government is to be lenient toward those who have confessed and sterner toward those who have resisted."

Our Center Chief then announced that he would not allow the prisoners to exchange information during the processing period and that notes and letters between the prisoners were henceforth prohibited. Thus, every day during recreation, each group would go to the courtyard separately and could not meet with the other groups.

After this meeting, all the groups returned to their respective cells to hold intra-cell discussion sessions. It was agreed among my cellmates that each and every one of us would be frank in our confessions in order to struggle for more lenient

treatment; and, in order to gain the confidence of the newly arrived special investigating personnel, I decided to rewrite my reminiscences in greater detail and in a more systematic way.

But this did not prove to be so simple. When I came to the last days of the Manchukuo government and the Soviet Russian declaration of war against Japan, I recalled a particular incident. I had been worried that at this critical point the Japanese might become suspicious of me, so I had tried to curry favor with the Kwantung Army. On the night following the Soviet war declaration, I, acting without instructions, had asked the Premier, Chang Ching-hui, and a Japanese in charge of the General Affairs Bureau to come and see me and I gave them an oral decree asking the people of Manchukuo to support the Japanese Imperial Army in its resistance of the Soviet invasion.

Should I lie about this? If I did not confess it, it was unlikely that other people would know about it. Chang Ching-hui was clearly senile and the former head of the General Affairs Bureau had vanished. In this particular incident the Japanese had not prompted me to take action, and if I admitted it, wouldn't this arouse the suspicion of the investigators so that they would feel I was not always controlled by the Japanese? My final decision was that it was not important if I "forgot" one or two incidents like this. I could thus place the whole responsibility on the Japanese.

Previously, I had never paid attention to the suffering caused by the Japanese in the Northeast. Ten years had passed and I thought this was not my concern. As a consequence, I failed to appreciate the implications insofar as my confession was concerned, in the fact that the Japanese detainees themselves, who were in other Centers at Fushun, had undergone changes in their point of view during their ten-year "study" period.

At an important meeting, attended by my own Center inmates and cadre teams (organized by the Japanese "study committee," which had been formed after the majority of Japanese detainees had undergone enlightenment with respect to their own thoughts), several Japanese talked about their "studies" and frankly confessed many criminal actions, and even accused others.

During these confessions they discussed massacres, their opium policy, atrocities, etc., and these confessions and exposures of Japanese policy especially agitated the younger Manchukuo detainees. I was, as a result, thus denounced by my own nephews, brothers-in-law and Big Li, and was enmeshed in an atmosphere of hatred that came at me from all directions, even from my family clan. It was as if I were trapped in a hall of mirrors from each and every angle of which I could only see myself reflected in a hostile light.

This occurred at a subsequent meeting in our own Center. After we had returned from the conference organized by the Japanese "study committee," we were asked to talk about our feelings. Many people still felt agitated by the Japanese confessions and, one after another, stood up to talk. They voluntarily confessed their own actions and accused others. The accusations were for the most part concentrated on the former Manchukuo Minister of Justice, but I was afraid that I would also be accused by others who might not know that I had already confessed. Thus, I felt the need to talk at this conference in order to indicate my own attitude.

But after I had supplemented my pre-Japanese meeting confession with additional material, Little Ku unexpectedly stood up from the audience and questioned me. "You have said a lot, but how come you did not mention the note?" he asked.

I was shocked speechless.

"The note! The note Little Jui gave you," he continued.

Then Little Hsiu stood up and said, "A moment ago you mentioned that all of your jewels and treasure were surrendered voluntarily. Why didn't you mention that it was prompted by Little Jui?"

"Correct. Correct," I mumbled. "I was about to mention it, I was about to say that this action was actually initiated by Little Jui, but . . . but . . ." Fortunately the meeting was adjourned at this point.

Upon my return to my cell, I again took up my pen and wrote an additional self-exposure document for the Center authorities. When I thought how angry the Center Director would become when he found out these new details and how I had withheld them, I couldn't help but blame Little Jui.

Why should he have told the others about this incident? After all, we still belonged to the same family.

Each accusation had to be read by the accused person himself. Investigator Chiao showed me the file of material on me and asked me to examine it and initial the points on which I agreed and write a defense on the points with which I disagreed.

I first read the documents written by some of the former high Manchukuo officials and I signed my name to these. Subsequently, I read the documents written by my family clan. Before I had finished the first one, a cold sweat came out on the palms of my hands. For they contained even more denunciations than at the recent meeting that had followed the revelations by the Japanese. One of them was as follows:

> On August 9, 1945, I entered the palace at night to see Pu Yi. Pu Yi was writing on a piece of paper. At that time, the Premier and a Japanese were waiting outside for a chance to see him. Pu Yi showed me the note he was writing. The contents were something like this: "Order all the military and civilian people in Manchukuo to join up with the Japanese Imperial Army to fight in order to crush the Soviet invaders." Pu Yi told me he would show this note to the Premier and the Japanese.

There was also the following:

> At the movies in the palace, whenever the Japanese Emperor was shown on the screen, Pu Yi would stand at attention. Whenever there were scenes showing the Japanese occupation of new areas, he applauded because the movie projector operator was Japanese. In 1944, to save coal and charcoal, Pu Yi ordered that the heat should be turned off in his residence, but he kept an electric heater in his bedroom. When Pu Yi escaped to Talitzu-kou he put some Japanese gods and a picture of Hirohito's mother in the compartment of the train and each time he passed them, he made a 90-degree bow and also ordered others to do the same.

In Little Jui's accusation, he reported the following item:

> He (Pu Yi) used about 20 orphans as servants. Some were eleven or twleve years old whose parents had been murdered by the Japanese invaders and who had been taken care of by a general relief association. They worked 17 to 18 hours a day and received only poor food to eat. He used all kinds of cruel punishment on them. Beating their palms was common and this was the lightest punishment they received. At times they were put in wooden cages. When they became eighteen or nineteen their height was only that of a child of twelve. An assistant of Pu Yi once beat an orphan to death and yet Pu Yi claims he is a Buddhist and vegetarian and has never even wanted to kill a fly or mosquito.

Big Li showed his hostility in another document:

> Pu Yi is both cruel and afraid of death. He is suspicious, tricky and a hypocrite. When he beat or scolded his servants, it was not for mistakes they committed, but due to his own mood at the time. If he did not feel well, or was tired, then the servants would suffer all kinds of punishment, the lightest form of which was when he used his fists or kicked them. Yet when he met outsiders this hypocrite was the best of men.
>
> There were wooden benches and horsewhips in Tientsin. In Manchukuo there were new forms of punishment added. He tried to train many accomplices to beat people and if they were slow at it, he would accuse them of siding with his victims and then they themselves would be beaten.
>
> His nephews and attendants have all beaten others. On one occasion, a twelve- or thirteen-year-old orphan was so badly beaten he got a cut one foot long. It took a physician two or three months to cure him and, during the treatment, Pu Yi asked me to send the boy milk and other things and tell him that His Majesty was kind and ask him if he would have gotten such goodies in an orphanage.

After I had read all this material, even the arguments for my own defense, which I had just completed, seemed shaken to their roots. I had always found justification for my actions in the belief that someone else in my position would have done the same thing. Thus, when I had submitted to Japanese pressure and followed their directions, I had rationalized that I had to do it and had no other alternative. And when I made demands on family members or took away or gave them things, or punished them, I had felt that these actions were within my prerogatives. All this had seemed to me natural and reasonable. Now I understood that there were other people who were not like this, and that my family members were no longer interested in maintaining my reputation as the last Manchu Emperor.

The investigation material on conditions in the Northeast under the Japanese had demonstrated that there were common people who, even under extreme pressures, would not bend as I had done.

For example, there had been a common farmer named Hsiao Chen-fang who had helped his uncle send food to the Communist resistance movement and also acted as guide for the Communist army and undertook various resistance tasks. On April 21, 1943, in the middle of the night, six policemen suddenly entered his house. Since his uncle was absent, he was bound and taken to police headquarters for questioning. The police beat him nearly to death and later poured cold water into his nose to revive him and then beat him again. They did this four times, but he told them nothing. The last time they beat him they thought he was dead and had him taken to a common grave in a "sanitary cart."

While en route, this stubborn man revived and was saved by one of the cart drivers.

Also, in 1943, a teen-ager named Li Ying-hua sent some fresh eggs to the resistance army and was arrested by the police. At first they served him cigarettes, poured tea for him and invited him to eat. They told him, "You are only a child; we'll release you as soon as you tell us what you know about the resistance army." The boy, after he had smoked a cigarette, drunk the tea and eaten the food, said, "I'm only a farm boy. I don't know a thing!" The Secret Police then

hung him upside down, gave him electric shocks, burned him with cigarettes and bumped his body against a nail board. But they found out nothing from him.

Thus, I learned that not all people in the world were soft-boned and that my own past illustrated that I was the type who would only jump on the weak, that I was afraid of the strong, that I treasured my life and was afraid of death.

