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A STUDY OF THE MODERN CHINESE NOVEL, GAO YUBAO (高玉宝)  
AND ITS AUTHOR GAO YUBAO (高玉宝)

by

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### Abstract

Gao Yubao, a soldier in the Chinese People's Liberation Army, was nearly illiterate when he began to write his autobiographical novel, Gao Yubao, in 1949. The PLA's literary branch helped him finish the novel and after its publication Gao and his struggle to become literate by writing a novel served as an inspiration for others striving for education. Gao Yubao was republished several times up until as late as the 1970's and each time it was republished it was revised. This paper traces the history of the novel Gao Yubao and its author with special attention being given to comparing the changes made in the various editions of the novel. The conflicts between amateurism and professionalism and between fact and romanticization and those conflicts inherent in the constant revisings demanded of an already revised work are shown to be unresolvable because of the nature of contemporary Chinese literature.

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## I. Introduction

Gao Yubao is an autobiographical account of the author Gao Yubao's childhood in Liaoning Province during the Japanese occupation. It is a tale of the oppression and cruelty of the Japanese invaders and Chinese landlords and the heroic bravery and resistance of the Chinese masses. When Gao Yubao wrote this novel in the early 1950's he was an amateur writer who had been discovered, encouraged, educated, and promoted by the Chinese army. He was, in fact, the first amateur writer of any importance cultivated in the post-revolutionary period and as a peasant soldier who had overcome illiteracy in order to write his autobiography, he became the focal point of a massive literacy campaign conducted by the People's Liberation Army in the 1950's--the "Wo Xie Wo" (我写我), or "I Write About Myself", movement. He and his novel offer a unique opportunity to learn about the beginnings of amateur writing in China and the army's role in the development of literary talent.

Since its early beginnings this novel has had a long history of republishing and revision. Gao Yubao began to write his autobiography in 1949. The original work was revised several times before it was published in short story form in 1951. From that point on until as late as 1976 the same basic story has appeared and reappeared in many different formats and degrees of completeness and as the story progressed through time it has changed as it has accommodated itself to changing literary policies. The revisions made in Gao's single novel present a view of changing governmental policies toward literature over a long period of time. It is rather like a scientific experiment in which as many factors as possible are controlled--the author and novel are the constants and the

literary line is the variable. We can see the concrete results of abstract policy changes by tracing the history of the revisions of Gao Yubao. There is no other modern Chinese novel that has been durable enough for this type of comparison to be made.

Since Gao was nearly illiterate when he began his novel, it was necessary that he have someone to help him. The extensive help given Gao while he was writing and revising his book is an example of the relationship of an author to his work in China where works of art are not necessarily thought of as products of a single person's endeavour. Further, because Gao Yubao was the product of a literary movement, the writing process is well documented and allows this relationship to be investigated in depth.

Gao Yubao is also an autobiographical novel, a genre rare in the history of Chinese literature. We can see in this novel the problems encountered in trying to fit the realities of autobiographical (or biographical) writing to the patterns of Chinese literature. In addition, an autobiography implies the recording of the conditions of life yet in Talks at the Yen'an Forum on Literature and Art in 1942, Mao wrote that "...life reflected in works of literature and art can and ought to be on a higher plane, more intense, more concentrated, more typical, nearer the ideal, and therefore more universal than actual everyday life."<sup>1</sup> How does one portray that which is universal while at the same time retaining the characteristics of the individual? This is a problem that Gao is never able to resolve.

While investigating these aspects of Gao Yubao and his novel, one finds interrelated conflicts that appear and reappear. First there is the conflict of amateur versus professional. Gao is valued because he is a nearly illiterate peasant soldier writer. Because he is poorly educated

and yet has written a book he can be an inspiration for millions who are striving for literacy. He also has the correct class background and life experiences necessary for a communist writer. Unfortunately he cannot write well enough either to be an inspiration for the striving masses or to understand or record his valuable life experiences. The second conflict is that of the revised edition that still needs further revisions.

Correcting Gao Yubao is like writing a paper on an assigned topic for a professor and then finding out after finishing that he has changed the topic. It is struggling to reach a goal which turns out to be the wrong goal after it has been reached. The third conflict is related to the second. That is the conflict between fact and 'creativity' in autobiographical writing. This is a novel called Gao Yubao written by Gao Yubao about the character Gao Yubao yet the Gao Yubao of the novel is not the same as the author Gao Yubao.

These conflicts will constitute the theme of this essay. By tracing the history of Gao and his novel we can see how these conflicts develop and persist. We will also see that these conflicts, because of the nature of contemporary Chinese literary theory, are conflicts that are never resolved.



## II. Life History

When discussing the facts about Gao Yubao's life the word 'facts' must be used advisedly as the apocryphal nature of Gao Yubao's life story is obvious. Confusion is created--probably intentionally--between the fictional Gao Yubao in the autobiographical novel and the real Gao Yubao who is the author of the novel. Although it is not difficult to accept that the character in the novel is a fictionalized version of a real person, it is harder to understand that the author, too, has become a fictionalized version of an individual we are never allowed to see. This situation arose because of the importance of the story of the author Gao Yubao's life to the literacy campaign. The novel covers Gao Yubao's life as a young lad, but it is Gao Yubao's life as a young man, a period not covered by the novel except in the form of introductions, that serves as an inspiration for those learning to read and write. Unfortunately for someone trying to ferret out Gao's true life history, the biographical sources available are extremely biased and all have the same objective, that is, to portray Gao as a struggling peasant soldier who overcame tremendous difficulties to write his autobiographical novel. Of course, Gao's biography as presented in these sources is based on reality, but it is up to the researcher to guess where the reality ends and the fiction begins.

Gao Yubao was born in 1927 in Sun Jia Hamlet, Taiping Village, Pingshan District, Fu County, Liaoning Province (东北辽宁省復县平山区太平村孙家屯).<sup>1</sup> As a young boy he tended livestock for a local landlord.<sup>2</sup> While in the countryside he attended school for only about one month.

At the age of nine his father took him to Dalian where he studied carpentry<sup>3</sup> and also had the chance to attend school, but only for seven to eight days.<sup>4</sup> By 1943, by the time Gao Yubao was 17 years old, his grandfather, mother, uncle, and one younger brother had died in Dalian.<sup>5</sup> It was in that same year that Gao Yubao and what remained of his family returned with his father empty handed to the countryside.<sup>6</sup> After this, Gao Yubao worked in a copper mine for his father who was in bad health after having done conscript labor for the Japanese.<sup>7</sup> He also hired himself out as a hired hand on a farm. On 19 January, 1947, his county was liberated. He joined the Red Army soon after this and in January, 1948, he joined the Chinese Communist Party.

At this point the life history of Gao Yubao begins to merge with the history of the book, Gao Yubao, as the history of the writing of Gao Yubao is in large part that of Gao's struggle to learn how to read and write. As mentioned previously, Gao Yubao had only about one month of formal education. While in Dalian, however, he often listened to storytellers who told tales from the Sui, Tang, Five Dynasties, and Song periods. After returning to the countryside, while laid up with a broken leg, Gao Yubao started to read books. At this time he could only understand forty percent of the characters he read. After deciding to learn to read, his father cursed him for reading at night so he was forced to continue his reading secretly. One article about Gao stated that out of a sentence of twenty characters, he could only recognize thirteen or fourteen.<sup>8</sup> He still could not write. A different article said that when he just started reading, if a sentence had 29 characters, he could only read about ten of them.<sup>9</sup>

Trying to keep track of the statistics of Gao's illiteracy is both frustrating and amusing. Rather than being content with merely saying that Gao was not very literate, his biographers and he himself were fond of

quoting figures and percentages concerning the numbers of characters he could read or write. While these figures and percentages certainly do point out that Gao was not well educated when he started to learn to read and write, their impact would have been greater had the statistics given in the various accounts agreed. This was a result of one of the problems Gao's early biographers had--they had not completely decided on the 'facts' of the Gao life story before they began to write. The story of Gao's father cursing him for reading, for example, was one of the stories that disappeared early on. It would not do to have such dissension within a poor peasant household.

Even before he could read Gao was receiving artistic influences which would affect his future novel. He loved to listen to ancient stories about fighting and heroism and to watch shadow puppet plays.<sup>10</sup> As might be expected, he was also a skillful and well known storyteller in his army troop. At the same time that he was enjoying these traditional art forms, his army propaganda leader was giving him explanations of newer, socialist literature. Gao soon came to realize that literature should be about poor people, not scholars and beautiful women. He thereupon burnt all of his old books.

While he was receiving all of these influences, he was also continuing the labourious task of learning how to read and write. Several biographical articles report a specific incident that inspired him to begin studying. Once during his early years in the army, he received a document for which he had to write a receipt. He could write the Chinese characters for 'received' (今收到), but he did not know the character 'gao', or 'document', (稿) so was forced to draw a picture instead. The humiliation this<sup>11</sup> caused him made him decide to begin studying. Then, on 25 October, 1949,

at 10:00 in the morning, he was greatly moved by reading Shaonian Mao Zedong  
 (Mao Zedong's Childhood; <sup>12</sup>少年毛泽东). This cartoon book caused Gao Yubao  
 to wonder, as did the young Mao Zedong in the book, why peasants were  
 never portrayed as heroes in the ancient tales that he read. <sup>13</sup> \* The next  
 day he read Chenyuan Ji (Record of Unredressed Wrongs; 沉冤记) by  
 Bai Ren (白刃). This story had a peasant hero. The reading of both of  
 these stories inspired Gao Yubao to, on 27 October, 1949, start writing  
 his own life story. <sup>14</sup> He began to write his book on this date with a  
 pen and a notebook received from a dying uncle. <sup>15</sup> After he became an army  
 mailman, he wrote whenever he had free time--while waiting for the troops,  
 while feeding his horse. <sup>16</sup> At this time, when he was just beginning to  
 write, out of ten characters, he could not write seven or eight. <sup>17</sup>

Gao's life story has a fine sense of drama. Here the apocryphal  
 nature of his biography is clear: the burning of the books; the inspiration  
 to write; the pen from the dying uncle. In personal correspondence with  
 Gao Yubao in 1979 I asked him how he had learned to write. In reply he  
 repeated the same story his biographers had told earlier. Since his  
 public image had become his official image he could add nothing of a  
 personal nature to it, nothing that would vary from the official line.  
 Gao's letter of 14 August, 1979, says:

...You asked in your letter how I learned to be literate?  
 You read Comrade Huang Cao's article and "How I Studied and  
 Learned to Become a Writer". If you looked at these closely  
 you can understand somewhat. I undertook my studies and began  
 to learn to be a writer in 1949. Comrade Qi Jianhua's "fast

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\*This is a cartoon book about Mao Zedong's childhood. It is based on Mao's  
 life story as told to Edgar Snow. Emphasis is placed on Mao's schooling and  
 literary interests. Mao, like Gao, was fond of stories from China's past. ✓

method for learning characters" was propagated after 1952. Before liberation those of us Chinese who were poor could not study. After liberation, in order to eliminate illiteracy, Comrade Qi Jianhua's method for learning characters was of great use for teaching adults literacy in school. At the time that I was correcting Gao Yubao in Beijing I had not yet attended classes in this method, so I didn't learn it.\*

You know about my life. As a child, because of imperialist aggression, this society of oppression forced me to wander all over and to lead a precarious existence. I didn't have enough food to eat, even less did I have money for studying. After liberation I joined the Chinese People's Liberation Army. When I worked in the army, because I couldn't read, I met with many difficulties. At that time I thought: If it were not for the Communist Party and Chairman Mao saving my life, I fear I would have died early in the mines. That I am alive is all due to

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\*This fast method for learning characters was created by Qi Jianhua (祁建华) in the early 1950's. In a 1952 article in Jiefangjun Wenyi 18 a young soldier recounted his experiences of being taught by this fast method. In three weeks the students learned 2,000 characters and could read books and newspapers and write papers. First the national phonetic symbols were taught, then these were used to teach spelling. On the fourth day the students began to learn Chinese characters. It took them eleven days to learn 2,000 characters. On day twelve they were given four books and started to read. They finished these books in three days. They then began to learn about the radicles of Chinese characters, the classification of characters, and how to use a dictionary. Their three week session ended with them learning how to write down conversations.

