

That is, the Soviet Union has not yet produced sufficient tea to meet the needs of their people.

The total consumption of tea in Russia before the revolution was put at some 190,000,000 lbs. There was then a violent drop in the demand for tea after the revolution. But by 1938, the consumption of tea was increased to one-fourth of pre-revolution record. In the next ten years, the most conservative estimate puts it that the Soviet Union will consume some 80,000,000 lbs. of tea annually. If the present percentage of the Chinese tea imports to the Soviet Union (i.e. 56.4% of total tea imports to Soviet Union) still stands, China will have to ship some 50,000,000 lbs. of her tea to the Soviet Union!

At present about 70 per cent of China's total export of tea goes to the Soviet Union to fulfill a barter contract which was entered into between China and Soviet Union in 1938 providing for the exchange of tea for the supplies needed by the Chinese.

With the increase in the purchasing power of the masses in the Union and the improvement of the livelihood of the Soviet people, there is indeed greater demand for tea than the Soviets could produce themselves. By the launching of the National Economic Reconstruction Movement throughout the country, China will need more Soviet machinery and Soviet financial and technical assistance, for which, China hopes to repay by her tea! So, tea will likely become a commodity of great economic importance and will play a great part in Sino-Soviet relations!

In other words, China, the Soviet Union and the United States—three Great Democratic Nations bordering the Pacific—have now re-invoked the Oriental principle of regulating the friendly and commercial relations among the nations. This famous principle provides: 以其所有易其所無, meaning "To exchange with one another what we have for what we don't have." China and the Soviet

Union are now exchanging what they want with what they have in surplus. The result is that *both are benefited* by the transaction, and none is permitted to enrich himself at the detriment of the other. The whole arrangement is not one that regulates the relations between a creditor and a debtor, but it is based on the principle of exchanging of the surplus for what is needed.

Such an arrangement is the conclusive evidence of the *cordial relations* which must have been existing between China and the Soviet Union, arising not from sentimentality, but rather from mutual understanding, mutual sympathy and mutual assistance. Without such friendship and mutuality, such an arrangement would indeed be impossible.

At the same time, such arrangement is a good lesson to the nations which embark to an aggressive adventure on the ground that they are the "have-not nations." If such arrangement could be followed systematically, and such Oriental principle of regulating commercial relations among the nations could be invoked, both the "have-not nations" and "have nations" could adjust themselves, and live harmoniously to the benefit of both.

At any rate, both China and the Soviet Union have now made another contribution to the world by demonstrating that nations can readjust themselves *economically* without resorting to war, and that war is avoidable and war is not necessary if the nations are sincere and *bona fide* in their desire for peace.

Therefore, underneath all these barter agreements concluded between China and the Soviet Union, there is one great principle involved, which may be worked out as one of the greatest principle for the remaking of the world, for the readjustment of the economic relations among the nations in the world, and for the preservation of the world peace at large, after the present European War!

## Appreciation of Art in the Chinese Opera

By HSU TAO-CHING (許道經)

LIKE many other Chinese fine arts, the Chinese opera is today neglected by many people. Among those who undervalue the Chinese stage are those who, although highly cultivated, have too much faith in things foreign and modern, with the result that all things western are better developed than the Chinese. Again, there are those who prefer easy "arts" and take what is only pleasing to be the highest possible satisfaction. Since to enjoy an art is the same as to appreciate it, and in order to appreciate the art nothing falling short of some knowledge of it will suffice, no art is indeed "easy" in the sense that it will be welcomed by anybody. Not all music-lovers enjoy symphonies, they must train themselves before they learn the appreciation, for those who are not willing to take the trouble of studying music are always left outside the door to musical literature! The Chinese opera, likewise, cannot be admired by slothful people. Just as one must learn to write with a Chinese brush before he can discern the beauty in the Chinese calligraphy, so one must understand the character of the Chinese music and the form of the stage presentation in order to be delighted by the Chinese opera. On the other

hand, those who like "ready-made arts" need not be troubled with thinking, they simply have to sit before the movie and enjoy it. These people, however, know not art consequently. Modern life is such a busy one that so many people prefer easy recreations that what is popular is seldom artistic. However, those who have eyes for art choose the more profound delight.