In the past, however, I had had a fundamental reason to explain away these defects in character. I had believed that as the last Manchu Emperor my existence was more precious than others. But in the past few years, as a laundry worker and paper-box paster, and in the light of the investigations of conditions of the Northeast common people and in the attitude of my family, I could see that in this new light my life had a different value. Within this frame of reference, I was both guilty and inglorious. I thus had no more reason to defend my past deeds and so I signed my name on the last copy of the material the Center had given me.

31

Self-Pity

"A NEW YEAR HAS BEGUN. WHAT ARE YOUR RESOLUtions?" the Center Director asked me on New Year's Day, 1955.

I told him that I could only prepare myself for my punishment.

"Why be so pessimistic?" he asked as he shook his head. "You should take a more positive attitude toward your remolding and try to be a new man!"

I had heard these same words the previous month when I had put my signature on the last confession documents the investigators had presented to me. Although they had made me feel a bit more comfortable, they had not basically changed my pessimistic and passive attitude. I had fallen deep into a pit of self-pity.

In March a group of Liberation Army generals came to Fushun to inspect our Thought Control Center, which was under the Mukden Military District. The Director asked me and Pu Chieh to come and see them. When I first entered the room which was full of shiny gold epaulettes I thought it was a military tribunal; but later, I realized that the generals wanted to know about my studies and my remolding. Their attitude was friendly and they seemed very interested in what I had to say and asked me about my life as a child and also during my Manchukuo days. Later, a bearded general said, "Study well and remold. In the future you will be able to see for yourself the socialistic reconstruction of China."

On the way back to my cell, I decided that this man must have been a marshal, and Pu Chieh told me that he probably was not the only marshal among them.

Back in my cell, I related the marshal's remarks to my cellmates and Yuan, the former Manchukuo Ambassador to Japan, said, "Congratulations, Pu! Since the marshal said you will be able to see socialist reconstruction, this means you're safe!"

The others all became very excited over this since they decided that if the "number one" prisoner would be safe, they too would certainly be all right.

After the end of the period of accusations and acknowledgement of guilt, the ban on talking during the recreation period in the courtyard had been lifted, and also, our cell doors were no longer locked during the day. This good news was soon spread through the prison. At this time I thought of my nephews and Big Li who had been ignoring me since the period of accusations of guilt. I felt sure that this news would also make them very happy, and I used it as an excuse to look for them and tell them about it. I heard Little Ku's voice singing a new song and followed the sound until I found him with Little Hsiu standing beside a large tree in the corner of the yard. But before I got there they went away.

In April, the Center had us elect a Study Committee as the Japanese prisoners had done. This Committee, which was under the supervision of the Center authorities, enabled us to organize our own studies and daily life. It was responsible for reporting to the Center staff all problems that arose and for reporting on discussions and self-criticism meetings. It could also forward ideas on its own initiative. The Committee had five members who were chosen by election but had to be approved by the Center authorities; there was a chairman and four other members responsible respectively for study, daily life, sport and recreation. The study chief and the daily life chief in each cell had to report to the responsible committeeman every day.

Soon after its creation, the Committee decided that we should build a sports ground. Little Jui, who was the committeeman in charge of daily life, was in charge of this work. When I showed up for work the first time he scolded me in

front of everyone. As I ran to my place in the line, I was buttoning my jacket. All of a sudden, I heard my name shouted.

"Pu Yi!"

"Coming, coming," I replied, running to the end of the line.

"Each time we assemble, you are always late. You keep all of us waiting just for you. You aren't even conscious of it," Little Jui shouted with a grim expression on his face. "Just look at yourself, you're a complete mess. You can't even button yourself properly."

As I looked down, I noticed that all my buttons were in the wrong holes. Everyone turned to look at me as I fumbled and fumbled, still unable to button my jacket properly.

One day my glasses broke again. After some hesitation, I asked for Big Li's help once more. "Please help me," I asked humbly in a low voice. "I've tried to do them myself several times, but I just can't. Nobody else can do it. I beg you to mend them for me."

"You still want me to serve you," he said, staring at me. "Haven't I waited on you long enough? Haven't I served you sufficiently?" When he finished speaking, he turned his back on me and walked off in the opposite direction. I stood helplessly, wishing that I could dash my head against the wall. But in a few minutes, Big Li came back and took the glasses from me.

"Very well," he said angrily. "I'll mend them for you. But let me tell you this; I'm only doing this to make it possible for you to reform. Otherwise, I wouldn't have the time."

Later, during the rest period, I went to the newly established library to relax by myself and I ran into Pu Chieh. I started talking about myself and told him that I was so disturbed by the attitude of my family members that I was unable to sleep at night. "Why don't you talk it over with the Center staff?" he suggested. "From what I hear, they have urged the prisoners to forget old grudges and help you."

One Sunday I was washing clothes as usual. When I finished it was about time for sports but since I wasn't in the

mood, I went to the reading room by myself. As soon as I sat down, I heard people talking outside the window.

"Can you play tennis?"

"I don't know how to play. Ask Pu Yi, he knows how."

"He knows how, but he doesn't want to play. Anyway, goodness knows when he'll finish washing his clothes!"

"He's become much quicker at it lately."

"I don't believe you!"

This conversation infuriated me. I *had* finished my laundry and I'd washed just as many clothes as anyone else. Why couldn't they believe in me? It was as if by nature I was incapable of improvement. Thus I fetched my tennis racket and went out into the yard, not so much because I wanted to play, but because I wanted to show the others that I had finished my washing.

When I reached the tennis court, the people whom I had overheard were gone. There was someone else there and so I played with him. Lots of spectators gathered to watch, and I played happily and worked up a good sweat.

After I finished I washed my hands at the tap, and then ran into the Center Director who often spent Sundays at the Center.

"Pu Yi, you've made real progress today," he commented.

"Oh, I haven't played for a long time," I answered contentedly.

"I wasn't talking about your tennis," he said as he pointed toward my clothes drying on the line. "Since you can now do your washing as quickly as the others, you can enjoy the same amount of leisure and recreation as they do. Recreation is life's happiness."

I immediately nodded my head to indicate agreement and then accompanied him on his stroll around the yard.

"In the past, when others enjoyed their rest and recreation, you were still busy doing your work," he continued. "Thus you were not equal with the others and felt resentful. But now, you know how to wash clothes, and you have a status of equality and are thus much happier. As you can see, you yourself hold the key to the problem and you don't have to worry how others treat you."

A few days later, when our group returned to our cell after

having removed the garbage, our committee member in charge of daily life held a self-criticism session. "Someone left the water running after washing his hands," he said. "This was irresponsible and I hope it won't happen again."

As soon as Big Li heard this, he immediately turned toward me. "Pu Yi," he said, "weren't you the last to wash your hands?"

"Perhaps I forgot to turn off the faucet," I answered after a moment.

"Is there ever a time when you don't forget?"

"Yes, of course there are times I don't forget."

"The trouble with you is," Big Li continued, "you are not even ashamed. You still have the habits of an emperor. In the past, you never turned off faucets yourself; as a matter of fact you never even touched a doorknob. There were always others to open and close doors for you. Now, when you leave a room, you only open a door, but you never close one. You still cannot lay aside the pomp of emperorship."

"Now I come to think of it," Old Yuan interjected, "I notice that sometimes you often cover the door handle with a piece of newspaper. Why do you do that?"

"It's because you're afraid it's dirty, isn't it?" Big Li commented.

"Everyone touches a doorknob, so of course it's dirty," I said.

This remark produced an avalanche of attacks by my cellmates. "Why are you the only one to mind the dirt?" "Is it because you think you are above other people?" "Is it a dirty door you're worried about, or dirty people?" "In your heart you really look down on others, don't you?" And so on.

I did my best to protest that I entertained no such feelings, but basically I couldn't help but feel depressed. Did I really do this? Later, someone mentioned that whenever we went to take a bath, I was always the first to jump into the communal tub and always got out the moment anyone else got in. Someone else recalled that at the New Year parties in the Soviet Union, I had always been the first to help myself to a bowl of dumplings. After hearing all this, I had

to admit to myself that Big Li's analysis was right and that I had not been able to cast off my emperor's airs.

Once, when we were washing, Big Li came up and reminded us not to splash water on the floor while we were brushing our teeth. He told us that if we did so, we should mop it up with a cloth because there was going to be a hygiene contest that day and failure to do so would mean that we would lose points. As I looked down at my feet, I noticed that I had spilled some tooth powder and water on the floor.

Big Li also noticed it and asked me to mop it up. Without thinking, I wiped it with the sole of my cloth shoe. He laid into me for this, accusing me of only thinking of myself. "The trouble with you is you can only think about your privileges, never about your duties." He was just at the point of taking a mop and doing it himself, when he changed his mind and told me to do it. I obediently carried out his orders.

Big Li brought in some new fly swatters one day and handed one to me. This was the first time I had ever handled a fly swatter and I felt awkward. I had never before killed a fly. Actually there were very few in the Center. I finally found one by an open window and waved my swatter to drive it out.

"What do you think you're doing," Big Li shouted from behind me. "Are you killing flies or saving lives?"