the Communist Party saving me. If I thought of following Chairman Mao and protecting and building the homeland, it would not do to be uneducated. I then decided to study for the homeland. My decision was: if I didn't finish studying in one year, then I'd study two years; if I didn't finish studying in two years, then I'd study five years! After five years, when my educational level was raised, I could then work even better for the people. In this way, while my unit and I were in the south fighting, I would on one hand work and on the other hand study. I studied and also wrote a book. Why did I write a book? That is because our Chinese language has characters, unlike foreign words which use alphabets and you just have to learn a few dozen letters and you can arrange them into a sentence. There are more than 8,000 Chinese characters that are in common use. If there is one character in a sentence you can't write, then the whole sentence is incomprehensible. I then thought to write my family history as a way of studying, to write a book of the bitter life I suffered. I carried it with me and looking at it I then could not forget my roots and I then could even better protect the homeland and build the homeland. But to write a sentence was very difficult. Out of ten characters I could only write one or two! Of these one or two characters, at times they were the wrong characters so other people could not understand. I often quickly became discouraged. At times I did not want to study and did not want to write. But, as soon as I thought of not studying, I then criticised myself. As a Communist Party member my own decision was a five year plan. If I could not realize it how could I protect and build the homeland? After criticising, I sat down again and got down to studying and writing. Our unit in the south of China had a lot of heavy fighting and heavy rain. When I studied, because I was not together with other people, it was difficult asking people characters. I then thought of a method of drawing pictures to represent characters. When I couldn't draw a picture, I then drew something that resembled it. Then, when someone came, I asked, and again copied it in another notebook. In this way I studied and wrote a book. In general, then, I had no really good method for studying. You could say there is only one, that is, a person only must decide to struggle in his pursuit, then whatever myriad difficulties there are will be incapable of hindering his progress. Even enormous difficulties will not hinder a person with determination.... 19

Here we see the conflict between Gao the uneducated peasant and Gao the skilled writer. Gao writes in this letter that he only knew one or two characters out of ten as he began to write. He explains that he supplied the missing eight or nine characters by drawing pictures and

then later asking others how to write the real characters. Gao Yubao undoubtedly was a man of determination, but the mind boggles at the thought of the amount of determination that would be required to write a book in this way. This is too incredible a feat to be taken as anything more than a part of the mythology of the Gao Yubao literacy struggle.

By December, 1949, Gao had already written ten chapters of his book. It will be remembered that he started writing on 27 October, 1949. At this time Gao Yubao was writing a "da gu shu" (大鼓书), or a story told by singing with the accompaniment of drum beats, but he was advised by his military section chief, Chi Zhiyuan (迟志远), to follow the format of a serial novel (章回小说) in order to make his story clearer.<sup>20</sup> At this time, in 1950, by the time that he had already written ten chapters of his book, it is stated that he could recognize more than 1,000 characters, could write more than 700 characters, but could only use 200 to 300 characters.<sup>21</sup> This is a confusing statement--what is the difference between being able to 'write' a character and being able to 'use' it--but it is clear that Gao must have been receiving extensive help for not only was he writing far beyond his capacity at this time, but he was also reading extensively, though it is hard to know how he did so when he could only recognize 1,000 characters.

In February, 1950, after he had written quite a bit, his section chief advised him to pattern his book on the novel How the Steel Was Tempered by the Russian communist author, Nikolai Ostrovsky.<sup>22</sup> \*

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\*How the Steel Was Tempered is an autobiographical account of the author's life as portrayed through the novel's hero, Pavel Korchgin. Ostrovsky's childhood biography is very similar to Gao Yubao's. He came from a family

One wonders whether or not Gao was literate enough at this time to read such a novel since less than a year before he was reading only picture books. It was common, though, during the literacy campaign for students to claim that they began to read substantial works in amazingly short periods of time.<sup>23</sup>

The element of struggle in Gao Yubao's writing experience is always stressed in any account of his creative process. It is stated that he often wrote for six or seven days and only completed one chapter.<sup>25</sup> In June of 1950 he was billeted with a peasant family during extremely hot weather and while with them he wrote day and night, fainting from heat and exhaustion many times.<sup>26</sup> It was here, in Chaoan Xijiao Village (潮安西郊村), that he finished the first draft of his book. Later, after the Korean War started, Gao Yubao not only felt pressed for time, but also was sick from exhaustion and, therefore, he was given a secretary

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\*(continued from previous page) of hired laborers and at the age of nine he worked as a shepherd boy. After being expelled from school, he ran away from home and joined the Red Army. In 1924 he joined the Communist Party. While Gao had to struggle with illiteracy when writing his book, Ostrovsky had to struggle with illness and as a result, like Gao became a model to be emulated because of his perserverence.<sup>24</sup> Ostrovsky's novel, however, is unlike Gao's in that it is a proletarian novel not a peasant novel. At times, indeed, in the novel Ostrovsky seems to hold the Russian peasants in rather low esteem.



to copy his draft for him. This speeded up the process considerably.<sup>27</sup>

The book originally was 200,000 characters, or about 320 pages, long and had 40 chapters.<sup>28</sup> It covered the period from the Japanese occupation to the liberation of Guangxi, the first 34 chapters dealing with Gao Yubao and his family and the last six with his joining the army.<sup>29</sup> A short time later he rewrote the chapters dealing with his army life, a process that lengthened the book making it a book of 60 chapters and 300,000 characters, or about 480 pages.<sup>30</sup>

In April, 1951, the Liberation Army Literary Branch received the draft of Gao Yubao's novel plus two letters. One was from his propaganda officer and the other from Gao himself. In his letter Gao wrote that he had been inspired to write his life story by reading the previously mentioned Shaonian Mao Zedong and Chenyuan Ji. His aim in writing the book, he said, was to show the suffering of the masses. He asked the editors to return the manuscript if they did not use it so that he could show it to his father and family to remind them of their suffering and their enemies.<sup>31</sup>

Gao Yubao's novel, in the form that it was when it first reached the Literary Branch, had at the beginning twenty or so opening poems (开场诗) of seven characters per line covering subjects ranging from Pangu (盘古王) to the happiness of the Chinese Communist Party. Each chapter began with a four line poem summerizing the contents of the chapter. Familiar storyteller techniques were used to open and close each chapter, starting with a 'hua shuo' (话说) and ending with a phrase intended to entice the reader into reading the next chapter (且听下回分解).<sup>32</sup>

In 1956 critic Ma Hanbing (马寒冰), recalling this early draft of the novel, wrote that because Gao Yubao had read a few old novels, his

book was like a 'chang ci' (唱词), or ballad. He paid more attention to rhyme than plot or characterization and as a result, the book turned out to be a factual description of his life. It lacked plot arrangement and did not describe the characters adequately. At the same time, Gao was too modest and was afraid of aggrandizing himself in his novel. In order to correct these short comings in his work, the army literary branch assigned a professional writer, Huang Cao (荒草)\*, to help him with his corrections. With the encouragement of Huang Cao he wrote down his experiences and did not only limit himself to his own experiences, but also included things he had seen or had heard had happened to others. After the first correction under the direction of Huang Cao, the novel was felt to be better as far as plot and characters were concerned, but it was still thought that there were many problems in composition and use of sentences. Huang Cao went over the manuscript with Gao Yubao sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph giving his opinions. The chapter "Wo Yao Dushu" (I Want to Study; 我要读书), even after having been rewritten ten times, was not considered good enough. Although Gao Yubao became sick from exhaustion because of this chapter, he never stopped rewriting.<sup>33</sup>

After having completed his book, his struggle for literacy did not end. After finishing writing the novel, he could write about 80 percent of the commonly used characters. It is also said that after two years of study, Gao Yubao could recognize 90 percent of the characters in books and could both write and read 80 percent of the characters commonly used in Chinese. He could at this point write down anything he thought.<sup>34</sup>

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\*Huang Cao was active creatively in the late 1940's and early 1950's as a playwright, novelist, poetry editor, and essayist.

In two years Gao Yubao achieved what would take others ten years to achieve,  
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 that is, literacy.

Gao's life history as presented by his biographers shows the same conflicts that are found in his book. In trying to resolve the conflict of Gao's amateurism--how could a rank amateur write such a novel--the conflict between fact and idealization in biography arose and placed his biographers in a dilemma. Gao Yubao was used as a positive example during the army's literacy campaign of the 1950's. As such, the process of his writing the novel was as important a story as the one about his childhood oppression that he related in his novel. Indeed, when readers wrote in response to the publication of some selections from the novel which were published in Renmin Ribao (People's Daily; 人民日报) in 1952, they were moved more by Gao Yubao's struggle to learn to read and write than they were by his struggle to survive as a child. 36 As such it was important that Gao Yubao be seen as the author of the novel. Although the impact of the story of his childhood and the sufferings he endured then would not have diminished had the novel been presented as an account of his life as told by Gao Yubao to some other author, or if it had been written as a biographical novel rather than an autobiographical novel, this would not have served the purposes of the literacy campaign. Nor would it have served its purposes to have said that a nearly illiterate peasant produced a 320 page novel, completely unaided, in two years. Not only would this have strained credulity, but it would also have raised false hopes in the minds of those at whom the campaign was directed. His biographers responded to this problem by saying that the peasant soldier Gao did indeed write the novel, but with an unspecified amount of help.

Gao Yubao's life after the publication of his novel is not as well documented as is his earlier life. A 1957 article said that Gao Yubao had been studying at People's University in Beijing for the past two years taking a special university entrance course designed for people who previously had no chance to get an education.<sup>37</sup> He entered university in 1958 and after graduation worked on a newspaper.<sup>38</sup> Gao Yubao is still a member of the People's Liberation Army and presently lives in Luda City in Liaoning Province. He has continued to write, but this author has been able to find only one article by Gao Yubao that is unrelated to the Gao Yubao novel. This is a reportage article written by Gao Yubao and three other authors on the great love that foreigners have for Mao Zedong.<sup>39</sup> This appeared in 1967 in Jiefangjun Wenyi (Liberation Army Literature; 解放军文艺).

In 1977 Gao Yubao wrote an article in Jiefangjun Wenyi criticising the 'Gang of Four' because of the criticism they had previously made of an article he had written in 1972. They had criticised him as being too much concerned with writing of real people and real events. Gao Yubao countered, in 1977, that a writer must always be linked with the workers, peasants, and soldiers. Without them the writer becomes like water without a source, a tree without roots.<sup>40</sup>

In a letter in June 1980, to this author, Gao Yubao wrote that he had just returned to Dalian from an island where he had been concentrating on writing a long novel, Wo Shi Yige Bing (I Am a Soldier; 我是一个兵). He said that while he still works for the army in Dalian, he is also a member of the Chinese Writers' Association, a member of the board of the Liaoning Province People's Culture Research Group, and a member of the standing committee of Luda's People's Cultural Research Group.<sup>41</sup>

### III. The "Wo Xie Wo" Movement

In a letter in September of 1979 Gao Yubao replied to a question I had asked him about the nature of the "Wo Xie Wo", or "I Write About Myself", movement:

...As for the question you asked about the "Wo Xie Wo" movement, this movement took place in 1952 after our army had expanded literary studies and it arose spontaneously from the masses. Since at that time our army members were all workers and peasants, they had no education. After our People's Republic of China was born, it was necessary to have a strong, modern army to protect it. Because of this the whole army then developed an education movement. While the soldiers were studying language and had to write compositions, the teachers then talked about how I had studied and learned to write. In this way the soldiers' "Wo Xie Wo" movement arose. Their literacy level was raised and they then used their own pens to expose the darkness of the old society and praise the brilliance of the new world. Cui Bawa (崔八娃), Zhang Mengliang (张孟良), and so on all were part of this movement and wrote very good works. This movement was principally propagated in the army. After the educational level was raised there was not much meaning in again propagating it. <sup>1</sup>