Some knowledge in general art is prerequisite to the comprehension of some particular form of it.

The meaning of art, it should be understood, can only be suggested, it cannot be demonstrated. To define art is always a futile attempt, because if we put art under some other category we have a definition of something else, and if we define art as art itself we only obtain a definition which needs be defined again. Thus, when we say: Art is what gives aesthetic pleasure through the medium of the senses and imagination, we are raising a question with an answer—for what then is aesthetic pleasure? Aesthetic pleasure, to tell the truth, is that pleasure bestowed by true art. So we have set ourselves to run along a circle of terms and predicates. In order to avoid meaningless

repetition of ideas, we must give up all demonstrations. In fact, not all concepts are capable of being demonstrated although they can be otherwise conceived. No mother, for instance, can explain to her child what love is, but in the long run, all men learn love from the mother. Such likewise with art: to be the child is the way to learn.

There is, however, another way of explanation which is only next to a definition, i.e. to tell what art is by showing what it is not. Many people take what is pleasing for art and feign to have perceived art on bracelets and neckties. Sensory pleasure, these people do not understand, stop at the sense, whereas aesthetic delight penetrates deeper. In fact, the greatest sensory pleasure is given by the satisfaction of lower cravings, but surely no one will take appetite and lust for art. Moreover, an old beggar is nothing pleasing to look at, but when an artist put it on a painting it is preserved and enjoyed through hundreds of years. Mona Lisa has a dull-yellow face, but is still one of the greatest paintings. Surely these pictures do not delight the carnal eyes; they give joy to the mind's eye.

Some other people take what is realistic for art. They praise the oboe which imitates well the automobile horn and assert that Venus is beautiful only because it is very much like a woman model. If this were the case, there would not have been art at all, because no doubt a woman model may be found anywhere and Venus is wholly unnecessary. If then they object that the social tradition does not allow nude shows and that the sculpture is a convenience, let them ponder why should some people pay thousands of dollars for a painting depicting some apples and bananas. Nothing can be more realistic than life itself and since every one lives a life in the real world, none will need art to imitate the reality. The very existence of art, then, proves that the realistic quality of some art should not be mistaken to be the essence of all of it.

Still there are some who mistake art for sentimentality. It is probably because some people are living too leisurely and monotonously that they seek for excitements and stimulations in books and theatres. The girls, for instance like to blush, no matter whether they are conscious of it or not; and if they do not have it or have not enough of it they will look for it in novels and dramas. In like manner, many people may find satisfaction in the stories that produce sentiments in them: hen-pecked husbands for the pride of the hero having many mistresses, divorced men or women for the innocence of some devoted lovers, mothers for filial piety, soldiers for the triumph of a warrior, etc. Many works of art, it is true, do produce sentiments and some of them have even good effects on morality and social consciousness; but it should be understood that art does not aim at emotions and ethics and its object is elsewhere. The tragedy, to illustrate, is supposed to bring about the sentiments of pity and regret none of which is delightful, yet it is and has long been an effective form of dramatic art because something else behind the sentiments appeal to the refined taste. Those who have not wept enough may be satisfied by a tragedy in so far as the story makes them weep, but those who are given joy by the art in it are too much concerned with the taste to be emotional.

The regretful element of a tragedy is the story which may or may not sustain art, and in fact, with or without art it moves the passionate audience to tears just the same. However, unless there is true art in a tragedy the bare story is tasteless to those who look upon it with an artistic sense. In other words, sentimentality alone does not afford aesthetic joy.

Art, in short, can not *depart* from reality, lest it becomes nonsense; but it must *transcend* reality for otherwise it is mere common sense. Its primary effects to the senses may be most pleasing or only plain, but it can not but be beautiful; and beauty is to be discerned not with the senses but with *the* sense. It sometimes calls for sentiments, sorrow or happiness, but it always produces the artistic feeling, that is, the aesthetic delight.