At the self-criticism meeting that night, no one mentioned the affair until Big Li told how I had forbidden the killing of flies in Changchun and had even organized a group of people to save a mouse from the mouth of a cat. Then, everyone had a good laugh and criticized me for my superstition. "Why should you call me superstitious?" I answered. "Didn't I kill flies last year?"

At this, Old Yuan couldn't help but burst into laughter. "Thanks for reminding me," he said. "If you hadn't mentioned it, I would have forgotten. You asked others to use the fly swatters while you used a newspaper to chase them away."

In the midst of the laughter, only Big Li kept a straight face. "I don't know what it means when other people save lives," he sneered, "but in your case I understand com-

pletely. It's pure selfishness so that you can get the blessing of Buddha. Others may all die so long as Buddha protects you. You think you are the most precious thing on earth."

"You're exaggerating," I protested.

"Pu Yi does sometimes seem humble," Old Yuan put in.

"Yes," I added. "That's true. I do not regard myself as superior to anyone else."

"Perhaps sometimes you do humble yourself," Big Li admitted. "But at other times you still think of yourself as higher and superior to others. I've no idea how you got this way."

32

Conditions Improve

Soon after the Chinese New Year of 1956, the Center Director gave us a talk on national construction. "You have studied about the First Five Year Plan, agricultural cooperation and the socialist transformation of the handicraft industry as well as privately owned industry and commerce," he explained. "You have also read in the newspapers about the development of joint public-private enterprises in several of the big cities. But this is all book knowledge. You now need to see with your own eyes the present state of society. For this reason the government will arrange for you to make observation trips. First you will go to Fushun; then, later on, you will go to other cities."

The atmosphere in the Thought Control Center was very happy that day. Many felt excited and encouraged by the prospect of a trip to the outside world, and some regarded this news as a sign that we would soon be released. But I did not share this elation. I did not feel that I would be released even if others were. Also, I was uncomfortable about the prospect of public visits. That afternoon, near the garden plots, I overheard some of the others talking about this same problem.

"What do you think the people will do when they see us?"

"Since we'll be conducted by government officials nothing will happen to us. Otherwise they wouldn't let us go."

"I'm not too sure. What will happen if people get excited?

I used to be a government official and I've seen the masses when they get worked up."

"Don't worry; the Government wouldn't let us go out if it wasn't sure of what it was doing."

"Anyway, I don't think the Government will reveal who we are."

"Whether they reveal it or not people will know. The people are bound to recognize one of us and then they'll know who the rest of us are."

These conversations made me recall how the Northeast people had been compelled to bow to my pictures, and I didn't see how they could help but recognize me. If so, how could the Government suppose they wouldn't get excited when they saw me and demand a public trial?

At Taishanpao, a village on the outskirts of Fushun, everyone we met was kind to us and some even stopped work to stand up and greet us. In the house of an agricultural cooperative member I revealed my identity without disastrous results.

The house was occupied by a family of five named Liu. Only Mrs. Liu was at home when we arrived. She was cooking, and when she saw the Cooperative Communist cadre member lead us in, she immediately took off her apron and invited us into a new room that had been added on to her house. She treated us as real guests, and asked us to sit on the *kang*.

The cadre member who had brought us in explained that we had come for a visit and wanted to see life in a cooperative. Although Mrs. Liu was not very articulate, she was able to tell us that they had originally been a family of seven with about seven mou[1] of land to cultivate, and that during the Imperial Manchukuo regime they had been practically reduced to beggary. "Although we grew rice, we had to eat acorn flour," she explained. "We had to hand over all the rice we grew to the government and if they found a single grain of it in the house, we would be labeled 'economic criminials.' "

Her son came in while she was speaking and answered many of our questions. Although crippled, he had become a

[1] A little over one acre.

bookkeeper for the cooperative storage pits. When he talked about the present, his voice and manner became cheerful and confident, just like his mother's. Subsequently, his mother showed us a large crock of rice in the corner.

"Who wants to look at rice?" her son asked with a laugh.

"Yes," the mother admitted. "There's nothing to it now. But how often did you see it during the reign of the Emperor?"

I had been frightened when we first went into the house lest they would ask me my name, but now I felt that it would be inexcusable of me if I did not tell them who I was. Thus I stood up and said to Mrs. Liu in a low tone: "The Emperor of whom you spoke was Pu Yi. I am he. I want to beg your pardon."

Before I had finished speaking, the former Manchukuo ministers who were with me all stood up and told her who they were. The old lady was dumfounded. Even if she had guessed that her visitors were prisoners being subject to thought remolding, she clearly had not known who we actually were or that I had been the Emperor and would ask her forgiveness.

How did she react? Did she revile me or weep or call in the neighbors or the families who had suffered during the war to vent their anger? On the contrary, she sighed and said, "All those events are past. Let's not talk about them. As long as you are willing to study and obey the instructions of Chairman Mao, and become regular men, it will do."

On March 10, three days after our trip to Taishanpao, a guard told me, Pu Chieh, my two brothers-in-law and my three nephews to go to the Center Chief's office. When we entered, to our astonishment we saw my uncle, Prince Tsai Tao, and my third and fifth sister from whom we had been separated for over ten years.

When I saw my uncle looking as healthy as ever and my sisters in their cotton-padded uniforms, I felt as if I were entering dreamland. Tsai Tao was the only surviving close relation of mine of the previous generation. In 1954 he had been elected to the National People's Congress as the representative of China's two million Manchus. He was concurrently a member of the National Committee of the Chinese

People's Political Consultative Conference. He told me that he had met Chairman Mao a few days previously at the second meeting of the Congress. Premier Chou En-lai had introduced him as Mr. Tsai Tao, the uncle of Pu Yi. Chairman Mao had shaken hands with him and said, "I have heard that Pu Yi's studies are going well; why don't you go visit him . . . ?"

As my uncle told us this, we had to wipe away our tears, and my nephew Little Jui sobbed out loud. From this meeting I learned the fate of the Manchu nation and my own Aisin-Gioro clan. As Tsai Tao explained it, before liberation there had been only 80,000 Manchus officially registered, but now the number was thirty times as high. After 1911, the Manchus had encountered increasing difficulty in surviving under the Peiyang war lords and the Kuomintang which had been anti-Manchu and thus they had assumed Han nationality and taken surnames like Chin, Chao and Lo. My father's family in Tientsin, for example, had taken the name of Chin. But after the Communists took over, more and more Manchus acknowledged their true minority nationality and, upon the proclamation of the new Constitution, all the Manchus had registered as actual Manchus and thus the number reached 2,400,000.

This change in government policy toward Manchus had not only affected the Aisin-Gioros and their careers, but also Prince Tsai Tao and the various royal princesses. My uncle was sixty-nine years old, and in such good health and physical vigor that I could see little of an old man about him. When he talked it was as he used to. He explained that after the Communist take-over, he had worked for a department of the Liberation Army that was in charge of horses (a field in which he was an expert) and had spent some time on the steppes of the Northwest. He also explained that he was planning to go back to the border area in order to inspect the work of the national minorities as part of his duties as a member of the National People's Congress.

Right after the entry of the Liberation Army into Peking many of the retired Manchu statesmen had felt very uncomfortable. Although the majority of them had not become members of the new Manchukuo nobility, they had not forgotten their status as descendants of the royal family and

their respect for my person. When they learned I had been imprisoned they felt even more worried than before. The combination of this, the diminishing number of Manchus and their difficulties in earning a living all added to their uncertainty. Thus, when they learned of the opening of a special school for Manchu children, they were surprised. Later, when cadres from the People's Government visited many of them and invited them to be delegates to local consultative conferences and asked them to express opinions on Manchu problems they were even more surprised. It was clear that the new government was pursuing a different policy than the Kuomintang with the respect to the border peoples.

In Peking, all the descendants of my great-grandfather the Emperor Tao Kuang and of his brothers Prince Tun, Prince Kung and Prince Chun were over sixty except for a few cousins of mine who were a little younger. My second cousin Pu Chin (also known as Pu Hsueh-chai), an outstanding painter, calligrapher and player of the *ku chin* (an ancient Chinese stringed instrument), was over sixty and had never expected that he would once again be able to take his *ku chin* down from the wall and be allowed to carry it once a week to play on the banks of Peihai Lake in Peking. He had also been elected Vice-President of the *Ku Chin* Research Association and President of the Calligraphy Research Association and had become a teacher at the Academy of Chinese Painting. His cousin Pu Hsiu, who was Little Jui's uncle, had been at one time a "Companion of the Chien Ching Gate" in the Forbidden City and had looked after my property in Tientsin while I was in Manchukuo. Subsequently he had gone blind, but after the take-over, his experiences and the historical materials he carried in his mind were regarded as invaluable and he was employed as a member of the Institute for Classical and Historical Studies. Pu Hsiu recounted for others to write down what he remembered about Ch'ing history.