Gao had begun writing before this movement was started and thus was not part of it in the sense of having learned to write in the course of the movement, but rather was a part of it in the sense that his struggle to become literate by writing an autobiographical novel was used as a model for the movement's participants. There were other similar movements in the army with similar names--"Bing Xie Bing" (兵写兵), or "Soldiers Write About Soldiers", and "Bing Yan Bing" (兵演兵), or "Soldiers Act About Soldiers"--being conducted at approximately the same time. In all these Gao was used as an example

to be followed.<sup>2</sup> The writers in the "Wo Xie Wo" movement focused on depicting life before liberation--the oppression suffered by the people and their resistance to it. The writers in the movement were all soldiers of peasant origins and previously had had low educational levels. This movement was used as a means to promote literacy and to show how rich the cultural life of the army was.<sup>3</sup>

In 1953, a collection of short stories by authors who were part of the "Wo Xie Wo" movement was published in a book called Zhanshi Chuangzuo Xuan (Collection of Soldiers' Creative Works; 战士创作选). The authors whose works were included were: Gao Yubao, Cui Bawa; Guan Zhenqian (关振钤); Zhang Mengliang; Wang Diancun (王殿存); Xiao Gaosong (萧高嵩); Tan Yao (谭尧); and Wang Xilin (王熙麟). Their backgrounds were all similar to Gao's. They all had been poor, oppressed, and illiterate before they joined the army, but after a few years of study under the guidance of the PLA and the CCP, they not only learned to read and write, but also became published authors. It is reported, for instance, that when Cui Bawa joined the army in 1949, he could not even write his name. He studied using the quick method for learning characters previously mentioned and soon knew more than 2000 characters. In 1953, four years after he began to study, he was a published author. Guan Zhenqian had had three and one half years of schooling before he joined the army to become a cook. During the "Wo Xie Wo" campaign his literacy level was raised to a point that enabled him to write a novel. Xiao Gaosong had tended sheep as a boy--just as Gao had tended pigs--and at times was a peddler. He had attended a few years of school as a child, but he had to relearn everything once he joined the army. Before Tan Yao began to study

he could only recognize 1000 characters and of these 1000 only use a few, yet by 1953, at the age of 24, he had advanced to a higher primary school level and had published several short stories and a novel.<sup>4</sup>

The credulous reader can only be amazed at how quickly these students learned to read and write. Although exact dates were not always given, several of them did not begin to learn how to read and write before 1949 and by 1953 they were published authors. The critical reader must realize that it is impossible for them to have produced polished stories such as these in so short a time by themselves. We know from Gao's experience that he was given a lot of help at all stages of his writing. The other "Wo Xie Wo" writers, of course, had to have received similar help.

The stories included in this 1953 collection were of two types, war stories and childhood autobiographies, the latter type being more numerous than the former. These childhood stories are remarkably similar to Gao Yubao. One author wrote of the famine and oppression that forced his family to sell him to the local landlord at the age of ten.<sup>5</sup> Gao had been almost the same age when he was sold to a landlord. Guan Zhenqian wrote of himself as a young lad trying to get a job in a factory. He had the same trouble that Gao had trying to find someone to guarantee him. After securing the job he found that the Japanese overseer forced the workers to carry excessively heavy loads of cement, but the workers, being as clever as the workers in the "Banye Ji Jiao" chapter of Gao Yubao, tricked the overseer into hurting himself by carrying too heavy a load. Like the workers in Gao Yubao, these workers also sabotaged the work they did for the Japanese, not wanting their

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production to be used to hurt their fellow Chinese. Wang Diansun's story about his boyhood is also remarkably similar to Gao Yubao. When he was eight years old he lived in a dark hut as part of a family of six. His father was a carpenter, but was not paid for his work. Eventually the landlord took his father for forced labor and Wang Diansun had to herd animals for a rich man. His trials as a cowherd were very similar to those of Gao Yubao as a swineherd. Just as Gao Yubao got into trouble with his landlord for letting one of his pigs be injured, one of the calves Wang Diansun was tending was attacked and injured by a wolf.<sup>7</sup> Xiao Gaosong, another "Wo Xie Wo" writer, was also a shepherd for a landlord and recalled his bitter life in the story<sup>8</sup> of his that is included in this collection.

After reading these stories one is left with the impression that the soldiers in the PLA had remarkably similar childhoods. An inordinate number of former swine, sheep, and pig herders seem to have made their way into the ranks of the military. A more probable explanation is that a certain type of childhood was seen to best portray the evils of the old society and then either only the works of those writers with the desired childhood backgrounds were selected for publication, or, irrespective of their actual life histories, writers were encouraged to adapt their autobiographies so that they resembled the model. Probably both processes operated at the same time. This is another instance of actual life experiences and romantization in competition. These stories are presented as autobiographical works that portray the evils of pre-revolutionary China as only such true life accounts can, yet they are probably not strictly true. With our minds we are expected to know that these autobiographies are fictionalized, but in our hearts



we should accept them as true pictures of the old society.

It is interesting that, although the help given to Gao Yubao was always openly acknowledged--although its extent was never made clear--little mention was made of the help given these other "Wo Xie Wo" writers. This was in part because these writers were less well known than Gao so' thus less critical attention was given their writings, but it also was because at this time there began a movement to take amateur writing as serious literature and not just as a tool for literacy. Because of this the accounts of the authors' struggles to gain literacy were somewhat deemphasised. This trend will be further investigated in the next chapter.

Lars Ragvald, in an article on amateur writing in post-revolutionary China offers several explanations for why amateur writers such as Gao and others of the "Wo Xie Wo" movement were encouraged and cultivated. His arguments are worth mentioning here, but it must be pointed out that he considers that the goals of amateur writing in the early 1950's were the same as the goals of amateur writing in the 1960's and 1970's. This is only partly true. At its beginnings amateur writing was seen primarily as a means to encourage literacy. It was only later that it began to be regarded as literature in and of itself. Ragvald's arguments, though, do help explain why Gao Yubao remained popular even after the literacy movement had ended. Ragvald writes that in 1949, as now, the professed objective of the cultural and political leaders was to write first of all for the workers, peasants, and soldiers. Unfortunately for the realization of this goal, the only people who knew how to write were the existing writers, who were, almost entirely, former city intellectuals. Ragvald states that, "the cultural foundation for any wide spread

amateurism among the Chinese population was virtually nonexistent in 1949 and had to be created from scraps." <sup>9</sup> For this reason, the leaders had no choice other than to rely on these intellectuals who were constantly criticised for keeping aloof from the on going political movements and tending to remain alienated from the masses. The criticism leveled against the works of these intellectual writers by their readers were summerized by Ragvald in three points: 1) a lack of works corresponding to the low educational level of the readers; 2) the writers lacked knowledge of the life and feelings of the workers and therefore took refuge in stereotype; 3) the works distorted and uglified the workers. Works such as Gao Yubao and authors such as Gao certainly cannot be criticised for having any of these shortcomings. Gao Yubao, being written by a newly literate person and being written using only 1800 commonly used characters, was intended to correspond to the low educational level of readers. Being a peasant himself, Gao certainly should have a knowledge of the life and feelings of the masses and for the same reason would not uglify or distort them. These qualities helped insure continued success for both Gao and his novel.

#### IV. Presentation of Gao Yubao

Whenever Gao Yubao or any part of it was presented to the public it was always accompanied by some sort of explanation of the author or text in the form of an introduction or postscript. These explanations show what aspects of Gao Yubao were considered important by the critics of the time. In 1951, when several of Gao Yubao's stories were first published in Jiefangjun Wenyi<sup>1</sup>, Huang Cao wrote the accompanying introduction. In this article, the introduction was five pages long, the stories introduced just seven pages long. Almost as much space was devoted to the introduction as to the text. The title of the article can be translated as "A Heroic Literary Hero", a title which set the tenor for the whole article. The first two paragraphs presented for the first time Gao Yubao, the struggling amateur writer, in the same light in which he was to be portrayed from this early point on:

In April of this year, we received a manuscript that had not been neatly copied though it was very carefully bound. It was a serial novel (章回小说) having in all forty chapters and almost 200,000 characters. It was written by our Regiment 368's dispatcher, Gao Yubao, and was copied for him by (an)other comrade(s).

Comrade Gao Yubao overcame many difficulties to write this book and it took more than a year's time just to finish writing it. His literacy level was very low--when he wrote ten characters he had to ask someone seven or eight of them yet, incredibly, he completed a great book like this. Considering his determination alone, it is very amazing.<sup>2</sup>

In the next paragraph, Huang Cao went on to stress that this was a record of the oppression that the people suffered at the hands of the

Japanese imperialists and the traitorous landlords and that since the book was written with the "tears and blood" of Gao Yubao, it was a story that would make us angry when we read it. The whole book, he continued, was about real people and real events; the writer's class viewpoint was clear; the characterization well done; the language realistic; and the composition tight. He then told the story of how Gao Yubao came to write this book. The details of the writing process, which have been related previously in this paper, all served to emphasize the struggle involved in the writing and the dogged determination with which Gao Yubao faced all problems. Huang Cao closed with a call for others to emulate Gao Yubao:

A literary warrior like Comrade Gao Yubao emerging from the ranks of the workers and peasants and appearing on the battle line of art and literature is the glory of our new China! I hope Gao Yubao will continue to work hard, raising his literacy and each type of knowledge, and will get ready to write even better works. I hope that our battle line of art and literature can produce even more heroes like Gao Yubao.<sup>3</sup>

At this time, although the politics of the novel are mentioned, it is the writing process that is given the most attention. Articles in Wenyi Bao<sup>4</sup> and Jiefangjun Wenyi<sup>5</sup> in 1952 repeat the same message: Gao Yubao and his struggle for literacy should be an inspiration for all of us, especially the hundreds and thousands of workers, peasants, and soldiers who have joined the 'literacy tide'; we should also remember the tremendous influence of the CCP, for without the help and guidance of the CCP, Gao Yubao could never have written the book.

Gao Yubao continued this theme in an article in Jiefangjun Wenyi<sup>6</sup> in 1952. This was an article written by Gao Yubao himself in the form of a letter to all of his soldier friends who wrote to him in response to his stories. The letters, he said, requested that he give the

readers more to read and he assured them that with the help of the Party and the comrades from the army literary branch he would write faster and try to soon finish his book. He modestly asserted that he was just an ordinary person and could never have written his novel without the help of the Party and Chairman Mao. At the same time he stressed the importance of the determination of the individual. He often thought of stopping while he was writing, but whenever such thoughts entered his mind, he would subject himself to self criticism by pretending he was two people and arguing out his problems with himself. He found that as he studied and wrote more and more, he even began to enjoy the process. He closed by urging his comrades to study hard. Here we see Gao Yubao not only as an example for others to follow, but also giving concrete suggestions as to how one should proceed with study.

In 1952, in Zhongguo Qingnian<sup>7</sup>, Huang Cao wrote another article about Gao Yubao's literacy struggles that was very similar in content to those published previously. Included in this article was the letter that Gao had sent with his manuscript when he first sent the manuscript to the army's literary branch. In this letter he gave his reasons for having written the book:

I have written a book because I want to make a record so that from now on I will not forget my origins. I wrote this book in September of 1949 while I was on my way south. Previously I had not thought of writing a book, but after I had read such picture books and popular stories as Mao Zedong's Childhood and Record of Unredressed Wrongs, I recalled my own years of bitterness. I knew that the life of the poor was one of hardships. The bitterness of the poor had a place to be told; the poor could also publish books! It was only then that I thought of writing a book....But when I picked up a pen, how could I write? Out of the huge number of characters, I only knew a few! However, the difficulties did not surpass my determination. At that time, out of every ten characters I wrote, I had to ask what seven or eight

of them looked like. Everyday I asked, everyday I wrote. Additionally, I got the help of the chief, Chi Zhiyuan, and the clerks of the propaganda department and I also received the encouragement of the section commander. Only in this way could I write.

If you can use this book, please tell me. If you cannot use it, please return it to me. I will send it home and tell my father to look at it and tell him to remember the bitterness of the past and to know who our enemy is....<sup>8</sup>

The rest of Huang Cao's article treads familiar ground. He praises the correct and clear class viewpoint of the novel; recounts Gao Yubao's struggle for literacy; stresses the role of the Party and fellow comrades in the writing of the book; and urges everyone to copy Gao Yubao's spirit of determination.