The Chinese opera, because it is a true art, may not seem enjoyable to those who are not familiar with it, therefore, in order to appreciate it, the elements of which it consists should first be studied. The opera, by its nature, contains two essentials, the music and the drama. Like all forms of art, music composes of the "stuff" and the "soul." The "stuff" of music is the sound or notes, and its "soul" is in the melody and harmonies. The sound appeals to the ears and accounts for its pleasing or unpleasant effects but the melody touches a deeper sense and is where the beauty is hidden. The "stuff" of the Chinese operatic music, it should be asserted, is not pleasing: the orchestra is small with a violin dominating and since this instrument in the Chinese form is nothing elaborate, it sounds piercing to unaccustomed ears. It is used to accompany; the main part of the music being the vocal solo. The vocal music is in two forms, Si Pi (西皮) and Er Hwang (二簧) the difference of which lies in the methods of playing the violin and the two "styles" thus resulted and they are often spoken of as "of different tones." Each of these forms includes about a dozen kinds of "metres" (板). The "metre" is a melody with a definite rhythm and a few prominent notes, the music being capable of infinite variation between these fixed notes or "turns." There are the "original metre" (原板), the "inverted metre" (倒板), the "flowing metre" (流水板), the "rocking metre" (搖板), the "rapid metre" (快板), the "scattered metre" (散板), etc. These names may perhaps suggest somehow the individual effects of these melodies but the true musician is in fact the actor who has to fill in all the notes not given on the musical record in order to fully interpret the "metres" and fit the melody to each occasion. These supplied musical figures are so subtly complicated that it is impossible to record them in symbols, for, unlike western music which is built upon notes of definite pitch, the Chinese operatic melodies are constituted with the delicately changing pitch cast in intricate rhythm. It is this ever fluctuating pitch that produces the "swinging" characteristic of the music which is said to resemble "the curves on a long strip of silk waved in a breeze" and "to be circling around the rafters long after the music has ceased." The actor Tan Fu Ying (譚富英) who was here this summer is famous of his downward "swing" in the "slow metres" (慢板) and it is his properly adjusted rate of

changing, the exact timing and the careful variations in volume and tone that give the audience the feeling of beauty. Amid such feeling of beauty the sound or the "stuff" of the music is forgotten and one is then too much occupied by an indescribable rapture to recall what is producing the music. The western music, in the eyes of Chinese musicians, has too much "form" in it leaving little room for "expression," whereas the Chinese music may be said to be wholly "expression" with a little frame work behind it. Hence, once the beauty is "expressed" the framework is forgotten.

The dramatic side of the Chinese opera is different from that of the western in that it is highly conventional. Conventions, as the Chinese see it, are not only convenient but necessary also. For, as it is impossible to present a real hill on the stage, so a small table has to be used in its place. Some people may prefer a big painting of hills in the background in order to be more realistic but it is to be noted that even then, as the painting is always known to be such, it is but a symbol and a kind of convention too. After all what we wish to see is the man on the hill not the hill itself, hence the latter is not essential of the operatic art and may be substituted for with a table. Again, it is impossible to arrange in the front of the stage some real doors which the actors may close behind them on the occasions of confinement and privacy, because then the whole stage will be out of sight. Furthermore, even if we can arrange a transparent door, it is wholly dispensable as after all we are to enjoy the actor not the door. The door, therefore, is both inconvenient and unnecessary and should be omitted for a convention. With the convention one only needs to assume for himself an imaginary door and enjoy freely the beautiful movements of the dainty hands supposed to be closing the door. There are scores of other conventions on the Chinese stage; a whip means a horse, the stamping of the foot means the rolling of the drum, two flags may stand for a gust of wind or a fire seen, even two boys may stand for a sudden change of the mental state, etc. To take a whip for a horse seems absurd until it is imagined how awkward it would be if a real horse were led to the stage and how peacefully then could the actor sing on the brute. For highland scenery, let one go to the mountains; for doors, his own house; for horses, the circus, but only for art shall be enter the opera house where, as it is art alone that he seeks, realistic presentations need not and should not be provided. In fact, after having been acquainted with the conventions, the audience respond to them so effortlessly and naturally that their full attention can be focussed on the more subtle part of the opera.