I once made a calculation on the basis of the "Jade Register" of the imperial family compiled in 1937 and the information provided by my younger brothers and sisters about the rate of infant mortality in my branch of the Aisin-Gioro clan. The death rate of children before reaching majority was 34 percent during the last part of the Ch'ing

Dynasty, 10 percent during the Republic, and none during the ten years since the take-over. The figures of the whole Aisin-Gioro clan were even more staggering and something like 45 percent of the boys and girls of my own and my father's generation dying before reaching majority, and most of the deaths occurring before reaching the age of two.

When I met my uncle and sisters I had not compiled these statistics, but when I listened to my sisters talking about their children, I couldn't help but think of all the children who had died in my own and my father's generation as well as the "Jade Register" which contained blank spaces for the children who had died before they had been given names. And in the previous generation, if they had reached maturity, besides airing their birds in cages early in the morning on the streets of Peking, they had nothing to do except to drink tea until lunchtime. They had no future under the Republic. Few of them learned anything and once they had used up their money they could not find employment or jobs since they were unskilled.

But now things had changed. In Peking, a younger brother and my six sisters had a total of twenty-seven children and, with the exception of those not yet of school age, the rest were in school or in college. My uncle Tsai Tao had sixteen grandchildren and great-grandchildren of whom the eldest was a technician at a hydroelectric plant, one granddaughter was a student at the Military Medical College, one had joined the People's Volunteers in Korea and had returned and was in college, another was an army literary and art worker, and others were, with the exception of the very young or those in school, all working. The past life of going to the races, hunting with eagles or strolling in the streets with lanterns was a joke.

From the time of this first visit of Tsai Tao, family members came to see me often at the Control Center.

The New Year of 1957 was celebrated with more festivity than the previous ones. The authorities told our Committee that if we thought we could manage a large-scale party, we could get the Number 3 and Number 4 Center Chiang Kai-shek detainees to fill the auditorium as an audience for our show.

The reason the Center authorities had given us their support was because they felt these shows enabled the detainees to educate themselves. In the past they had been very successfully used by the Japanese war prisoners, who wrote educational plays on the basis of what they read in the Japanese press. These had a great remolding effect on the writers, performers and audience alike. Our own Study Committee therefore decided to include plays of this sort in our own show. Two plays were decided upon: one was called *The Failure of the Aggressors* and dealt with the collapse of the British invasion of Egypt, and the other dealt with the transformation of a Manchukuo traitor and was titled *From Darkness to Glory*. These were written by my brother Pu Chieh and a former official of Wang Ching-wei's[2] government, named Mu.

As the work on the plays went ahead all kinds of other performances were also under preparation. Old Lung, our magician, whose tricks were always welcome, indicated that he would get up a large-scale act because he was tired of the small tricks he had previously performed of swallowing ping-pong balls and obtaining eggs from a hat. Old Cheng, two Mongol brothers and Old Kuo were busy preparing a Mongolian song-and-dance act. My cell chief who was fond of music was active rehearsing choral singing and others were busy with many of the traditional items. During these few days, the busiest man was Old Wan, the head of the study committee who was in charge of the program. Little Jui was responsible for the decorations since he was so skillful in making paper flowers and lanterns. Big Li was in charge of the lighting. Each and everyone of us were involved in the preparations.

In the past, I had not performed in the New Year shows and had not been asked to help out with the decorations. Even when I had offered to hold thumbtacks or paper streamers people had felt that I was so clumsy I would only be in their way. But this time, to my astonishment, Old Chu, our cell chief, discovered that my singing was passable and signed me up for the choir. I was grateful and practiced with

[2] A prominent Chinese revolutionary who set up a pro-Japanese regime in East China during World War II.

gusto. But just when I had learned my songs, Old Wan, my brother-in-law, who was chief of the Study Committee came to see me.

"Pu Yi," he said. "There's a part for you in the first show. It's not too difficult and there aren't any lines. Besides, you can make up your own lines as well. This is a significant task and part of your self-education. . . ."

"You don't need to persuade me," I interrupted. "As long as you think I'm all right, I'll do it."

"Of course, of course you will do it." Old Wan grinned. "You can do it; besides you have a loud voice and . . ."

"You flatter me! Tell me, what do you want me to play in?"

"*The Failure of the Aggressors,*" Wan answered. "It's about the displeasure of heaven that the British incurred when they invaded Egypt. It's based on news items. Old Jun is playing the leading role—the Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd. You will be a left-wing Labour Member of Parliament."

I went to see Pu Chieh to read the script and to copy down my lines. Then I went to choose a costume. Since I was playing a foreigner, I, of course, had to wear Western-style clothing of which there was no shortage since many of the prisoners had arrived in them and they had been stored in the custodial section. I thus chose the suit I had worn at the International Tribunal in Tokyo, a shirt, a tie, etc., and then returned to my cell. Since nobody else was in the cell, I started dressing. As soon as I had put on a white Arrow shirt, Old Yuan happened to walk in and was dumfounded at what he saw.

"What are you doing?" he asked. Since I was excited and my shirt collar was too tight, I could not answer at first. "I'm going to take part in the play," I finally panted. "Please come here and help loosen the belt at the back of my vest."

Even though he did this, I still could not button it, and I thus realized I had put on weight. Even my leather shoes from England were too tight for me, and I asked Old Yuan in irritation if I would need to wear leather shoes to play a British M.P.

"Of course you must," Old Yuan answered. "The British

Labour Party M.P.s even wear perfume. So how could you think of not wearing shoes? Don't worry about it; your shoes won't be too tight after you wear them for a while and the vest can be altered. Go learn your lines. It's really a strange thing that you will be acting."

As I walked down the corridor I could still hear his laugh, but I was really very happy and, from that moment on, I used all my time to memorize my lines. What Old Wan had said was correct. They were very short; perhaps I was the actor with the fewest lines. According to the story of the play, at the very end Selwyn Lloyd made a speech in the House of Commons defending the invasion of Egypt and some of the opposition members started to question him and then joined in an attack on him. At this point, I was to stand up in their midst and challenge him and say: "Mr. Lloyd, please don't try to defend your actions. They are a shambles, a shambles, a shambles!" The Parliament was then supposed to be filled with a hubbub of angry shouting and demands for Lloyd's resignation, during which I was to shout "Get out." This play had a very simple plot in which the most important element was the parliamentary debate that only lasted fifteen minutes. But I spent dozens of fifteen minutes preparing my part fearful that I would forget my lines or make a mistake and thus disappoint the hopes that had been placed in me.

When New Year came and I went into the hall for the party, I was attracted by the atmosphere of festivity and the beautifully decorated stage and I forgot my nerves. The colorful decorations and the handmade paper flowers deserved the praise of all of us. It was all quite professional. Old Wan had written a beautiful sign in Sung Dynasty style calligraphy: *Evening Party to Celebrate the New Year.* When we saw how impressed the Chiang Kai-shek detainees were we couldn't help but feel happy.

The other acts went off successfully, drawing lots of applause. When our act got underway, Old Jun, who was dressed up to look just like Selwyn Lloyd, was very lively. Since he had a big nose, he was really the only M.P. who looked like an Englishman. His acting was outstanding in showing the anger, fear and desperation of a defeated Foreign Secretary. After the play had gone on for ten minutes,

Old Yuan, who was sitting next to me on the stage, and was playing the part of a member of Parliament, said to me (this was in the play), "Don't be so wooden, put some movement into it." At this point I looked forward and watched the audience and got the feeling that it was paying more attention to me, the left-wing M.P., than to the Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd. All of a sudden, I became very tense. No one had noticed me when I was singing in the choir, but now I had become the focal point of the audience. Before I could recover my composure, Old Yuan nudged me. "Say it, it's about time for you to refute him," he whispered. I stood up immediately, turned toward Old Jun who was still talking, and forgot my lines! Finally, inspiration came to me and, using English, I shouted at him, "No! No! No!" My shout interrupted Old Jun's speech and then I remembered my lines and continued, "Mr. Lloyd, please don't continue your tricky defense." Putting one hand on my waist, I pointed with the other, "In fact, this is a shambles, a shambles, a shambles!" Immediately, I heard a burst of applause from the audience, while on the stage we repeated in chorus, "SCRAM! SCRAM!" At this, the Foreign Secretary scuttled off the stage.

"You played very well." Old Yuan was the first to congratulate me as he descended from the stage. "Although you were a little excited, you were really good!" Later, others also indicated their approval and they laughed at the line I had improvised. Some even recalled the time when I had refused to meet a Swedish prince because he had his photo taken with a famous actor. I couldn't help but join in the laughter.

In 1958, the importance attached to labor and the enthusiasm for it made a deep impression on us. When we learned that Chairman Mao himself and Premier Chou had taken part in building the Ming Tombs Reservoir, we immediately asked the Center authorities and the study committee to organize us for productive labor.

The authorities met our request by allowing us to set up a workshop to manufacture miniature electric motors, but as we were short of manpower this task was given to Section 3 and Section 4 of the Chiang Kai-shek detainees and we were

then organized into five specialized groups: animal raising, food processing, horticulture, hothouse vegetable raising and medicine. Four others and I were assigned to the medical group. Our job was to clean up the clinic daily and do various odd jobs and help with auxiliary medical work. We also spent two hours a day studying medicine under the direction of Dr. Wen of the Center staff, and also held group discussions. My four colleagues had all been doctors before; three of them reviewed their Western medicine and one his Chinese medicine. In addition we all took a course on acupuncture[3] and moxibustion.[4] This period of working and studying with a small group gave me new confidence.