Again in 1952--a big year for the publication of works by and about Gao Yubao--a 58 page booklet entitled Gao Yubao Xie Shu (Gao Yubao Writes a Book; 高玉宝写书)<sup>9</sup> was published and contained a collection of five of Gao Yubao's stories that had appeared in various other publications. The introduction explained why this booklet and others like it were being published. The purpose of the book was to provide those who were learning to read in the accelerated literacy classes with material to read and to thusly help them to remember characters and practice reading and writing. All the books in the series were written in simple language and some of the material was rewritten to make it easily understood by beginning readers. There were illustrations in all of the books to add to the reader's interest. The books were all printed in standard script and any characters that were not among the 1800 often used characters had pronunciations printed after them. (These 1800 characters included 1500 made public by the Education Department plus a little over 300 others). The first story in this collection of Gao Yubao's stories was "How I Learned to Read and Write". It was printed in larger type than the other stories of his childhood, an indication of the

importance attached to the story of Gao's writing struggle.

In 1953, a 27 page booklet by Gao Yubao appeared entitled, Wo Yao Dushu (I Want to Read; 我要读书). It was part of a series of books published for beginning readers. The introduction explained that this series of books was published in order to meet the urgent needs of the masses who needed the proper elementary literary material with which they could make their first encounter with literary works. Four types of material were selected for this series: 1) works of traditional literature that were rather easy to understand; 2) representative post May Fourth short works or extracts from larger works; 3) short works or extracts from longer works by present day authors; 4) translations of foreign works. The introduction stated that all revisions and translations were trustworthy and that footnotes were added when necessary. Good  
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illustrations further enhanced the works.

After several of Gao Yubao's stories had appeared in Renmin Ribao in 1952, several readers wrote letters to the newspaper expressing how moved they had been by Gao Yubao's article and story and how it had inspired them to work harder. It would seem that Gao Yubao's works were having the desired effect of encouraging others to study, or at least that the literary authorities wanted it to appear so. A fourteen year old boy, addressing Gao Yubao as "uncle Gao Yubao", wrote that he studied half time and worked half time and that the stories of Gao  
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Yubao's struggle to learn were of great encouragement to him. All of those who wrote in felt that, though they were having a very difficult time learning to read and write, their struggle was small compared to that of Gao Yubao. It may be noted here that in 1957, when "Kao Yu-pao's School Days" appeared in English in China Reconstructs, foreign readers

wrote in with their comments. Readers from England<sup>12</sup> and Indonesia<sup>13</sup> praised the story, but H.G. Clements of Perth, Australia, found it a rather "tendentious and priggish"<sup>14</sup> book. Apparently, as late as 1957 adverse criticisms were still accepted, at least from foreign readers.

By the mid-1950's the novel Gao Yubao had been published in its entirety. The articles of criticism that occurred at this time continued to stress its use as a tool for literacy, but also began to analyse it as a work of literature. Ma Hanbing (马寒冰) wrote in Wenyi Xuexi (Literary Studies; 文艺学习) in 1956 about the literary evolution of the novel from the traditional format of the first draft to the form in which it was eventually published. He also indicated that certain problems had been created by making Gao Yubao too convincing a model for emulation. That is to say, Ma wrote that some readers, especially middle school students, made the mistake when reading Gao Yubao of thinking that since their literacy level was higher than Gao's was when he began to write that they should be able to write even better books than he. Ma said that they could not do this because they lacked the life experiences of Gao Yubao. They also forgot that Gao Yubao had the help of Huang Cao.<sup>15</sup> One has visions of publishing houses across China being inundated with manuscripts from eager young writers emulating Gao Yubao. Literary authorities probably wanted to encourage people to engage in writing as an educational exercise, but they were not prepared to accept these works as literature. This put them in the position of having to explain to disappointed authors why their works were not good enough to be published.

Yu Zibing (喻子兵), in an article in Tushuguan Gongzuo (Library Work; 图书馆工作)<sup>16</sup> in 1957, related the experiences he



had when he, a Hubei library worker, went to factories and work places to tell the Gao Yubao story 36 times to 9800 people. He felt that in explaining this book he had to denounce oppression and tell of the suffering and heroism of the peasants and workers. He also had to point out Gao Yubao's struggle for literacy in order to help with the campaign to eliminate illiteracy. In his talks he was careful to explain how Gao Yubao learned to read and was also careful to make sure that his listeners understood the lessons to be learned from the stories, that is, the suffering and cleverness of the poor and the oppression of the landlords. For example, in the story "Banye Ji Jiao (The Rooster Crows at Midnight; 半夜鸡叫), the listeners should not only understand the story, but should also understand the bravery and cleverness of the peasants. Introducing books to the masses was the main objective of his trips to work places and factories. About fifteen books were put in a portable book bag and taken to various sites. Books were then given to people according to their literary level. For example, poor readers would be given picture book versions of the Gao Yubao story, while better readers would be given short stories from Gao Yubao or the whole book.

In the mid 1950's attitudes toward Gao Yubao began to change. Until this time Gao Yubao was treated primarily as an example from which the newly literate could draw inspiration and secondarily as an example of the oppression suffered by the peasants and workers at the hands of the landlords and imperialists. In the mid 1950's the educational role of Gao Yubao slowly began to fade as it began to be seen primarily as an expose of the evils of old China. It was also at this time beginning to be regarded as a work of literature and was

analysed as such. For example, in 1955, Xu Chengjun (徐承俊) writing in Yuwen Zhishi (Language Knowledge; 语文知识) used Gao Yubao as a source for dialect analysis, extracting eleven words or phrases from the text, defining them, and giving sample sentences from the text. 17 This is the first article in which no mention was made of Gao Yubao's struggle to become literate. Although the 1955 edition of the novel had a long postscript by Huang Cao which gave a detailed account of how Gao wrote the novel, this postscript was dropped when the book was republished in 1956 and in its place was substituted an eight line introduction which stressed not Gao Yubao's struggle to become literate, but rather his struggle to escape from the yoke of capitalist and imperialist oppression. In 1959, Nie Qiao (聂绀弩) continued this focus on politics and literature when he subjected the hero of the novel to character analysis in order to prove the nobility of peasants and the baseness of landlords. 18

In the 1960's Gao Yubao did not receive much critical attention nor was it republished to any significant extent. Interest seemed to be waning in the novel until the Cultural Revolution began in China. Sometime in the late 1960's a puppet film was made from one of the episodes in Gao Yubao. When Chinese Literature published "A Cock Crows at Midnight: A Puppet Film Scenario" in 1970<sup>19</sup>, there was no introduction at all, there was, in fact, no mention of Gao Yubao, and no author given. There was no link between the story and the literacy movement and no mention of how Gao Yubao learned to read and write. A quote from Chairman Mao was used as a heading for the scenario and it showed what lessons were intended to be learned from Gao Yubao in 1970:

The ruthless economic exploitation and political oppression of the peasants by the landlord class forced them into numerous uprisings against its rule....It was the class struggles of the peasants, the peasant uprisings and peasant wars that constituted the real motive force of historical development in Chinese feudal society.<sup>20</sup>

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In his 1972 article, "How I Became a Writer", Gao Yubao stressed that he became a writer in order to express his class hatred and to serve the workers, peasants, and soldiers. He made little mention of the fact that he also took up writing as a way in which to become literate. The introduction to the 1972 edition of Gao Yubao (translated in the appendix of this paper) is of a far different tone than the postscript by Huang Cao. The 'editor's note' to the English translation of the 1972 edition states this clearly:

The novel Kao Yu-pao is a trenchant presentation of the tragedy that engulfed Chinese peasants in the old society; most important, it describes their courage in fighting back against the oppressor. Its setting in the pre-liberation social situation will help readers to understand the process of the Chinese people's revolution.<sup>22</sup>

Over the years, Gao Yubao changed from being regarded as a tool both for literacy and political education to being regarded as a tool solely for political education. As we shall see, not only did the evaluation of the purpose of Gao Yubao change, but Gao Yubao itself changed in order to better suit itself to its new purpose.\*

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\*Interestingly, in the 1970's the Gao Yubao story regained some of its former purpose as a tool for teaching language, though at this time it was not the Chinese language that it was teaching. In 1974, a delegation of American linguists went to China to investigate, among other things, English and foreign language teaching in China. At the Shanghai

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(Continued from previous page) Foreign Language Institute they were shown the film "The Rooster Crows at Midnight" with dubbed foreign language sound tracks. This, they were told, was used to help in language training and to reinforce social and revolutionary objectives.

## V. Plot Summary

Before going farther, a short summary of the plot of the novel will be presented. The plot of the 1955 edition of Gao Yubao will be used as the basis for this plot summary since future comparisons of editions published before and after 1955 will all be done in reference to the 1955 edition. The summary will be done chapter by chapter as the chapters are often presented as separate units and published singly.

### Chapter One: Guizi Bing Laile (The Devil Soldiers Come; 鬼子兵来了)

As the peasants are working in the fields they hear that Japanese soldiers are nearing their village. Chou Changan, the Bao chief\* of the village, and Wang, the hamlet chief, are delighted with this news. The Bao chief's young son brings a letter saying that the Imperial Army will pass through the village the next day. The two landlords decide that the villagers must make Japanese flags with which to welcome the Japanese.

The family of Gao Xuetian, a family of seven, is one of the poorest in the village. Wang orders the peasants to make Japanese flags and also to send one member of each family to welcome the Imperial Army, but the eldest son of the Gao family, young Gao Yubao, resists. He convinces his mother not to make a flag and then he feigns illness as an excuse for

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\*Bao chief (保长): official appointed by the Japanese to guarantee the conduct of the inhabitants of a given area. The Bao jia (保家) system is of Chinese origin and was used by the Japanese and KMT as a control mechanism as it had been used under the empire.

not going to welcome the Japanese. The Bao chief is angered by this show of resistance and goes to investigate matters at the Gao household. Gao Yubao puts on a convincing act of illness but fails to appease the Bao chief's anger.

## Chapter Two: Sunjiatun de Kusheng (The Cries of Sun Family Village; 孙家屯的哭声)

To avoid coming in contact with the Japanese, Gao Yubao leaves home to tend the family pig. He visits his grandmother, leaves the pig there for safe keeping, then returns home to find out what is happening in the village. He sees the Japanese soldiers looting his house and hears that his mother and little brother are hiding at the West Court with other peasants. The Japanese troops, looking for women, take the old lady Liu. Seeing that his mother is also in danger, Gao Yubao successfully hides her from the Japanese under a pile of straw. In the meantime, the Japanese take the coffin the Gaos have bought for their grandfather. They lose not only the coffin but also the grain they had hidden in it. Gao Xuetian, who has been working as a hired hand away from home, returns at this time to see the soldiers looting his house. The shock of this brings on an epileptic fit. The Japanese also come to conscript men to work for them and forcibly take away Gao Yubao's uncle, Gao Xuede. As the family fights to keep Gao Xuede with them, Gao Xuetian is shot in the arm and the grandfather is fatally wounded. With the grandfather dead and the coffin gone, the Gaos are forced to go into debt to buy another coffin from the hamlet chief.

## Chapter Three: Liang Fu Guancai (Two Coffins; 两付棺材)

Life is now even harder for the Gao family. Gao Yubao's father goes

to work for the Bao chief's father Zhou Bapi, but is tricked out of his rightful wages by this wily landlord. When Gao Yubao's father protests, Zhou Bapi sics the dogs on him. He is wounded so badly that he must be carried home.

One day the Bao chief pays a visit to the Wangs and their daughter Fengzi. At first Wang is angered by the Bao chief's attentions toward Fengzi, but he soon sees that an alliance between the two would be advantageous for him. The Bao chief tells Wang that he wants to tax the peasants in order to get money to buy a present for the Japanese. He has devised a clever plan whereby they can get a present for the Japanese as well as secure a one hundred percent profit for themselves. This brings them to the topic of the Gao family and their inability to pay their debts. The two landlords see that they may be able to get the Gao land if the Gaos cannot pay this new tax. Fengzi says she heard the word "grain" mentioned in the Gao courtyard while she was eavesdropping and assumes that this means they must have grain somewhere. The two landlords immediately go to the Gao courtyard to try to get this grain in payment for past debts.

