

Other notable victories scored by Chinese fighter planes during the past year included that on November 4, when 18 of 54 Japanese bombers were brought down over Chengtu, that on December 25 when nine bombers were shot down over Lanchow and 12 Japanese planes were destroyed in an air battle over Liuchow.

Copying the German model, the Japanese have, during recent raids, used large numbers of planes to conduct mass raids over Chungking. While they have succeeded in causing considerable damage, they can by no means lay claim to air mastery, as proved by the large numbers of casualties suffered by them in recent attacks, as well as the fact that on a great number of occasions, they never succeed in reaching their objective, having been turned back long before.

As a result of the fierce resistance being put up by Chinese fighter planes, the Japanese have been compelled to adopt new tactics in their raids over the wartime capital. For instance, Commander Cheng Shao-yu, group leader of fighting squadrons charged with the defence of the city, has revealed that aerial battles over Chungking are developing into a "climbing contest". "When the Japanese first raided Chungking," he said, "they came at 4,000 meters. Chinese fighters attacked the raiders at 4,500 meters. The raiders then climbed higher and higher until

Chinese fighters are awaiting them at 7,000 meters. The pilots must use oxygen at such heights where the weather is extremely cold, requiring exceptionally strong physique to withstand such conditions. We do not know when or where this climbing contest will end." However, bombing from such a high altitude has its disadvantages, since it is impossible to aim accurately at an objective. Thus in recent attacks on Chungking many bombs fell without causing any damage.

Commander Cheng also revealed that in order to avoid attack by Chinese pursuit planes, Japanese bombers are now using mass v-shaped formation in their raids. Ninety bombers come over in one gigantic formation and in this way try to keep Chinese fighters away with the tremendous combined firing power of 90 planes.

Despite the still overwhelming superiority in the numbers of the Japanese and the various tactics which the Japanese are employing to elude the attack of Chinese fighters, Japan still cannot boast of mastery over the air in China. China's "wings" are growing and becoming stronger every day. The future will see the Chinese Air Force undertaking an increasingly greater offensive role in the conflict and, when the time comes for the launching of the great counter-attack, will be ready to strike a hard blow for victory.

## Lin Yutang And His Novel

(Contributed)

Recently a Chinese scholar spent over a year's time in France for the sole purpose of writing a novel in the English language on contemporary Chinese life. And that novel has once occupied the top place in the list of best-selling fictions in the American book mart. I am speaking of Dr. Lin Yutang and his first novel, "Moment in Peking."

But is this novel on Chinese life a Chinese novel? Is "Moment in Peking" comparable to such well-known Chinese novels as "The Dream of the Red Chamber"? First, let us see what is a Chinese novel. Pearl S. Buck who was awarded the Nobel Prize "for rich and genuine epic portrayals of Chinese peasant life and for masterpieces of biography" delivered a lecture on this subject before the Swedish Academy at Stockholm on December 12, 1939. In "The Chinese Novel" (MacMillan, London, 1939) Mrs. Buck (now Mrs. Richard J. Walsh) says:

"The novel in China was never an art and was never so considered, nor did any Chinese novelist. In China the novel has always been more important than the novelist. The Chinese have always demanded of their novels character above all else. The result was that the novel was the peculiar product of the common people and written primarily for their amusement."

It was said that Mrs. Buck chose "the Chinese novel" as the topic for the Nobel Lecture on a literary subject, because it was the Chinese rather than the western novel which shaped her own efforts in writing. The authoress of "The Good Earth" concluded her lecture with a discus-

sion of her debt to the Chinese tradition of the novel: for the novelist the only element is human life as he finds it in himself or outside himself. The sole test of his work is whether or not his energy is producing more of that life, and the judgment depends upon the "man in the street" who reads his novel.

In ancient China, Chinese scholars occupied the top-most rung of the social ladder and aspired to be government officials. The literary achievements of real scholars were gauged by their essays and poems, but never represented by their stories and novels. The student in China was taught Chinese classics and the literary works of individual scholars. Most certainly he was not required to read novels and plays in his formal education. The novelist had no place in the literary world of old China. Even Shakespeare might not have won literary fame as a dramatist, had he been born in China. Only the obscure scholar or disappointed aspirant for public office turned his attention to novel-writing more as an instrument to express their unhappy thoughts than as a medium to show their literary genius. So it was not uncommon that the Chinese novel was a satire on the political or social conditions of the novelist's time.