When I first joined the medical group my proficiency was much below that of my associates. The surgical cotton pads I made looked like lumps of worn clothing padding and when I took blood pressure, I would either forget to listen to the stethoscope or else forget to look at my watch. When I was learning to use the electrical equipment for treating blood pressure, I was always in a state of confusion and could do nothing right. But I was determined to master my job and after the doctor or nurse had taught me something, I would ask my classmates for further explanation and then I would practice by myself. Thus I gradually learned to master my job as a medical assistant. At that time one of the Japanese detainees used to come for electrical treatment every day and he would always bow nearly to the ground afterward and say, "Thank you, Doctor," and I couldn't help but be delighted by this. I came to think that although my white coat and spectacles gave me the appearance of a doctor, the bowing also showed that my skillful technique had gained the patient's confidence. At the end of the first course, Dr. Wen gave us a test and I got full marks with the others. I thus became confident that I was not so stupid and had been able to master a trade so that I would no longer need my 468 pieces of jewelry to support myself.

[3] A form of medical treatment by which long metal needles are inserted into certain tissues in order to relieve nervous tension. If the acupuncture technician is expert, no blood is drawn.

[4] Application of burning licorice leaves and other herbs to the skin.

But I had rated myself too highly, as I found out when I was faced with a test. At the time when the Great Leap Forward was taking place throughout the country, the Center Director explained to us that in order to let our thoughts keep pace with the new situation we needed to step up our remolding studies and have thought reviews in order to eliminate ideological obstructions to our progress. The method used was for each of us to discuss in our study meetings the changes that had taken place in our thinking during the past few years and the issues which were not yet clarified.

When my turn came, a big problem developed. I talked about my past thinking and the changes in many of my thoughts. When I asked for comments, someone said: "People of your experience must have had deep and long emotional attachment to Japanese imperialism. Perhaps you still have links and connections with it. Your relationship with the Japanese was no less than ours, and since everyone else has talked about this, why is it that you have not even mentioned it? Do you mean to say that you don't have such feelings?"

"I only have hatred for the Japanese; I have no feeling or sentiment for them. I am different from you."

This provoked a storm of reaction. "Why aren't you more humble? Do you still think you are above us? What sort of feelings for them do you have now? Don't tell me you have made more progress than the rest of us."

I replied that in the past the Japanese and I had sought to utilize one another, but I had no feeling or sentiments for them. I did not look down on my fellow detainees. I was really telling the truth. But despite my explanations, no one chose to believe me and later, I was asked:

"When Manchukuo collapsed, the Japanese were going to send you to Tokyo and they gave you three hundred million yen for your expenses. Didn't that make you grateful to Japanese imperialism?"

"Three hundred million yen?" I was astounded. "I don't know anything about three hundred million yen!"

Actually, this was not a great mystery. When the Kwantung Army took the last gold reserves from the Manchukuo

treasury, it was announced to the outside world that it was being transported to Japan for the Emperor of Manchukuo. But I had never seen a cent of this money, and everyone knew this. Had I thought back calmly I would have been able to remember the entire incident; but instead, I asserted with confidence that I knew nothing whatever about it.

"You don't know about it?" many of those who did know shouted. "This affair was handled by Chang Ching-hui and Rokuzo Takebe. Are you trying to deny it because Chang Ching-hui died recently? Didn't you write about it in your confession?" When I said I had not they were even more incredulous. "But everyone knows about it. This isn't a matter of three hundred, or three thousand, but of three hundred million."

That evening I cast my mind back and suddenly recalled that when I had been in Talitzukou someone had told me that the Kwantung Army had taken all the gold from the Bank of Manchukuo and said that it was to be used to support me in Japan. This must have been the 300 million they were talking about. But at that time I was too worried about my own safety to pay any attention to the matter. The following day I explained this to my study group.

"Why did you try to hide this?" several asked in a chorus.

"Who was hiding it? I absolutely forgot about it."

"Do you insist that you have forgotten it now?"

"Now, I recall it."

"Why didn't you recall it before?"

"What is forgotten is forgotten. It's only natural to forget sometimes, isn't it?"

The more I tried to argue the less they believed me. I became worried. Obviously they thought I was lying. If this was reported to the Center authorities, would they believe in me? As these thoughts rushed through my mind it was as if I were possessed by devils. I recalled incidents in the remote historic past of China when others had overwhelmed a person who had told the truth by their refusal to believe, and at the thought that my word was not likely to be taken against all the others, my courage melted away and I fell back into my old ways. I was prepared to forget my principles so long as I could weather this storm. I would be able

to see my way through this crisis if I made a false confession. So I said that I had not dared to mention it before, since I was frightened that the government would punish me, but now they had all persuaded me to overcome my fears.

In the fall of that year, the former Center Director came to the prison and sent for me. When I opened the door of his office I saw the familiar gray-haired figure behind his desk reading a pile of papers. He asked me to sit down, and, after a while, put aside his papers and raised his head to talk to me.

"I've just finished reading the record of your group. How are you doing? Do you have any problems regarding ideology?"

At this moment I became hesitant. I looked at the pile of records of our cell and recalled the unanimous accusations against me and couldn't help wondering whether there was any point in telling the real truth about the 300 million yen incident, as it would be my word against all the others. Should I continue with the deception?

"Tell me what the meetings of your group are like," the Chief asked.

"Very good. You must have a systematic synthesis of our thoughts, and the conclusions are all accurate."

"Hm?" The Center Director raised his eyebrows. "Can you give me a more detailed description?" he asked.

It seemed to me that even my breathing had become unnatural. "What I said was true," I replied. "The report that I was too worried to mention certain things is quite true. But there were one or two items . . ."

"Continue. You know that I wish to understand better your ideology and thinking."

I felt that I could not hold back anymore and that I had to speak out. So I poured out the events of the last study meeting while my heart pounded like mad. The Chief listened to me very attentively and after I had finished speaking he said, "Why was it so difficult for you to say this? What were you thinking about?"

"I was afraid because they were all unanimous in believing that I was not telling the truth. . . ."

"So long as you tell the truth what are you frightened of?" The Chief spoke sternly and with dignity. "Do you think that the government cannot investigate the matter itself and reach its own verdict? You never seem to understand that you need courage to speak the truth."

33

A Special Pardon

ON SEPTEMBER 14, 1959, CHAIRMAN MAO TSE-TUNG, ON the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic, forwarded a proposal to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress providing for a special pardon for a number of war criminals, counterrevolutionaries and common criminals "who have really been reformed." According to Chairman Mao the majority of the prisoners under detention had been remolded and their pardon would help "change negative factors into positive ones" and enable the prisoners to realize that "under socialism their future lies in reform."

This proposal was passed by the Standing Committee on September 17 and the special pardon was proclaimed that same day. The scene created at the Reform Center by this proclamation was unforgettable. When the announcer had finished his last sentence there was a moment of silence followed by an explosion of cheers, slogans and applause. It was as if 10,000 strings of firecrackers had been ignited at one time, and the noise went on for a long time.

All sorts of views were expressed. Some felt the Party and Government were always true to their word and we now had a future and a place to go and it would not be long before we were out. Others said we would be pardoned in groups; some would go out first, others later. Some debated as to who would be included in the first group. Many came to understand that our pardon would depend on our reformation and remolding and thus some regretted their tendency to be slack with their studies. Meanwhile some who tried to be humble and modest about the degree of their reformation and the probability of their early release, nevertheless discreetly tidied up their things, destroyed their discarded notebooks and threw away their worn-out socks.

The courtyard was a babel of voices during the rest period. I heard Old Yuan ask Old Hsien, "Who will be in the first group?"

"Those who have received awards during the review of their study records probably won't have any problem. Possibly you will be one."

"No, I'm not good enough, but I'm sure you are."

"Me? If I should go out first I'll certainly send you some Peking delicacies. I really long to eat some Peking dates."

From another side of the courtyard, I heard another's voice: "If they want to release us they should release all at once, or not let anyone out."

"Don't you have any confidence in yourself?" someone answered him. "Are you afraid that you might be left behind?"

"Left behind? Unless they keep Pu Yi here they won't keep me."

What he said was really true. Even I felt he was right. On the following day the Deputy Chief asked me what I thought of the special pardon.

"I think that I am bound to be the very last one—that is, if I can ever remold myself. All the same, I shall try my best."

For most of the prisoners the special pardon and release meant reunion with their families, but this did not apply to me. My mother had died long ago, my father had died in 1951 and my last wife had divorced me in 1956.

We became more enthusiastic in our studies and work, and many of us waited impatiently for the next assessment of our progress. The food-processing team now made bean curd that was both soft and white, the stock-breeding team fattened up their pigs so that they were finer than ever, and my own medical team stopped making mistakes.