#### Chapter Four: Guonian (New Year; 过年)

Some time before, an uncle of the Gao family had left some grain at the Gao house and the Gaos have hidden it. Two debt collectors come looking for money, but the Gaos say that they have nothing with which to pay them. The Bao chief then comes to collect debts and taxes. He looks for the grain he heard about, finds it, and takes it away. Gao Yubao attacks the Bao chief as he is taking the grain and then runs away. Gao Yubao goes to Fengzi's house to avenge himself on her for her part in the grain theft. He shoots her with a stone from his slingshot and flees.

Wang returns to the Gaos to collect tax. They, of course, cannot pay

and are forced to mortgage their land to him.

#### Chapter Five: Wo Yao Dushu (I Want to Study; 我要读书)

While Gao Yubao is out gathering firewood one day, he meets a teacher and some students from the local school. The teacher chats with Gao Yubao and, finding him a clever boy, suggests that he attend school. Gao Yubao unsuccessfully tries to convince his parents to allow him to study, but after the teacher visits the Gaos and assures them that Gao need pay no tuition, they agree to allow him to study. The night before he is to attend his first day of school his mother lovingly sews him a uniform and a book bag. On the first day of school Gao Yubao has a confrontation with the Bao chief's son. This is the beginning of a long lasting feud.

Gao Yubao does well at school, but his education is short lived. After about one month at school he goes home one day to find that his parents have hired him out to the Bao chief to help pay their taxes. Gao Yubao is crushed that he can no longer study and sadly goes to return his text books. The teacher, however, tells him to keep the books and to study on his own.

#### Chapter Six: Shang Gong (Going to Work; 上工.)

Gao Yubao's mother takes him to the Bao chief's household on the same day that the Bao chief's daughter is preparing to leave for Dalian to study. Lost amidst the hustle and bustle, the two are taken care of by the kind Foreman Liu. Suddenly the Bao chief sees Gao Yubao and notices that a book bag is slung over his shoulder. Angered at the affrontery of a peasant boy wanting to study, he tears the book bag from Gao Yubao's grasp and rips the books to shreds.



## Chapter Seven: Fang Zhu (Tending Pigs; 放猪)

Gao Yubao leads a very hard life at the Bao chief's house. One hot day, while out tending pigs, he faints from the heat. When he awakes, he sees that a storm is fast approaching and he tries to gather together and drive the pigs home. In the storm, on the way home, however, he loses one of the pigs. Although the lost pig is eventually found by a farm hand, Gao Yubao suffers from his exposure to the storm and becomes ill. Still weak from exposure and lack of food, the next day Gao Yubao is caught in the act of trying to eat some pig swill. Zhou Bapi beats Gao Yubao unmercifully for this and Gao Yubao becomes dangerously ill. Of course, he is forced to work the next day even though ill. Concerned, Foreman Liu carries him out to a ravine where the pigs can be contained and Gao Yubao need only watch them and rest. It is here, after he has recovered, that Gao Yubao gets the chance to avenge himself on the Bao chief's son by giving him a sound thrashing.

## Chapter Eight: Xuexiao Menqian de Fengbo (Disturbance in front of the

School Gate; 学校门前的风波)

While tending the pigs, Gao Yubao gets the idea that he would like to see his teacher once more and ask for more books. He gets his opportunity when one day the Bao chief and his family go off to a wedding. When Wang comes looking for the Bao chief to tell him of an important meeting, Gao Yubao sends Wang off in the wrong direction. Thinking he is safe, Gao Yubao goes to the school house, driving his pigs before him, and has a tearful reunion with his teacher and classmates. Unfortunately, the Bao chief and Wang have found out about Gao Yubao's deception and when they find him at the school house give him a beating.

Chapter Nine: Banye Ji Jiao (The Rooster Crows at Midnight; 半夜鸡叫)

Gao Yubao accidentally discovers that Zhou Bapi has been imitating the crowing of a cock in order to wake the farm hands early and thus get more than his fair share of work out of them. At Gao Yubao's suggestion, the farm hands decide to trick their wilely landlord. Early one morning as he is sneaking into the chicken coop, the farm hands pretend that they think he is a thief and beat him severely. In the scuffle he is also shot by a Japanese officer who happens to be staying at the Bao chief's house.

Chapter Ten: Changgongmen de Tuanjie (The Hired Hands Organize; 长工们的团结)

The Bao chief is very angry after this beating which he expects was intentional. In order to get revenge, he sells all of the hired hands into conscript labor. After they are seized and carted away never to be seen again, only Gao Yubao is left working at the Bao chief's household. He works in loneliness for some time then, using a small incident as a pretext, the Bao chief beats Gao Yubao, fires him, and sends him home without giving him any wages for all his months of labor.

Chapter Eleven: Dalian Yi Yue (A Month in Dalian; 大连一月)

The impoverished Gao family sells its land and moves to Dalian where an uncle lives and where, they hope, better times can be found. When they first arrive in the city they are shocked by the filth and oppression. They find their uncle, but also find that life in the city is even worse than that in the countryside. Gao Yubao's father is plagued by illness and cannot find work. Gao Yubao is forced to scavage for food and refuse in the town dump. This is illegal without a permit and eventually he is caught by a cruel Japanese guard, savagely beaten, and thrown into the sea. He is only barely saved by his uncle and is sick for a long time after the incident.

Chapter Twelve: Zai Yaochangli (At the Porcelain Factory; 在窑厂里)

Gao Yubao's cousin gets him a job in a porcelain works in Dalian. A helpful and friendly foreman named Liu becomes Gao Yubao's guarantor and lends Gao Yubao money to help the Gao family. Gao Yubao is shocked at the oppression he sees in the factory and willingly helps his fellow workers sabotage production whenever possible. Gao Yubao discovers that the workers at the factory are planning a strike and he helps them in a small way. Gao Yubao's career in the factory is cut short when he accidentally knocks a Japanese overseer into a pool of hot tar and falls in himself.

Chapter Thirteen: Muqin de Si (Mother's Death; 母亲的死)

Gao Yubao is very sick after falling into the tar and stays at home for a long time recovering. At this time the Gao family is poorer than ever. Gao Yubao's mother, who is now pregnant, is forced to go out onto the streets and do mending. One day she is beaten by the Japanese and is brought home very ill. She gives birth to a son. Soon after the police come looking for sick people who, reportedly, they will take away and burn alive in order to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. Gao Yubao who is still ill goes into hiding. He returns the next day only to find that his mother has been beaten by the Japanese and is on her death bed. She dies and the baby for want of milk soon follows her. What is left of the Gao family sadly returns to their native village.

## VI. The Revisions

The revising of Gao Yubao can be divided into five periods: 1) before the submission of the first draft to the army literary branch; 2) after the submission of the first draft; 3) after the first publication of the novel in 1955, but before the Cultural Revolution; 4) during the Cultural Revolution; 5) after the Cultural Revolution.

### A. Before the Submission of the First Draft to the Army Literary Branch

The first period is the one about which we know the least. It seems that Gao Yubao first started writing an autobiography on his own initiative as a way to teach himself how to read and write. As soon as his commanders found out what he was doing--and they must have found out fairly soon since he was asking others how to write about 80 percent of the characters he used--they began to help him. They advised him to abandon the traditional story teller format he was using and to make his book a serial novel. They also assigned him a secretary to recopy his manuscript before it was submitted to the army's literary branch. The main revisions at this point were probably those required to get Gao's story recorded in readable form, transforming his thoughts into Chinese characters. It was no small feat for Gao to record such a long narrative and, indeed, it was his perseverance more than the content or style of the book which impressed the army's literary branch. They saw the great educational potential in the crude manuscript if only it could be raised to a level acceptable for publication. It was at this time that Huang

Cao began to help Gao revise the first draft and that the second stage of revisions began.

#### B.. After the Submission of the First Draft

In the postscript to the 1955 edition of Gao Yubao, Huang Cao explained in detail all that was involved in this second stage of revisions. In the summer of 1951, when Huang Cao and Gao began to work together, Huang Cao saw two main goals for the revising of the novel--first, to successfully correct the novel and, second, to raise Gao's writing abilities and educational level. This helps to explain why Huang Cao did not take the Gao manuscript and correct it himself. This would certainly have been easier as Huang Cao would not have had to convince Gao Yubao of the necessity for each change that was made. Gao, however, would have gained nothing from this and China would have lost the chance of developing a writer of peasant origins.

With these goals in mind, Huang Cao and Gao Yubao began to revise the novel. The main problem Huang Cao encountered as he began to help Gao Yubao was explaining to Gao the nature of an autobiographical novel. Gao Yubao was reluctant to deviate from his life experiences because he worried that his friends who knew his history would criticise him for changing it. The main theme of the novel was the oppression and exploitation working people suffered under the enemy's cruel rule, but it also should have shown the heroic battling spirit of the working people and their intelligence and wisdom in times of adversity, have given a true account of the Communist Party's leadership during the Anti-Japanese War, and have pointed out the mistakes of the pessimistic characters in the novel. Huang Cao felt, however, that Gao did not

sufficiently show the battling spirit of the people and that the influence of the Communist Party could not be seen. Further, Gao Yubao's life as portrayed in the first draft was too tragic and contained little to rouse the people's will to fight or their confidence in victory. Also, in depicting the Japanese imperialists, Gao's first draft wrote of the outward evil of the enemy, but did not write enough of their inner evil. Without depicting the inner evil, the true evil of the enemy camp could not be revealed.

It is difficult to comment on Huang Cao's assessment of what was wrong with Gao's first draft since the first draft is not available. All that is available is the end product of the revisions and one can only look at it to see if it contains the characteristics for which Huang Cao was striving. Certainly, by the time we first see selections from the novel in print, it was an autobiographical novel and not an autobiography. The working people seem heroic and full of battling spirit. Pessimistic characters such as Gao's father are criticised. Although the Communist Party is not mentioned in stories of Gao's boyhood, in the selections about Gao's life as a young man which Huang Cao helped Gao correct, but which were not included in the 1955 edition, the Party's influence is given prominence. In looking at the results of the corrections it is, however, difficult to imagine that the inner world of the enemy has been portrayed since all the characters in the novel, friend and enemy alike, are very shallow. This author cannot think of a single character whose 'inner world' was adequately dealt with. Of course, the reason that these changes are difficult to see is that they are relative---the characters in the revised edition might seem complex if we could compare them to the first draft. We will see this relativity

at work throughout the long history of the revisions to Gao Yubao.

For example, the same peasant heroes that Gao Yubao and Huang Cao revised at this time so that they would be more heroic were criticised a few years later because they were thought not to be heroic enough.

In the postscript to the 1955 edition Huang Cao also wrote about the method he and Gao Yubao used when making corrections. Huang Cao would point out the faults of the work to Gao Yubao and then let Gao freely proceed with corrections. This resulted in increasing the length of the novel, getting rid of unnecessary characters and incidents, incorporating incidents that were not Gao's, and integrating or exaggerating certain stories.

Huang Cao also explained why Gao Yubao had the problems that he did. Here we see the problems of the peasant soldier who has all the virtues that should qualify him to be a good communist author, but unfortunately cannot write. Firstly, although Gao had led a rich and varied life, he did not understand its significance; secondly, although he came from and was one of the masses, he had a naive and unsophisticated understanding of the people's thoughts and behavior; thirdly, although his own behavior was exemplary, since his educational level was low he did not understand Marxist-Leninism and could not understand life's development; and fourthly, because he had not read much, he could not use the written language well. Gao was valued as a writer because he had experienced the oppression of poverty and imperialism, but because of this very life experience he did not have enough understanding or technical knowledge to write.

Huang Cao explained why and how he helped Gao Yubao correct his work. By looking at the actual pieces we can see the kinds of changes

that resulted. (In all further discussions the 1955 edition will be used as the basis upon which comparisons will be made). Selections from Gao Yubao's book first appeared in 1951 in Jiefangjun Wenyi.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

These were published just a month after Gao Yubao had submitted his first draft to the army literary branch. There could not have been sufficient time for extensive revisions to have been made so these three selections are probably similar to his first draft.