Yet there were many novels written by Chinese scholars whose names were unknown or long forgotten. For few Chinese novelists expected that their novels would remain as monuments of their literary talent after their death. The Chinese novel under discussion should be distinguished from modern Chinese stories with Euro-

peanized expressions and foreign-style punctuations. Of popular Chinese novels written in vernacular language, those listed by Mrs. Buck are most outstanding, namely, (1) *San Kuo Yien Yi* (三國演義), a historical novel of the days of the Three Kingdom, (2) *Shui Hu Chuan* (水滸傳), a story of 108 comrades of Mount Liang, and (3) *Hung Lou Meng* (紅樓夢), the Dream of the Red Chamber, a vivid portrayal of the daily life of an aristocratic family in China. To this trio may be added another quartet, including (1) *Si Hsiang Ke* (西廂記) or Western Chamber, better known for its literary style rather than its interesting plot, (2) *Fen Sheng Pang* (封神榜), or Chinese Gods and Heroes, (3) *Si Yeu Ke* (西遊記) or Chinese Pilgrim's Progress, and (4) *Chi Shia Wu Yi* (七俠五義), or Twelve Knights. Mention should also be made of *Liao Chai Chih Yi* (聊齋誌異) or curious Stories from a Chinese Studio, a collection of ghost stories and supernatural tales.

Since the versatile Lin Shu (林紓)—in collaboration with Messrs. Tseng Kung (曾鞏) and Wei Yi (魏易)—rendered into beautiful Chinese a number of famous English novels, it is only natural to expect that good Chinese novels would be translated into English. All of the three Chinese novels selected by Mrs. Buck have been so translated. Mrs. Buck translated *Shui Hu Chuan* under the religious or philosophic title of "All Men Are Brothers." "Water Margin"—a literal translation of "*Shui Hu*"—used in another English translation is not so attractive as "Les Chevaliers Chinois" adopted by a French translator. Now comes "Moment in Peking" which is in many respects comparable to a masterly translation of another famous Chinese novel. Being a novel on contemporary Chinese life, many of its characters might well have been borrowed from socially popular, or notorious, personalities in real life.

In the preface to his first full-length novel Dr. Lin says: "What is a novel but 'a little talk' as the name *hsiaoshuo* implies?" Now *hsiaoshuo* (小記) is the Chinese equivalent for "novel." But "Moment in Peking" is a novel of unusual length, covering 815 closely printed pages. What a "little talk"! The readers of "*The Critic*" will certainly recall the fact that not long ago, Dr. Lin contributed articles to this journal under a special column, "The Little Critic." Now "Little Critic" has written a "little talk" and earned the title of a "great writer." Of course, Dr. Lin has chalked up three "best sellers" to his credit, namely, (1) "My Country and My People," (2) "The Importance of Living," and (3) "Moment in Peking." Of this trio, it is needless to add, the last is the best. Though "My Country and My People" made the "little critic" famous, yet by "Moment in Peking" will Dr. Lin be remembered as an author of world-wide renown. In his "little talk" Dr. Lin undertakes, and succeeds in so doing, the herculean task of depicting Chinese life during the most turbulent period of modern Chinese history. It may not be a true story entirely; yet it describes real life in China. It is an epic of Chinese life, old and new, artistically interwoven and fascinatingly portrayed. Written in excellent English, "Moment in Peking" gives a panorama

of contemporary Chinese life of absorbing interest and exquisite beauty.

The present writer literally buried his head within its pages, when he read the novel from the first page to the last. Somehow the novel cast a spell over the reader, for it kept him reading from chapter to chapter with the extreme reluctance to stop and rest. My first impression in reading this novel is just this: It is so similar to typical Chinese novels, especially Tsao Hsueh-ching's (曹雪芹) "The Dream of the Red Chamber." It may be quite safe to say that the author is in no small way influenced by this famous Chinese novel, because in view of the intricate plot and numerous characters in "Moment in Peking" Dr. Lin may well be regarded as a profound student of "red-ology" (紅學).

Since several book reviews on this novel have appeared in leading magazines, it is not the purpose of this writer to touch upon the story in this article. Suffice it to say, it is a novel of war-time conditions in 1900 and in 1937. The ravages of war and the plight of refugees stand out as the central theme of this novel as well as the singular contribution of Dr. Lin the novelist. It is a source of real consolation to learn that Mr. Yu Ta-fu (郁達夫) has been authorized to translate this novel into Chinese. But it is still the pious wish of this writer that "Moment in Peking" is actually a translation in English from a best-selling Chinese novel.

It is taken for granted that a novel on Chinese life written in the English language finds its readers among the English speaking people. Knowingly or unknowingly, the novelist is called upon to play the part of an interpreter. The success of such a mission is conditioned by several factors: (1) command of English, (2) a worthy theme, (3) an interesting story, and (4) reading without difficulty. Judging from these standards, "Moment in Peking" is strong in the first three, but rather weak in the last. Despite the author's painstaking efforts at explaining Chinese names, salutations and other terms, the foreign reader with little knowledge of the story's background—such as Chinese language, custom, habits history and geography—often finds it difficult to follow—not to say enjoy—the story. It appears that the author still assumes that the average reader of a Chinese novel in English knows more about Chinese life than he actually does. In other words, the author "talks way above the head" of the reader. What a pity! On this point, Pearl S. Buck in her "The Good Earth" is less impeachable, simply because it is not so picturesque—yes picturesquely Chinese—as "Moment in Peking." Personally, I believe, neither foreign readers with inadequate knowledge of Chinese life nor Chinese readers with inadequate knowledge of English language could possibly enjoy this novel to the full. In the course of reading, either group of readers would very likely lay down the novel with a deep sigh for not being able to follow the story from beginning to end.