More than a month passed. One evening the Deputy Chief asked me to come and see him to discuss the special pardon. "What have you been thinking during the past two months?" he asked me.

I told him that some of us seemed to have been remolded very well. I mentioned several who had received special commendations and also the food-processing and pig-breeding teams.

"It is much easier now for you to think of other people's good points, isn't it?" the Deputy Chief asked with a smile. "If the special pardon should include you, what would you think?"

"But this is impossible," I replied.

Impossible! That was the thought I carried back with me to my cell. But if . . . if? Once this phrase came to my mind I suddenly became very tense. My hopes became greater and I couldn't help but entertain some dreams. I imagined myself, Old Wan, Little Jui and others taking our place among real people and doing the same things that real people did. Perhaps I might be given a job as a medical assistant in a hospital by the Labor Department, just as had happened to others who had been remolded. But this would require a long period of time. At the thought of the happiness that might be in store for me I was almost unable to sleep.

On the following day, we were told to assemble. As we walked into the great hall I saw hanging across the stage a broad crimson cloth that took my breath away. On it was written: *Special Pardon Meeting for the Fushun War Criminal Control Center.*

A representative of the Supreme People's Court, the two Center directors and others were sitting on the stage. Below, everyone was so quiet that I seemed to be able to hear my own heart beat.

After a few introductory words from the Center Chief, the representative of the Supreme People's Court went to the center of the stage, took out a piece of paper and read, "Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi."

My heart leapt. I walked toward the front of the stage and heard him read as follows:

Notice of a Special Pardon from the People's Court of the People's Republic of China

In accordance with the Special Pardon Order issued by the Chairman of the People's Republic of China on September 17, 1959, this Court has investigated the case of the "Manchukuo war criminal" Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi.

The war criminal Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi, male, 54 years old, of the Manchu nationality, and from Peking, has now served ten years' detention. As a result of remolding through labor and ideological education during his captivity he has shown that he has genuinely reformed. In accordance with the stipulations of Clause I of the Special Pardon Order he is therefore to be released.

SUPREME PEOPLE'S COURT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

December 4, 1959

Before hearing the end of the pronouncement, I had already burst into tears.

34

The Forbidden City—Revisited

On December 9, 1959, I arrived at Peking, my home town from which I had been absent for thirty-five years. On the station platform, I saw a younger sister whom I had not seen for more than ten years and a younger brother whom I had not seen for more than twenty years. I shook their hands very warmly and heard them call me "Elder Brother," a term they had never before used in addressing me. They thus made me feel that I had commenced a new type of life among my family members. I then bade good-bye to Li and Meng, both of whom had accompanied me all the way from Fushun. Li had been the cadre member in charge of our study section who had sought to quiet everyone after the dispute arose over my inadequacy at pasting labels on pencil boxes, and Meng had been one of the eight inmates from Chiang Kai-shek's organization who had received a special pardon at the same time I did.

As Meng left the platform with his wife, who had come to welcome him, my younger brother picked up my black leather suitcase and, with my sister, we walked out of the station together.

Once outside, I glanced at the station clock and took out my pocket watch to set it. When I had left Fushun the Center Director had taken this watch from among the things I had contributed to the Government and asked me to accept it. It was the same French gold pocket watch that I had bought at Wu Li Wen Company in 1924 on the day I had fled

from my father's mansion to the Japanese Legation. Now I was using it to set the time for starting a new life.

My family were very amiable and kind to me and, early in the morning of the following day, I wanted to think of something I could do to help them. When I noticed that neighbors were using a broom to sweep the alley outside the house I joined them and swept all the way to the end. Unfortunately, when I finished I found that I could no longer locate the house where I was staying and, by mistake, walked into the home of total strangers.

These people were very considerate and kind about leading me to the correct house and said I did not need to thank them. "We are neighbors; but even if we were not," they explained, "you would not need to thank us for doing so little. It doesn't matter at all."

Later that day I saw my uncle Tsai Tao and his wife as well as some cousins and another sister and her husband. My uncle told me what had happened to the various members of my family clan. We also listened together to Pu Chin who played some music on the Chinese lute, and he showed me some of his calligraphy which was really so good that it had reached a new high standard. Later I saw some paintings of flowers and birds that another cousin had painted, and, after that, I went to call on a sister but found that she had already left for the street nursery where she worked. According to her husband who was an engineer for the Postal and Cable Department, she was now so busy that she no longer had time for the migraine headaches from which she used to suffer. I also saw an unmarried sister and three other married sisters and their husbands. One was active in political association study work, another was working on the archives of the Forbidden City and another, with her husband, were painters.

In this period of again getting to know my family, I was especially touched by all their children, and was taught, through their eyes, what the second generation regarded as honorable titles. For these growing youth in their ruby neckties, their idols were the champion Peking girl's motorcycle racer and a mountain-climbing chief. And the younger ones, still in middle school, were learning all kinds of spe-

cialized occupations. All, without exception, were proud to earn honorable titles.

During my first few days in Peking I also met many old friends including some who had once been eunuchs in the Forbidden City, and I learned of the present situation of many of them. They were spending a peaceful old age at a Center for the Aged that had been especially established by the Peking Civilian Administration Bureau.

Almost all the people I met said to me: "Now you have returned, you must go about the city and take a look and see the changes and improvements." And so I went for a walk with a younger sister and another young relative. In the square in front of the Gate of Heavenly Peace as we were walking slowly westward toward the Cultural Palace of Nationalities my sister said to me: "My brother, aren't you tired? Isn't this the first time you have walked so long?"

"I'm not tired," I answered. "It is because it *is* the first time, that I'm not tired!"

These words, "the first time," had become very much a part of the life I had just commenced. There had been two other "first times" that very morning; and in each case I had not felt uncomfortable, because it was the "first time"; only excited. That morning I had gone to a barbershop.

As soon as I sat on the barber chair, I heard a hair drier being used on the man next to me and did not know what it was or what to call it. I asked the barber what he called the device which made such a "woo . . . wooo . . . woo" sound.

"That's not a device," he replied joking, "that's the wind blowing."

"In that case," I said to him in all sincerity, "what do you do first; blow the wind or cut the hair?"

He looked stunned at this remark and for a moment obviously thought I was some odd creature from another world. "Have you never had a haircut before?" he asked, finally.

When I explained to him who I was and that it was indeed my first visit to a modern barbership we couldn't help laughing. Thus by the time I heard the woo . . . wooo . . . woo sound over my own head the novelty of it made me feel quite happy.

I had a similar experience the first time I rode on a public

bus. I noticed that those waiting in line to board it let the older people and children go first and so I let a lady behind me go on ahead and didn't realize that she was the conductress who expected me to be quick about climbing aboard after her. Then, when she saw me standing motionless she shut the door and the bus left without me. One of my cousins who had seen what happened came back from the next bus stop up the street. We began to laugh when we saw one another and I said to him, "No need to worry. Nothing will happen to me."

The Civilian Administration Bureau of Peking, in order to help us become reoriented and to acquaint ourselves with life in the outside world, had organized all of us who had been pardoned and were residing in Peking into a special sight-seeing group. We were taken on guided tours of newly constructed factories, expanded public works enterprises, the Municipal People's Commune and other buildings. We spent about two months at this and, toward the end of the course, at the request of one of my companions, we took a tour of the Forbidden City. I was assigned as a special temporary guide for the group.

What surprised me the most was that the old and desolate atmosphere that had pervaded the palace by the time I had left it was now gone. It had been painted and even the door and window curtains, the draperies on the beds, the seat covers and tablecloths were new. Upon inquiry I found that all these had been made in a special weaving establishment near the palace to reproduce the original fabrics.

There were really not many jade pieces, porcelains, calligraphy, paintings and other ancient cultural relics left, but I did find some things that the Museum had purchased as well as others that had been contributed by private collectors. For instance, there was a famous painting of a river scene which Pu Chieh and I had taken and sold which had been repurchased. In the Imperial Garden I smelled the fragrance emitted by the old cypress trees and it brought back to me memories of my youth.

In March, 1960, I was assigned to work at the Peking Botanical Garden which was under the direction of the Chinese Scientific Botanical Research Center. I worked a half day and studied a half day. This was essentially a testing

period for me during which my reformation and remolding could be observed by the authorities and was preparatory to my eventual assignment as a professional worker for the government. Under the direction of technicians I was taught in the hothouse how to plant seeds, how to care for the plants, how to transplant, and so on. When I was not on the job at the hothouse I either studied or worked on my autobiography. The people with whom I worked and lived at the Botanical Garden were friendly and kind from the top to the bottom.

One day, after I returned from a stroll outside, I discovered that my watch was missing. I couldn't help but feel upset. Also I believed that since I had gone for such a long walk I would never be able to find it again and that I might just as well give it up for lost. But when he learned about it, one of the Garden officials, who was also a roommate, insisted on hearing every detail of my walk and then immediately set out to retrace my steps. There were others, too, who instead of taking a rest went out to look for it. I was really very embarrassed. Later, Liu, the Garden official, found it in the Four Seasons Evergreen Dining Hall of the People's Commune. He was so happy to be able to give it back to me that I felt that what I had received from him was not a watch but a deep and genuine friendship.