The first selection included was entitled "Guizi Bing Laile" and thus had the same title as the first chapter in the 1955 novel. In fact, however, this 1951 version was more like an outline of the 1955 version. In its first published form it was only 3,000 characters long, while in 1955 this same general story was expanded to two chapters and 11,000 characters. Descriptions of characters and scenes, sketchy in the first version, are lengthened by 1955. In 1951 only a few characters are introduced, but in 1955 all the principle characters of the novel appear. A few characters are changed, but only slightly. The evil landlord becomes the father, not the uncle of the Bao chief; Gao Yubao has two older sisters in 1951, in 1955 he has only one. Almost all of the changes in 1955, however, seem to be stylistic, that is, those that would be necessary to expand a story outline and make it a unified part of a larger work.

The next selection which appeared in 1951 in Jiefangjun Wenyi was entitled "Fa Liang Er Dou" (A Fine of Two Dou of Grain; 罰糧=斗).<sup>4</sup> The 1955 book contains no such chapter. This short piece of 3,000 characters covers the same time period covered by chapters three through ten in the 1955 book. The changes were extensive. Many episodes were added and even those present in 1951 were altered considerably. The



acts perpetrated by the villains are made worse and those of the heroes made better. For example, in 1951, Gao Yubao's grandfather is reduced to beggary by the landlord. In 1955 he is killed by the landlord. In 1951 Gao Yubao is forced to work for the landlord in order to pay the interest on a fine he incurred by peeling bark off of the landlord's trees. In 1955 there is no suggestion that he did anything wrong to incur the wrath of the landlord, but rather he is working to pay an arbitrary tax levied by the landlord. In 1951 it is also stated that Gao Yubao's mother raised the motherless landlord's daughter, Fengzi, as a child. No mention of this type of collaboration between peasant and landlord is made in 1955.

The last selection published in Jiefangjun Wenyi<sup>5</sup> was not included in the 1955 book. It is a story of Gao Yubao's life as a soldier and his entry into the Communist Party and as such would not fit into the book which was limited to Gao Yubao's boyhood.

In May of 1952, in both Renmin Ribao<sup>6</sup> and Jiefangjun Wenyi<sup>7</sup>, another selection from Gao Yubao, "Banye Ji Jiao", was published. The Renmin Ribao version of "Banye Ji Jiao" is in essentially the same form as it is in the 1955 book. A few changes were made in the story between 1952 and 1955, however, and these seem to have been made in order to enoble the peasants and debase the landlords. For example, in 1955, after the landlord is wounded, he befouls his trousers. There is no mention of this humiliating act in 1952. And after the wounding, in 1952, it is a Japanese soldier who calls the doctor. In 1955 the Japanese are not allowed this act of humanity and it is rather the landlord's wife who must call the doctor while the Japanese soldier looks on laughing. In 1955 the hired hands are overjoyed at having been able to beat the

landlord and only regret that they could not have beaten him to death. This is a change from 1952 when they were lacking such brave and daring<sup>8</sup> thoughts. When this same selection, along with the selection "Zai Yao Chang li", was published in the magazine Jiefangjun Wenyi in May of 1952 it had been only slightly changed and both chapters were essentially in the form in which they would be published in the 1955 book.

From this time until the publication of the book Gao Yubao in 1955, numerous selections from the book appeared in various publications. By this time, though, the form of the stories had stabilized and they were the same as they would be in the 1955 book.

The 1955 Gao Yubao was published by Zhongguo Qingnian Chubanshe (中国青年出版社).<sup>9</sup> The plot of this edition has been previously related in detail so will not be dealt with here again. This edition is also being used as the basis for comparing editions so it has been referred to previously and will be referred to again hereafter.

#### C. After the First Publication of the Novel in 1955, But Before the Cultural Revolution

In 1956, Gao Yubao was published by Zhongguo Shaonian Ertong Chubanshe (中国少年儿童出版社).<sup>10</sup> This edition was shorter than the 1955 book. As the information given on the press run on the inside cover of the book indicates, the 1955 edition was 133,000 characters long while the 1956 edition was only 116,000 characters long, a difference of 17,000 characters. The 1955 edition contains a 6,000 character postscript that is lacking in the 1956 edition, but there is still an 11,000 character difference between the two works. The one poem that was in the 1955 book--a scatological one about the landlord's daughter using her father's

hat for a chamber pot--was not included in the 1956 book. An interesting footnote was added in 1956 to explain the use of the word, "huzi", or "bandit", when referring to the communist guerrillas. This word, the footnote explains, was used by the Japanese and at times by some of the less informed masses to refer to the communist guerrillas.<sup>11</sup> These changes in the 1956 edition are those that would be expected in adapting a book for a younger audience. This 1956 edition was reprinted several times.<sup>12</sup> A 1962 reprinting was the same as the 1956 original.

Although in this paper the 1955 edition is used as a basis for comparison, the information given on the front piece of the 1972 edition says that the Renmin Wenxue Publishing Company first published Gao Yubao in 1958 after the author had finished revising it. No mention is made of the 1955 edition which was published by another company. This author has been unable to find the 1958 edition, but it would seem that it was revised and thus was different from both the 1955 and 1956 editions.

At the same time that the whole novel was being published and republished, sections of the book were also being adapted into picture story books. The picture story books had one frame of action per page and a few lines of text at the bottom of the page. They told the same story although in the simplified and abbreviated form that was necessary for the picture story books. Foreign language editions of Gao Yubao also began to appear. An English translation of "Wo Yao Dushu", entitled "I Want to Study", appeared as early as 1954<sup>13</sup> and in 1955 one of the picture story books was translated into English. In 1960 the whole novel was translated into English. These were exact translations of their originals, no revisions being made during the process.

In the 1960's Gao Yubao does not seem to have been republished at all although it was reprinted. The puppet movie which was made some time in the late 1960's rekindled interest in the story and in the late 1960's and 1970's Gao Yubao stories began to appear again.

#### D. During the Cultural Revolution

In the 1960's, with the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, literature and art in China became the focal point for an attempt to revolutionize Chinese society. Art and literature, always considered an important tool by the communist for shaping society, at this time took on even greater importance and came in for even greater scrutiny. The fanatical attention given to art and literature forced it to change in form and content although this change was not a result of an obvious change in literary or art theory. The basis for all Chinese literary and art theory was still Mao's Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art, but critics during the Cultural Revolution contended that their opponents had distorted this work and used it for their own selfish, capitalistic ends. The Cultural Revolution was an attempt to regain the true spirit of Mao's works and to apply that spirit to everything. Art and literature workers were given guidelines as to how they might best put Mao's theory into practice. Of prime importance was ideology. They were urged to strive to be true Marxist-Leninists and to always follow Mao's line. Those who dared to put artistic technique on the same level as or above politics were soundly denounced. The aim in creating literature and art had to be to serve the masses of workers, peasants, and soldiers and not to seek personal fame or glory. In order to successfully work for the workers, peasants, and soldiers,

literature and art workers had to keep their roots among these workers, peasants, and soldiers by physically putting themselves among the masses by working and living with them on communes or in factories. Writing for the workers, peasants, and soldiers meant that one had to use a proletarian worldview. A bourgeois viewpoint which transcended class was unacceptable. Nor did humanism have any place in art and literature as there could be no feeling separate from class feeling. There could be no such thing as literature and art for the whole people. In literature, in order to write for the workers, peasants, and soldiers, one had to portray them as they really were, that is, one had to portray the typical worker, peasant, or soldier and since their typical nature was seen as heroic, literature had to focus on portraying a hero from among the masses who was a concentrated example of countless real life heroes. He had to be put in the typical environment of the revolutionary class struggle of a given historical period and his world outlook, thought, work style, disposition, and his high degree of class consciousness had to be clearly shown. The communist radiance of his mind had to unfold as the story developed. Villainous characters, other positive characters, and the environment all served to focus attention on the leading heroes--"Give prominence to the positive characters among all characters, give prominence to the heroes among the positive characters, and give prominence to the leading heroes among the heroes" was the literary slogan during the Cultural Revolution. When villainous characters accompanied the leading heroes, the leading heroes had to always play a leading role or history would be distorted and it would seem as if there was a dictatorship by monsters and demons rather than by the masses.

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Most pre-Cultural Revolution novels did not live up to these high

standards and the general procedure was for pre-Cultural Revolution novels not to be republished, whether in original or revised form.

Gao Yubao and its author, however, had several characteristics that made the book eminently suitable for revision and republication at that time. First, author Gao Yubao was a member of the People's Liberation Army and the PLA was seen as having a central role in the Cultural Revolution. After Jiang Qing was appointed advisor on cultural work to the Chinese People's Liberation Army<sup>15</sup> all matters concerning literature in the army were to be referred to her. She stressed the importance of the relationship of the PLA to literature, stating that the PLA was the hope and mainstay of the Chinese people and the revolutionary people of the world. Because of this importance, the enemy would try to use literature and art to corrupt the PLA ideologically. The correct orientation of art and literature in the PLA was, therefore, crucial. The PLA, she continued, must play a larger role in the Cultural Revolution. She said that there was already a nucleus of literary and art workers trained by the armed forces and tempered by the experiences of revolutionary war. It is upon these foundations that the PLA literature<sup>16</sup> should be built. Although Jiang Qing never mentioned Gao Yubao specifically, it is obvious that he could be considered one of the workers trained by the army and tempered in revolutionary war.

In another article, Jiang Qing complained that writers often<sup>17</sup> lacked life experiences. This was a common complaint during the Cultural Revolution and accounted for the frequent sendings down to the countryside of artists and writers to enable them to gain experience. Gao Yubao, however, perhaps unlike younger writers, was rich in life experiences, having suffered both as a poor peasant and an urban factory

worker. He had taken part in the liberation of China as a member of the PLA and remained a soldier even after the publication of his book. He had the perfect background for a writer to represent the Cultural Revolution.

Jiang Qing also spoke on the proper way in which works of art should be produced. Although she was referring to theatrical productions in this speech, her criticism can be applied to other forms. The problem of creative writing should be solved, she said, through a three-way combination of the leadership, the professional artists, and the masses. In the play, "Great Wall along the Southern Sea", this three way combination worked in this way: first, the leadership set the theme; second, the playwrights went three times to acquire experience of life; and third, after it was written, the military commanders criticised it, opinions were canvassed, and revisions made.<sup>18</sup> How similar this process is to the process involved in producing the 1955 edition of Gao Yubao. First, Gao Yubao was advised by his military commanders as to what form his book should take; second, Gao Yubao's life was rich in experience and his book related that experience; and third, after he wrote his first manuscript it was revised several times before it reached its 1955 form. Gao Yubao himself wrote that while writing and rewriting his work he always asked others for opinions and help.<sup>19</sup> He never felt that his book was the product of one man's effort.

If the 1955 edition of Gao Yubao was an ideal book to be published during the Cultural Revolution, why was it not published in its 1955 form? Why was it necessary to revise it? It must be realized that during the Cultural Revolution revisions were seen as essential. On several occasions Jiang Qing stressed this point:

In my opinion we should treasure the fruits of our labour, and shouldn't scrap them lightly. Some comrades are unwilling to revise their completed works but this prevents them from making bigger achievements.<sup>20</sup>

and:

Completely flawless works of literature and art are non-existent, and as long as the keynote of a work is good, we should help improve it by pointing out its shortcomings and errors.<sup>21</sup>

D. W. Fokkema, in an article on literature during the Cultural Revolution, also brought up the importance of this last point. By way of example he examined the novel The Song of Ouyang Hai (欧阳海之歌) by soldier writer Jin Qingmai (金敬迈). This book, like Gao Yubao,<sup>22</sup> was repeatedly rewritten and apparently no final text was ever published. Revision was the norm, not the exception during the Cultural Revolution. It is only natural, then, that Gao Yubao should be revised again during the Cultural Revolution, and that, in fact, it should continue to be revised even after the Cultural Revolution.