## CHINA CARRIES ON

### CHINA'S GREAT SOUTHWEST

One of the few bright spots in the darkened skies of China is the rapid development of her southwestern provinces right through the hostilities, Chungking reports on the 29th anniversary of the foundation of the Chinese Republic. Now, China's southwest, hitherto little known to the outside world, is fast becoming the new base of economic reconstruction. It covers a vast region of virgin soil naturally endowed with an abundance of natural resources. As a geographical unit it embraces five rich provinces, occupying an area of 1,520,015 square kilometers and inhabited by 88,354,427 hard-working people.

Province	Area	Population
Kwangsi	217,758 sq. km.	13,385,215
Kweichow	179,476	9,042,207
Sikang	371,599	968,187
Szechuen	431,309	52,963,269
Yunnan	320,051	11,994,549

Total 1,520,015 sq. km. 88,354,427

The systematic development of the southwestern provinces is part and parcel of China's present economic policy, for the Chinese Government has chosen these provinces as the new center of national recovery. To increase the ad-

ministrative efficiency in political affairs leading statesmen were selected to be the chairmen of these provincial governments. The Ministries of Finance, Economics and Communications are shouldering the joint responsibilities for rebuilding the economic structure and exploiting the natural resources of the five provinces.

The various plans of economic reconstruction, it is reported, are being put into operation by recently established government institutions such as the Agricultural Readjustment Commission, the Industrial and Mining Readjustment Commission, the Foreign and Domestic Trade Readjustment Commission; the National Resources Commission, the National Mining Research Institute, the Farm Credit Bureau, and the National Relief Commission. Important laws and regulations governing the encouragement and administration of agriculture, mining, industry and commerce have been formulated and enforced.

The great westward movement in China started two years ago, when thousands of people poured into the western hinterland, including government official, industrial captains, business leaders, prominent bankers, noted scientists, techni-

The appreciation of the Chinese opera further necessitates the apprehension of the nature of opera or its position among the fine arts. The fine arts have been divided into the sentimental and the non-sentimental, but such division is rather a contrast of characteristics than a decisive classification, for some art, such as poetry, is partly sentimental and partly not. It is curious to notice that the Chinese possess the two extreme types: the calligraphy is wholly non-sentimental and the opera, entirely sentimental. It has been cited that art, even though it may be sentimental, does not aim at emotions, and it is to be shown here that the sentimental art imparts aesthetic joy through the very sentiments it arouses. Those who stop at their own emotions and forget to look deeper rob themselves of the true value of the art. There is a story told about "a real butcher who kills a false Tsin Kuai." Tsin Kuai (秦檜) is a character in the opera for the patriotic general Yue Fei (岳飛) and since the actor was so well in portraying the cowardly, traitorous and cruel councillor Tsin, the story says, so much heroic sentiment was roused in a butcher among the audience that he jumped on to the stage and stabbed the "Tsin Kuai" to death. Even if such people will not really jump up to

the stage they are unfit for the opera house. It is true that the passions are easily induced by the opera because, with the help of the conventions, it is easy to extract feelings from ordinary life and express them in an abstract and intensified manner, but in order to be artistic, one must be calm and disinterested. Those who shed tears at tragedies are really of two groups: those who weep for the sentiment of sorrow and those for the aesthetic joy, for some people can not refrain from passionate fits whereas some are able to keep themselves from breaking down and so have the chance to perceive better things. It is the latter group of people who truly master the skill of operatic appreciation. It may be mentioned in passing that good movies also call forth true sentiments as do well told stories, but the opera is like the epic poem which not only narrates but expresses also. Here the barely sentimental and the sentimentally artistic are distinguished. The plot of a story may interest those who read too little, the sentimental passages may move those who respond too much, but only love and hatred and the fears and joys of life expressed through true art can move men of good taste and give them aesthetic pleasure. Such is the function of the Chinese opera.