In the summer of that year the Botanical Garden established a unit of the civilian militia. They drilled every day and I registered my desire to participate. When people said that I was too old, I answered that "as a member of the big family of my motherland, I should stand on duty to defend it."

Finally the officials were convinced and I was allowed to participate as a member of the overaged group and I dreamed of the time my Botanical Garden unit could participate in a parade by the Gate of Heavenly Peace. My wish was realized in a very short time and I joined in a demonstration of support of the Japanese people against the "Japanese-American Security Treaty." As we passed by the Gate, we shouted our slogan loudly: "Ten thousand years for the Chinese People's Republic! Long live the alliance of the people of the whole world!"

On November 26, 1960, I received my voter's certificate

with my name written on it: Aisin Gioro Pu Yi—and it seemed to me that nothing in my whole life was as valuable as this. When I placed my vote in the vermilion ballot box, I felt myself the richest man in the world. I was now a citizen of a country of 650,000,000 people and the gigantic hand that was extended by them to reach oppressed people and nationalities everywhere in the world was a reliable one.

In March, 1961, I concluded my testing stage and was assigned to a special job in the Literature and History Material Research Commission of the National Political Alliance. My assignment was to organize and arrange the literature and historical source material of the late Ch'ing Dynasty and the subsequent Peiyang clique war-lord governments. While working, I frequently ran into names that I was quite familiar with. Sometimes I even encountered historical events which had a relationship or connection with my own past.

After work, I continued to write my autobiography. I was supplied with valuable historical source material and some of it was copied down word for word by the hands of many friends whom I had never previously known. Part of this material was verified for me by my colleagues in the Publications Office and there were also elderly people who recalled their own experiences for me. The National Archives, the Historical Museum, the Peking Library and the Capital Library were especially helpful. I felt somewhat uneasy about receiving the assistance of so many strangers but this has become the regular way of doing things in China. Today, so long as you propagandize the truth, you receive aid from one and all including, needless to say, the Communist Party and the Government.

1962 was a special year of happiness for me. I was invited to attend the People's All China Political Consultative Conference, and I also audited the report of the National People's Congress regarding China's reconstruction. Also on May first of that year, my new wife, Li Shu-hsien, and I established our own little home. It wasn't much but to me it was something very special—a real family unit that represented the start of a new life for me. When I looked at my wife, my voter's certificate and the unlimited and broad

future before me I knew I would never forget how I had obtained this life.

My thoughts thus went back to the summer of 1960, two years before, when Little Jui, who had also returned to Peking, and I went on a visit to Fragrance Hill Park in the Western Hills. We had talked about the various stages of change in our thought development and I told him that as far as I was concerned, at the beginning, I had been most preoccupied with the problem of life and death and whether or not the policy of leniency would be applicable to me. What had given me the first real feeling that I might be able to live was when I had surrendered the jewelry hidden in the double bottom of my suitcase and I had received such unexpectedly lenient treatment. "When I talk about it," I said to Little Jui, "I have you to thank for your assistance."

"My assistance?" he asked as he stared at me and opened his eyes. "Then you still don't know what really happened?"

"Of course," I answered. "Didn't the Center Chief ever tell you what happened? Due to the questioning of Little Ku, I admitted everything and later I had a self-criticism session with the Center Chief. I told him that when I had surrendered my things, I had not mentioned the note you had given me because I was afraid that you might receive punishment. The Chief explained that he had known all about the note and that it had been he who had asked you to write it in order to assist me in confessing of my own volition. That was the assistance to which I was referring."

"Judging from your description, I can see you still don't know what the real situation was," Little Jui replied. "You just don't know about it. When the Center Chief asked me to write the note to you, this was not what I had wanted. It was my idea to have you searched, to confiscate your things and then have you punished."

This was the first time that the detailed background of these motivations was revealed to me. As Little Jui related the sequence of events, the Center Chief had refused his request. "It will be easy to search him," the Chief had explained, "but this will not be helpful for his reform. Let's wait and see. Searching is never as good as a voluntary

confession; it will be better if he reaches self-enlightenment by himself."

Later, Little Jui had again talked to the Center Chief and again asked him to search me, but the Director had explained that the speed of development of each man's thoughts was completely variable and that they should not be in a hurry. The Communist Party believed that a great majority of criminals could be reformed but that it was an individual process, requiring individual evaluation. The Chief had told Little Jui: "You should understand that it is hard for him because of his special status to believe in the policy of leniency for those who confess. If we search him, he will lose the opportunity to experience personally this policy. Let him surrender the things according to his own will. If you are in a hurry it would be better for you to think of some way to speed up his own self-enlightenment." As a result, it was decided that Little Jui should write the note to me.

After the note had been passed to me and there was no immediate reaction, Little Jui had become worried and again talked with the Center Chief. "Pu Yi will never understand until his death," Little Jui had explained. "Since he has no desire for self-enlightenment, why don't we search him?"

But the Center Chief had again urged patience. "From the beginning," he had argued, "I have felt that in this case we cannot hurry. It is more essential now than ever that we not get excited."

Later on, of course, I had become worried and had surrendered the jewelry and from this time on I had seen a way out. "It was at this juncture," I told Little Jui, "that I began to understand that the Government believed that a majority of the people could be reformed."

"But you yourself know," Little Jui answered, "that even after this you were still persistently resisting your reformation and cheating. Several of us had already told everything to the Government, even before the special investigators had arrived."

At that moment, I had been looking down on Peking in the distance, fading in the light of a glorious sunset behind us, and all the events of the past ten years had come to my mind one by one. I had recalled the grayish-white hair of the Center Chief, the queer speech and voice of the young

Deputy Chief of the Center; each and every one of the guards; each doctor and nurse; every single one of the Center personnel. While I had been trying to dupe them and while I was using all kinds of methods to resist them and exposing my own stupidity to the point where I no longer had felt like living, these Communist Party people had persisted in their belief that I could be remolded and had patiently guided me toward being a new man.

"Man" was the first word I had learned to read in *The Three Words Classic*,[1] my first primer, as a child. But in my previous life I had never appreciated the true meaning of its first four lines:

When a man is born (Jen chih chu),
His nature is basically good (hsing pen shan).
Human nature is similar (hsing hsiang chin);
Only environment makes it diverse (hsi hsiang yuan).

[1] A small book, written three words to each line, that Chinese children used to memorize. It was used in China for almost 700 years.

The Last Manchu: The Autobiography of Henry Pu Yi, Last Emperor of China
Edited by Paul Kramer
New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987, 310 pp.
(originally published in 1966)
reviewed by MC45

The Last Manchu, originally published in Chinese as Emperor to Citizen, is a great find for MIM as the self-narrated story of China's last emperor who lived – and reintegrated himself into society – into the period of revolutionary socialism. Pu Yi (who was given the name "Henry" by his English tutor) was the final heir of the Manchurian Ch'ing Dynasty. He ascended the throne at age three, and grew up cloistered in the Forbidden City in Beijing, surrounded by courtiers and servants.

MIM has reviewed another autobiography of rectification by two Amerikans who were imprisoned for four years as spies against China during the Korean War. Prisoners of Liberation, by Allyn and Adele Rickett is a good companion to The Last Manchu. The accounts of those who were imprisoned, made to engage in thought-reform, criticism and self-criticism and rectification are important readings on how Communists must approach our enemies. The Ricketts – University students in China during the Korean War – fed information on their classmates, professors and other associates first to Amerikan embassy contacts and then to the English government. That they did this during war time, when their government was bombing Korea daily and approaching the Chinese border, made their crimes quite serious. The Ricketts were in prison during the same period as Pu Yi, the head of that class of big landlords who were one of the two principal native enemy classes against which the Communist Party led a revolution.

When he was in his late teens, this last biggest landlord in all of China was expelled from the Forbidden City by a warlord and relocated to the Japanese concession in Tientsin. When the Japanese completed their occupation of Manchuria, they relocated Pu Yi and made him a puppet ruler in the renamed Manchukuo. His installation was part of the Japanese effort to expand its domination throughout Asia. From this position he enjoyed no governing power and was wholly bound to his Japanese masters in every way. He remained Emperor in name and in great wealth until the Soviet Union turned to fight Japan in 1945. In 1945, he and other high civilian and military officials of the Manchukuo regime began a five-year stay in prison in Siberia. They were all returned to liberated China by treaty in 1950.

The early portion of the book is slow-moving, but is useful because Pu Yi goes into great detail on the conditions under which he lived as a child and grew into an adult. In March, 1961, one year and four months after the end of his incarceration, Pu Yi was assigned to organize the materials related to the late years of the Ch'ing Dynasty and the warlord clique that deposed it. He did this work under the Literature and History Material Research Commission of the National Political Alliance and through his employment came across documentation to support the autobiography. He had begun work on the autobiography on his release from prison; it appears to be based on his self-criticism and confession.