In 1972 a newly revised edition of the whole novel was published. The changes made in the 1972 edition, when compared to the 1955 edition, are numerous. Almost every paragraph in the book was altered in some way. The basic format of the book, however, remained remarkably the same as only in three places was the plot of the story substantially changed. The chapter divisions all remained the same and in most cases even the paragraph and sentence arrangements remained the same. Changes usually were made by inserting or deleting words, phrases, and sentences. Only occasionally was a paragraph added or deleted. The changes made were, almost without exception, not stylistic ones but rather thematic ones, and seem to fall into certain categories. The major category



of change consists of those changes that were made in order to ennoble the oppressed. That is, changes were made in order to portray the peasants and the proletariat in a more favorable way. There are many instances of this, but one of the most interesting examples is the change in the character of Gao Yubao's father, Gao Xuetian. The poor and oppressed peasant, Gao Xuetian, had several defects in the 1955 edition which were eliminated by 1972. In the 1955 book, Gao Xuetian suffered from epilepsy, this affliction being one of the reasons he could not effectively support his family.<sup>23</sup> By 1972, this ignoble affliction had disappeared.<sup>24</sup> By 1972, Gao Xuetian had also found new courage, attacking landlords<sup>25</sup> where he had once held back,<sup>26</sup> and cursing<sup>27</sup> where he had once cried.<sup>28</sup> He becomes a better father to Gao Yubao and, in 1972, scolds Gao Yubao<sup>29,30</sup> less than he did in 1955. He does not, in 1972, get angry at Gao Yubao when he says he wants to attend school. Gao Xuetian has also become a stronger figure in his family than he was in 1955. On occasions when Gao Yubao had turned to his mother as head of the family in 1955, in 1972 he turns to his father as head of the family.<sup>31,32</sup> Gao Yubao's father also becomes a better husband and a more respected member of the community. In 1955, when Gao Yubao had asked his mother what he should be when he grew up, she advised him not to be like his father, but rather be good and learn to make a living.<sup>33</sup> This passage is omitted in 1972.<sup>34</sup> Arguments between husband and wife are omitted<sup>35,36</sup> from the 1972 book. In the 1972 edition Gao Xuetian is also more<sup>37</sup> upset about his wife's death than he was in 1955.

These changes made in the characters of Gao Xuetian and others show how individual characters were revised. Many methods were used in effecting such revisions. One way in which the peasants and proletariat

were ennobled was by removing any capitalistic characteristics that they might have had in the 1955 edition. For example, the pig that Gao Yubao tended for his family in the beginning of the book had been bought by Gao Yubao's grandfather in the 1955 edition, but according to the 1972 edition, Gao Yubao's aunt had given it to the Gao family. In the 1955 book Gao Yubao's uncle sells charcoal in town to make a living. In the 1972 book he drives mules for a landlord. In the 1955 edition, before they go to the city, the Gao family sells their land and furniture and uses the money they get from the sale to live on in Dalian. In the 1972 edition their possessions are taken from them by the landlord.

These changes just mentioned, of course, also serve to worsen the oppression and harsh conditions that the poor suffer in the book. There are many other instances in which the conditions in which the people lived were made worse in the 1972 edition. Statistics were at times changed. In the 1955 edition the Gao family planted nine mu of land, six mu of which were good and three of which were bad. In the 1972 edition they planted five mu of land, three mu of which were good and two bad. In describing Gao's village, the 1955 book states that about one half of the households were tenants. In the 1972 book it is said that almost all of the households were tenants. Sometimes the story line was slightly changed to make conditions worse. In the 1955 book Gao Yubao's mother made a Japanese flag from an old flour bag. In the 1972 edition she made it from an old overcoat. To have her use a flour bag was presumably to admit that peasants were rich enough to have flour. In 1955, the hill in Dalian to which the Gaos move is covered with trees. In 1972 it is covered with stumps.

When the Gaos first reach Dalian, their relatives want to celebrate,  
 so their aunt, in 1955 buys fish as a treat.<sup>51</sup> In 1972 she buys  
<sup>52</sup>vegetables.

Any indication in the 1955 edition that the poor peasants or proletariat  
 might have been happy is removed from the 1972 edition. For example,  
 while working for the landlord, for a short time Gao is able to tend  
 the pigs in a secluded, well protected valley. Of this time, the 1955  
 edition says, "The days passed easily for Gao...."<sup>53</sup> This phrase is  
 omitted from the 1972 edition.<sup>54</sup> Again, when the hired hands are together  
 in their sleeping quarters, the 1955 edition says that some sleep, some  
 chat, and some smoke.<sup>55</sup> The 1972 edition does not mention the pleasurable  
 occupations of chatting and smoking.<sup>56</sup> When Gao Yubao first reaches  
 Dalian, he is awed by the big city and, in the 1955 edition, in several  
 passages, he is happy and laughing in his new environment.<sup>57</sup> This  
 happiness and laughter is omitted from the 1972 book.<sup>58</sup>

Another way to ennoble the oppressed is to debase the oppressors.  
 One way of doing this is to change the past histories of the villains.  
 Landlord Wang, in 1955, is said to have become rich by selling livestock,  
 good and bad, to the slaughter house.<sup>59</sup> In the 1972 book he became rich  
 by being a spy and guide for the Japanese.<sup>60</sup> Nicknames for villains  
 are used much more often in the 1972 edition than in the 1955 edition.  
 The Japanese soldiers, for example, are called "guizi" (鬼子), or  
 "devils", much more often in 1972. Any good deeds that the landlords  
 might have performed in the 1955 edition are eliminated from the 1972  
 edition. In the 1955 book, it is Landlord Wang who prevents the Japanese  
 from shooting Gao Yubao.<sup>61</sup> In 1972 this is omitted.<sup>62</sup> The accomplishments  
 of the oppressors are also lessened. In Dalian the railway built on the

landfill near the Gao's house and the many cars and trucks on the bridge are mentioned only in the 1955 edition.<sup>63</sup> They would have to have been accomplishments of capitalists and as such are best forgotten.

Any explanations for the evil acts of the oppressor class that might have been in the 1955 edition disappear from the 1972 edition. For example, in the 1955 edition, the pharmacist who has come to collect past debts, explains that if he cannot collect his debts he will not be able to buy more medicine and without medicine he cannot cure people.<sup>64</sup> This rather plausible explanation is left out of the 1972 edition.<sup>65</sup> Attempts are also made in the 1972 edition to make the landlords appear ridiculous. When some rowdy landlords are described, the 1955 edition says, they were "noisy as an earthquake" (也闹得地动摇似的).<sup>66</sup> In the 1972 edition this becomes, "kept on shouting like a pond full of toads" (像象水坑里的癞蛤蟆叫个不停).<sup>67</sup>

All of this serves not only to debase the oppressor, but also to increase the separation of classes. Any hints that remain in the 1955 book that the oppressors and the oppressed may have collaborated are removed by 1972. We saw the beginning of this process earlier when the passage stating that Gao Yubao's mother had raised the landlord's daughter, which was in the 1951 version, was removed in 1955. In the 1955 book all the villagers except the Gao family gather to meet the Japanese army.<sup>68</sup> In the 1972 book, only the very young and old turn out.<sup>69</sup> To avoid meeting the Japanese, Gao Yubao pretends to be sick and his grandfather approves of this plan saying that "Even an official won't turn out a sick man."<sup>70</sup> By 1972 this somewhat favorable comment on the character of officials is gone.<sup>71</sup>

Antagonistic classes may be farther apart in 1972, but class

brothers are much closer. In 1972, the Gaos' neighbors give the Gaos money in troubled times<sup>72</sup> and when the Bao chief is beating Gao Yubao's father, angry peasants gather around and protect him.<sup>73</sup> They are not so helpful in the 1955 book. Mention of the theives and pick pockets in the crowd in Dalian who prey on their class brothers is removed from the 1972 book.<sup>74</sup> Even the villains are more closely united. In a few places in the 1955 book landlord Wang thinks ill of the Bao chief, but these disparaging thoughts are short lived and are gone by 1972.<sup>75,76</sup>

Class becomes all important in 1972, even more important than nationality. When Gao Yubao's teacher explains in 1955 why he does not want to teach his students Japanese, it is because Chinese are Chinese and should not learn Japanese.<sup>77</sup> In 1972 he does not want to teach the Japanese language because the landlords want to learn it so that they can collaborate with Japanese.<sup>78</sup>

Another catagory into which the changes between the two editions fall is that of deemphasizing the individual. This is naturally related to the increased class consciousness in the 1972 book. This deemphasizing of the individual often is found in passages concerning Gao Yubao's studying. At one point Gao Yubao gives his reasons for wanting to study. In 1955 the reasons he gives are rather personal and relate literacy to making one's life more enjoyable. In 1972, Gao Yubao no longer wants to learn for individual, selfish reasons, but rather wants to learn so that he can help his class brothers.<sup>79</sup> Again, when the village school master is trying to convince Gao Yubao's parents that they should allow him to go to school, in 1955, the school master says that since Gao Yubao is an especially intelligent child, they should not impede him.<sup>80</sup>

In 1972 there is no mention that Gao Yubao as an individual  
81  
might be smarter than other peasant children.

As the characters lose their own individuality, they come to think of the masses and not of themselves. After Gao Yubao has just gotten his job at the Dalian factory, he reveals to Foreman Liu that he and his family desperately need money. Foreman Liu gives Gao Yubao some money, saying, in 1955, that since he is alone in Dalian he does not need  
82  
much money and thus it is easy for him to spare some for the Gaos. In 1972 his reason for giving the money is that since we poor people  
83  
are all of one family, what difference is there between you and me?

Another type of change is that of generalizing the specific. At times, in 1972, a general name is substituted for a specific one.  
84  
The name of Gao Yubao's village becomes less specific in 1972. The name of the county seat was dropped in 1972 as Wafang Dian (瓦房店)  
85  
becomes merely "xiancheng" (县城), or "county seat". When the Gao family went to Dalian, the 1955 book says they took the Feng Tian  
86  
(奉天) train. This name was dropped from the 1972 book. In 1955 the hill on which the Gao family lived was called Shenshe Mountain  
87  
(神社山). The name of the hill was omitted in the 1972 edition. 88  
Facts were also often omitted which might have served to identify a specific place. In the 1972 book, the specific location of Gao Yubao's  
89  
factory, given in 1955, is omitted as are the names of the other  
90  
factories near Gao Yubao's factory. This is all an attempt to avoid the tabooed practice of writing of real people and real things and to make the story seem more universal.

References to groupings of people also become more generalized. As is obvious when looking at the examples given, these changes are

also related to the attempt to increase class consciousness.

In 1955, for instance, the Japanese soldiers, when in Gao Yubao's village, drive a crowd of Chinese people.<sup>91</sup> In 1972 they drive a

crowd of people, but it is not specifically stated that these people are Chinese.<sup>92</sup> In 1955, when Gao Yubao's grandfather curses the

landlord, he says, "You beast wearing the skin of a Chinese".<sup>93</sup>

In 1972 he says, "You beast wearing the skin of a man".<sup>94</sup> Again, when describing the people who come to express concern over the Gao's family plight, in 1955 they are referred to as "linju" (隣居), or "neighbors, people next door". In 1972 they become "xiangqinmen" (乡亲们),<sup>95</sup>

or "people hailing from the same area". Later, when the Bao chief is complaining about how tricky the masses are, in 1955 he refers to the masses as "Sun Family Villagers" (孙家屯的人).<sup>96</sup> In 1972 he refers to them as "these poor fellows" (这些穷小子).<sup>97</sup>

There are other changes in the novel that do not seem to be so directly related to the clear portrayal of class characteristics. One interesting change concerns peasant and proletariat organization to resist oppression. The revisions in this category are among the most complete in the book. At the ending of chapter ten, in 1955, although Xiao Ding discovers the landlord's plot to conscript the field hands, they do not escape and are sent off to do forced labor.<sup>98</sup> In 1972 it is Gao Yubao who discovers the landlord's plot and warns the workers. They then unite, set fire to the Bao chief's house and barn, and run off to, they hope, join the Red Army.<sup>99</sup> In chapter 12, however, in the 1955 edition, a large portion of the chapter is devoted to a discussion of the planning of a strike by the workers in several factories in Dalian.<sup>100</sup> In 1972, however, all mention of a strike by the workers

is eliminated. Instead, an old worker who has just returned from his native village relates to a few fellow workers the wonderful changes that have occurred in his village after its liberation by the Eighth Route Army.<sup>101</sup> Again in the 1955 book, when describing the village school in which Gao Yubao began his education, the history of the school is given--it was initially set up by the peasants then taken over by the Bao chief for the purpose of teaching the Japanese language.<sup>102</sup> This short history of peasant initiative is omitted from the 1972 edition.<sup>103</sup> Peasant initiative is fine as long as it is related to the Communist Party. Spontaneous initiative that is not rooted in communism is unacceptable.