However, "Moment in Peking" is a great novel. For it is not by luck or chance that a Chinese writer has been elevated to an international figure in literary stardom with

fame and fortune. Though the Chinese people can enjoy a novel without making an attempt to know its author, yet Lin Yutang and his novel will be equally remembered, perhaps because the novel is written in English. So "Moment in Peking" is a Chinese novel, even though it dons

English garments and gives a striking resemblance to a translation. It is not strictly comparable to the typical Chinese novel, like the Red Chamber Dream. It belongs to a class of its own—the Chinese novel for foreign readers.

## The Collective Purchase of Rice\*

By KWEI YEN-FONG

THE soaring of prices on the Shanghai rice market has seriously affected the peace and order of both the International Settlement and the French Concession. Frequent instances have taken place of robbery and rice plundering by those who are suffering from cold and hunger, while all who are living from hand to mouth are feeling acutely the economic pressure from the high cost of living. Great anxiety has been occasioned the local community by the disputes arising between employers and their staffs and the strikes started by the latter for the purpose of enforcing their demands for increased pay. If such undesirable conditions prevail following a good harvest in the interior of China, what are the 4,000,000 citizens of Shanghai to expect if a food shortage occurs as a result of a poor harvest?

I am of the opinion that during this time of stress we should make arrangements to unify our resources to meet the situation, otherwise I see no hope of solving the problem.

During December last, the "Shanghai Rice Market Control Commission" was inaugurated by Mr. Yu Ya-ching and other prominent leaders in local industry and commerce. At that time, I published proposals for the adjustment of the prices of food stuffs, with suggestions for the purchase of rice. Fortunately these proposals were well received by the whole community. The sum of \$1,000,000 has been raised by the Commission and allocated for the purchasing of rice stocks with a view to moderating local prices on the market.

The above funds will be refunded to the subscribers proportionate to the losses incurred in connection with the purchasing and selling of the rice. The idea is a good one and should prove to be an effective measure. Following the inauguration of the Commission, people of all classes applied for registration with the Commission for the purchase of rice. This had a steadying effect on the Shanghai rice market.

During more recent days, the question of selling rice at par has been suggested by someone as a remedial measure. Could this be done at the present time it would, without doubt, help to a considerable extent. However, it must not be overlooked that the collective purchasing of rice is the main point.

This should be pushed vigorously. The collective purchasing of rice is a fundamental remedial measure whilst the sale of rice at par, though important, is not essential. As the two schemes differ so in nature, the results of their operation will differ as follows:—

(1) The object of the purchase of rice by collective

funds is to safeguard against panic caused through the lack of a sufficient supply. The Commission will base their purchases on the estimates of quantities required by shops, factories, schools, etc., together with an excess amount of 100,000 bags of foreign rice to be stored in secure godowns. In the event of the rice price exceeding a certain figure, these 100,000 bags will be sold at cost price.

This action will moderate prices and prevent speculators from manipulating the market for their own profit. The rice sold from the Commission's stock will be replaced so as to maintain a permanent reserve stock to meet exigencies. This reserves stock will obviate the danger of a rice shortage and will have the effect of a steadying influence on market prices. The scheme is evolved solely for the benefit of consumers and contains the idea of self-protection.

(2) Next, let us discuss the second proposal of the sale of rice at par as a remedial measure. The present population of Shanghai is estimated at approximately 4,000,000 three-quarters of whom comprise laborers and destitute persons in need of relief. In the event of the million dollars raised being expended in the purchasing of rice for sale at par, each beneficiary will receive a value of a little more than 30 cents. Of what benefit will this small amount be to them?

Moreover, it would not prove easy to raise a large sum of money (say \$10,000,000) to operate this scheme on a scale that would make its benefits of value. The sale of rice at par is an operation for charity and does not constitute a cure-all. Moreover, in carrying out the sale of rice at par strict supervision is necessary to prevent all kinds of malpractices.

On the other hand, excessive restrictive measures will prevent the wide scope of this charitable remedy. It will be recollected that as far back as last September the Shanghai Refugee Relief Association carried out the sale of rice at par in both the Settlement and the Concession. Owing to the dense crowds of prospective purchasers injuries were received by some persons, while others suffered from the theft of various articles.

Women, children, the weak and aged often had to wait the whole day without being able to make a purchase, while the strong and violent got the first chance and were able to purchase excessive quantities. All this happened despite the fact that the sales were carried out from 50 centers. Although it might have been possible to take measures to reduce the size of crowds gathered at each center on the cheap rice-sale days, yet it is difficult to see how the scheme could have been operated more widely without leaving some of the poor and needy out in the cold.

\*By arrangement with "The Central Bank of China Bulletin"—Editor.