"I have found one volume of my menus showing the chicken, meat, etc. used during one month in the second year of my reign ... Including the Dowager, the consorts and myself [i.e., six people], the consumption of pork for the month was over eight tons and cost 2,342 ounces of silver."(p. 19) This figure represents food that was cooked to be eaten by Pu Yi and the other high royalty. He also details twenty-five ceremonial dishes that were served at every meal but were never eaten. "In the month in question, there were 20 tons of extra meat, 1,000 pounds of extra lard, 4,786 extra chickens and ducks, to say nothing of the fish, shrimp and eggs. All these extras cost

11,641 ounces of silver , and with the miscellaneous items added, the total expenditure came to 14,794 ounces of silver. This figure moreover does not include the cost of cakes, fruit, sweets and drinks that were constantly being served."(p. 19)

Striking among his descriptions is that of his own complete lack of education. He was taught to read and learned the Confucian classics as all educated Chinese did, he also read Alice in Wonderland in his English lessons. But "from 1911 until 1922 [ages five to sixteen], I learned nothing about mathematics, physics or chemistry. As for the modern history of my own country, I read only about such events as the unsuccessful struggles against the Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi by the two preceding Emperors, and my knowledge of foreign countries was limited to my trip with Alice in Wonderland. I had no idea about people such as George Washington, Napoleon, Watts or Newton. Insofar as geography was concerned all I knew was that 'the great pole produced the two Forms, and the two Forms produced the four Symbols, and the four Symbols produced the eight Trigrams.' If it had not been for the willingness of my tutors to talk with me about things that were not in the texts, plus my own desire to read extensively, I would not even have known where Peking was or that rice grew out of the ground."(p. 44)

The pace picks up from the period in which Pu Yi was ousted from his home in the Forbidden City. [machinations with warlords, with the Japanese.] During this time – his first opportunity in life to interact directly with the outside world and in matters of his own governance – he describes his own desperate clutching to be restored to the imperial throne. The periods of his exile in the Japanese concession in Tientsin and then his so-called restoration in Manchukuo were very tense times. It appears from reading the autobiography that Pu Yi was in or near a panic throughout this period (1924-45) – always afraid of losing his position and his wealth, and eventually afraid of being killed when it appeared that he was about to lose security for both.

Pu Yi's blow by blow accounting of Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal of the Chinese people to the Japanese invaders is another high (though unfortunately brief) point of The Last Manchu. The head of China's emergent bourgeois nationalist government was bent on destroying the Communist Party to the point of surrendering ever greater sections of territory to Japan so he could pay full military attention to the CCP. A footnote reads: "on September 18, 1931, Japanese forces seized Mukden. This was followed by almost unopposed occupation by the Japanese of all large cities in Manchuria and by the end of the year the victorious Japanese had pushed toward the Great Wall of China and occupied Jehol Province. These moves were not opposed by the Nationalist Government of Chiang Kai-shek who was busy elsewhere in China fighting the Communists."(p. 141) Chiang bent so far against the will of the Chinese people that he made a last ditch effort to ally with the Emperor rather than accept a united front with the Communist Party against Japan. (Edgar Snow's book, Red Star Over China, details the means by which the CCP convinced Chiang to agree to a united front and so managed to liberate China from Japanese occupation in 1945.)

Of course the deposed Emperor's concern with Chiang's activity at the time went only so far as his interest in retaking his throne. Demonstrating how little he knew or understood of world events, "it seemed to us [Pu Yi, his court and the Japanese officials] that the great enterprise of 'unification' could be accomplished only by me."(p. 139) That the Japanese officials believed that Pu Yi could achieve a rectification of China is not the whole story of course. The Japanese military foresaw installing Pu Yi as a figurehead who would make their occupation of China appear "native" rather than colonial.

Pu Yi did not care that he was opening his own country to occupation by a foreign military. The Japanese concession – where he lived in the period between the Forbidden City and Manchukuo

years – in Tientsin was a product of the Opium wars of the nineteenth century. He describes visiting an English country club in the city (also built on land taken over in the Opium Wars) that was normally off-limits to Chinese. But Pu Yi (and his family members when he escorted them) was allowed to enter at will as a "special Chinese." He was quite fully aware of the implications of these land deals at the time as he "attended many reviews of foreign troops" as they "marched before me in their martial splendor."(p. 136)

As a lesson in self-criticism Pu Yi's accounting of his childhood, Japanese occupation and the war years is staggering. Living in a country whose government will spend four million dollars to investigate and prosecute its leader for discussions related to his non-governmental life (and a country whose President will entertain this process to "clear his own name"), it is difficult to imagine the humility of the last Ch'ing Emperor. We learn in making self-criticism not to interweave facts with excuses, apologies, pleas for leniency or any other distractions from an assessment of events. Pu Yi spent 15 years in prison learning to tell his story in a simple and direct manner so that others could learn from it.

A central fact of life in a Maoist prison was taking care of one's own daily chores. The prisoners were allotted time to do their laundry and mending and rotated through serving food and other broader tasks. During his first several years in the prison, Pu Yi's nephew washed and mended his clothes and carried his bags; others also took extra chore rotations to spare the Emperor these indignities.

Study was also central to prison life in China between 1949 and 9176. Prisoners were locked up for crimes against the people, and their time in prison was to help them recognize their crimes and rectify the errors in thinking that led to those crimes. Pu Yi's first readings in the Fushun Thought Control Center (a prison for high civilian and military officials of the Manchukuo puppet regime) were on the characteristics of feudalism. Through this study with others who had been part of a feudal regime he was to understand his own role in oppressing the people of China and in inspiring them to revolution.

Following liberation, the poor peasants in China would "speak bitterness" about their existence under feudalism. The purpose of telling these stories was to explain to the young people why the revolution had been necessary, and what human errors the Communists were working to correct. Having learned in theory about the role of feudal landlords, Pu Yi was able to write a book that explains in great detail the cause for all the bitterness caused to the peasants. The cause was not – as the bourgeoisie says – that the poor were too stupid or too lazy to make a living for themselves. Pu Yi quotes an older peasant woman: "Although we grew rice, we had to eat acorn flour ... We had to hand over all the rice we grew to the government and if they found a single grain of it in the house, we would be labeled 'economic criminals'."(p. 274) Pu Yi explains how all this deprivation went to serving the Emperor 25 dishes of food that he would not eat at every meal.

On meeting the Amerikan journalist and author Edgar Snow in 1960, Pu Yi said frankly "My crime helped to cause the deaths of millions of people. ... Any other country would have killed me."(Edgar Snow, Red China Today, p. 70-1) The alternative to death that the Maoist government pursued was to split apart the human beings from their crimes, and to help these people turn themselves to contributors to the new society.

A note on the edition.

While MIM cannot say enough good things about Pu Yi's book, it is too bad that we were unable to obtain a Foreign Languages Press edition. Paul Kramer writes in his preface "When it came to presenting Pu Yi's thoughts, ideas and reactions, the [editing] task was enormously difficult. … [in Pu Yi's writing] there was the Chinese Communist habit of equating events with ideology to the extent that an Occidental found himself so far removed from the actualities of daily life and the conflicts involved that it was difficult to grasp truth in terms of definable human emotions and reactions."(p. xii)

We suspect that this approach to distilling analysis from the narrative contributed to the tone of the early portions of The Last Manchu. The detailed accounting of life in the Imperial household is fascinating on its own, but it would have been a more compelling read had it included more insight into the implications of the details. We also wonder aloud whether Kramer's editing has contributed to a disproportionate shortening of the sections on Pu Yi's rectification.

As MIM Theory readers will note, discussing events and opinions through the lens of political line is more a peculiarity of Communists than it is of Chinese Communists. In fact events do convey ideology. While emotions and reactions are interesting as a study of individual incentive, the study of concrete events and their meanings fuels our progress in remolding history in the interests of the people. The difference between this style of writing and what Kramer would call a Western approach is in our openness about our politics compared to the bourgeoisie's every effort to conceal its political message. We can look at this as a question of goals. As Communists, our message conveys the interests of the international proletariat – the majority of the world's people. Because we speak to the majority we are confident that our honesty will only win us more friends amongst the masses.

Pu Yi conveys this concept of openness in an anecdote from when he was nearing the end of his prison term. He and fellow prisoners had an opportunity to meet a womyn whose family "had been practically reduced to beggary" during his reign. He told them who he was because he felt it would be unconscionable to do otherwise. "How did she react? Did she revile me or weep or call in the neighbors or the families who had suffered during the war to vent her anger? On the contrary, she sighed and said 'All those events are past.'"(p. 275)

While there is a richness to Pu Yi's exposition of his own crimes against the Chinese people in this edited version of his book, MIM has no doubt that the original and the English translation of the Foreign Languages Press (published in 1967) are better. Kramer's analysis of Pu Yi's history, presented in an epilogue, pursues the theory that the Communist treatment of the former emperor was dictated by a desire to use him in proxy for the Manchurian people as the Japanese had. This is not borne out by the story of a man who went from ordering vicious beatings of the orphans whom he kept as slaves, to opening himself to the criticism of the people on whose labor he had lived to such excess. We assume that Kramer has introduced such errors of analysis into the edited autobiography as well.

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