As might be expected, another category of change is that of inserting the Chinese Communist Party into the text of the 1972 book. In chapter ten, as mentioned before, the farm hands find out that the landlord is looking for revenge after the beating they gave his father. They wonder what they should do. In 1955 they all agree that it would be useless to run away.<sup>104</sup> In 1972 they all agree to run away to a communist controlled area and try to join the Eighth Route Army.<sup>105</sup>

As stated above, in chapter twelve, the factory workers organize a strike in 1955.<sup>106</sup> In 1972 the episode of the strike is eliminated and a tale of the successes of the Eighth Route Army in rural areas is substituted.<sup>107</sup>

Another category of change could be called 'correcting the politics', or changing or correcting the 'slips of the pen' that might reflect badly on the CCP. In 1955 there is occasional use of the word "bandits" to refer to the communist rebels. (As we have seen, in the 1956 edition this reference was present but with a footnote by way of explanation).



108,109,110,111,112

By 1972 all mention of bandits is eliminated.

Further, at one point in the story, when the workers are beating the landlord, a Japanese officer hears the commotion and runs over with his gun drawn and says:

1955: 毛贼一个也不要 113

1972: 贼的一个也不要 114

Both can be translated into English as, "We don't want even one rebel...."

The word "maozi" (毛贼), used in 1955, can mean "petty rebel" as it does here, but it can also mean "Mao, the bandit". This possible insult to Mao Zedong was removed from the 1972 edition.

Another change in this same vien occurred when Gao Yubao was hiding from the Japanese. He was sick and the sun seemed merciless:

1955: He didn't know when the red sun set nor did he know when the sun rose again in the east...  
不知道红太阳什么时候下了山...也不知道  
太阳在什么时候又从东方升起来... 115

1972: He didn't know when the sun set nor did he know when the sun rose again...  
不知道太阳什么时候下了山,也不知道  
太阳什么时候又升起来... 116

Notice that in the 1972 edition the description of the red sun rising from the east is eliminated. Presumably this is because this might be construed as an unfavorable reference to Mao Zedong who is at times symbolized as the red sun rising in the east.

One of the major changes in the plot of the novel occurs in the last chapter and is done in order to add hope to the novel. In 1955 <sup>117</sup> this last chapter is entitled "Mother's Death" while in the 1972 <sup>118</sup> book the heading is "Going to Shandong" (上山东). In 1955, after Gao Yubao's mother dies, the family fortunes decline even farther

and soon what is left of the Gao family sadly returns to their native village. In 1972 after his mother dies, Gao Yubao and Foreman Liu from the porcelain factory leave, full of hope, for Shandong. One must not exaggerate the hopelessness of the peasants plight since peasant readers might interpret this to mean that it is useless to struggle against oppression.

Another interesting category of change is that of eliminating feudal elements. Appeals to and curses of the supernatural and fate are removed from the 1972 book. For example, Gao Yubao's mother, when exasperated at affairs, says, in 1955, "My God!" (我的天老爺呀).<sup>119</sup>  
<sup>120</sup> This is omitted in 1972. When she is lamenting that they cannot afford to send Gao Yubao to school, she says, "God does not have his eyes open so you must not think of studying...."<sup>121</sup> This also  
<sup>122</sup> is omitted in 1972. When Gao Yubao is beaten in the garbage dump, she cries, "God! What sin did I commit in my former life?"<sup>123</sup>  
<sup>124</sup> This is also gone by 1972. Mention of feudal customs is also left out of the 1972 story. In 1955 the pig that Gao Yubao is tending at the beginning of the book is going to be killed for his uncle's wedding festival.<sup>125</sup> This is not mentioned in 1972.<sup>126</sup> When Gao Yubao's grandfather dies in the 1955 book, the family is too poor to burn paper money for him.<sup>127</sup> This custom of burning paper money for the use of the dead is not included in the 1972 book.<sup>128</sup> Nor is the custom of giving the Kitchen God (灶王爺)<sup>129</sup> food at New Year's mentioned in 1972 as it is in 1955.

Particularly interesting for those studying the state of literature during the Cultural Revolution is the fact that in 1972 the names of certain literary works mentioned in the 1955 book are

changed. In the 1955 book, Gao Yubao's uncle tells Gao Yubao "Hu Yanqing Da Leitai" (Hu Yanqing Takes Up the Challenge; 呼延庆打擂台) stories. The village children act out the parts of the characters in the stories: Hu Yanqing (呼延庆); Men Qiang (孟强); and Jiao Wang (焦王).<sup>130</sup> In 1972 this is changed and the children listen to Shui Hu (The Water Margin; 水浒传) and act out the Wu Song (武松) tiger fighting scene.<sup>131</sup> In 1955 Gao Yubao says that he wants to learn to fight like Sun Wukong (孙悟空), the monkey hero in Journey to the West (西游记), did in the stories his uncle told.<sup>132</sup> In 1972, however, it is Lin Chong (林冲) and Wu Song from Shui Hu that he wishes to emulate.<sup>133</sup> When the Gaos go to Dalian, Gao Yubao's cousin tells him about a story teller they can listen to in the street. He is at that time telling the story of Yue Fei (岳飞), a hero of the Sung Dynasty.<sup>134</sup> In 1972 all mention of Yue Fei and even of the story teller is removed.<sup>135</sup>

Some of the most interesting changes, and, at times, for the Western reader, amusing changes, are those made in order to 'clean up' the text, to get rid of the 'dirty words'. This type of change seems to take precedence over all others. When there is a choice, for example, between debasing a landlord or ennobling a peasant and cleaning up the text, the latter is chosen. When a village woman is killed by the Japanese, in 1955 the murder is described as "jiansi" (奸死) meaning "to die after being sexually molested".<sup>136</sup> In 1972 this become "shasi" meaning "to be murdered" (杀死).<sup>137</sup> It should be noted that "jiansi"

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\*Hu Yangqing is a character from the book Hu Jia Jiang (呼家将) which is a collection of storytellers' tales predominately from the north of China. Hu Jiaqing, Meng Qiang, and Jiao Wang are characters from the same novel.

was retained in the 1956 edition, an edition which, judging from the name of the publisher, was intended for children. In 1955, Gao Yubao refers to the landlord's daughter as "choubiao" (臭表), or prostitute. 138  
 In 1972 this word is omitted. 139 When, in 1955, the Bao chief's wife is mad at her husband, she harangues him saying, "Which prostitute 140 did you have on your lap?" 141 This sentence is left out in 1972.

At times, passages are rephrased in more delicate language. Near the end of the novel, Mrs. Gao is going to have a baby. Her sister-in-law, in 1955, says to her, "Your belly has gotten big. 142 I can see you are soon going to give birth to a baby." In 1972 143 this becomes, "I can see that your time is almost here...." Again, in the same scene, when referring to Mrs. Gao's pregnancy, the 1955 phrase, "...I can see you are soon going to give birth to a baby..." 144 becomes, in 1972, "Your body is heavy...." 145 Unhygienic and scatological passages are also either changed or removed in 1972. When the landlord's wife thinks up an excuse to leave the room, in 1955 she says that 146 she has to go to the toilet. In 1972 she says she has "something 147 to do". In the last chapter, Gao Yubao is very sick from the burns he has received in the factory. His mother must constantly nurse 148 him. She must even, in 1955, help him defecate and urinate. In 149 the 1972 version mention of this service is omitted. Gao Yubao's brother had such a poor diet that it was said, in 1955, that he could not 150 have a bowel movement. 151 This is also deleted from the 1972 edition. When, in 1955, the landlord beats Gao Yubao it is because Gao Yubao 152 ate some of the pig food. In 1972 it is because he spilled some of 153 the pig food. When the Gao family goes to Dalian, the 1955 edition stresses the size of the night soil pile and sewage ditch near the

154  
 Gao house. In 1972 this unpleasant feature is not emphasised as  
 155  
 much. In 1955, when the poor children in Dalian scavage in the  
 156  
 garbage dump, they eat any discarded food that they find. This  
 157  
 eating of refuse food is not mentioned in 1972. One of the jobs  
 Gao Yubao's mother has in Dalian in 1955 is to wash cloth found in the  
 158  
 night soil pile. In 1972 this job was changed to washing clothes  
 159  
 for other people.

Acts of oppression by the landlords which seem undignified for  
 the hero to endure are changed even when the result is to make the  
 landlord's acts seem less cruel. The beating Gao Yubao gets in 1955  
 from the landlord after being found with some textbooks is much worse  
 160  
 and more humiliating for Gao than it is in 1972. There are several  
 beating scenes in which Gao is pushed into the mud by the landlord.  
 161,162  
 These rather undignified scenes are removed in 1972. After  
 163  
 the rooster incident in 1955, the landlord boxes Gao's ears where  
 164  
 in 1972 he just stares angrily at Gao Yubao. Having one's ears  
 boxed does not, perhaps, befit a hero.

#### E. After the Cultural Revolution

It remains to be seen whether Gao Yubao will be revised again  
 now that the Cultural Revolution has ended. In a history of contemporary  
 Chinese literature published in China in 1980 part of a chapter was  
 devoted to Gao Yubao and its author, but only the 1958 edition of the  
 165  
 novel was mentioned. No mention was made of the 1972 revised edition.  
 In the future, perhaps, rather than revising Gao Yubao again, the 1972  
 edition will merely be ignored. The revisions made to the 1972 edition  
 were extensive and offer actual examples of how the Cultural Revolution's

goals were implemented on the literary front. It must be remembered, though, that Gao Yubao was being subjected to similar revisions from the early 1950's on, long before the Cultural Revolution was ever conceived of. The Cultural Revolution did not originate new literary ideas, but merely intensified old ones. Now that the Cultural Revolution has ended, it is probably the intensity of the application of literary theory that will change, not the content of that theory.

This paper has stressed the wonderful opportunities these extensive and continual revisions offer to observe literary theory being put into practice. It must always be kept in mind, however, that post-revolutionary Chinese novels are not intended to reflect the realities of society as it is, but rather are intended to be reflections of society as it should be. These novels should never be used as tools to look at Chinese society unless this fact is clearly understood.

## VII. Conclusion

The changes made to Gao Yubao since it was begun in 1949 not only show the way in which Chinese literary theory was put into practice, but also show the contradictions involved in changing theory into practice. The first contradiction is that of the revised edition which must be revised again. Although all literary policy in China is based on Mao's Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art, controversies still exist as to whose interpretation of this work is correct. In order to be published, a work must be in accord with the interpretation that prevails at the time of publication. In order to survive after publication, it must be flexible and ready to accommodate itself to whatever new interpretations may appear. Gao Yubao has been amazingly successful at doing this for reasons mentioned previously, that is, since Gao started writing when he was nearly illiterate, he could not write without extensive help and he thus developed a work style that was very useful afterwards when other comrades were assigned to help him revise his work. Gao knew very well from experience that in China a literary work must undergo constant revision and that it is never the product of a single person.

The second contradiction encountered in putting theory into practice is that of fact versus romantization in autobiographical writing. A strict autobiography should limit itself to the events of the author's life. How far can an autobiographical novel stray into the realm of creativity and still deserve the adjective 'autobiographical'? Gao himself was understandably confused about this. To further complicate

this problem, post-revolutionary Chinese literary policy makes it impossible to write anything but the most creative autobiographies since one must write of the typical and not the specific. So while the autobiography is valued because it is based on real experience, the individual experiences recorded must not vary from the typical class experience of the period.

The third contradiction seen in the creation of Gao Yubao is that between the amateur writer and the professional writer. Gao initially became famous because he was an amateur writer who wrote his life history even though he was nearly illiterate. However, although his fame rested on the fact that he was a soldier of poor peasant background who overcame his lack of education to produce a novel that told of sufferings endured in the old society, in fact, he could not write this novel by himself. He required such extensive help that one wonders if he can be considered the real author of his novel. Gao recognized this contradiction and always acknowledged the assistance he was given. He was admired because he sought and accepted help since this showed his willingness to learn.

These three contradictions seen in Gao Yubao and in the author Gao's life are contradictions that can never be resolved given the characteristics of modern Chinese literature. Works will continue to require rewriting as long as they are required to rigidly adhere to a changable literary policy. Autobiographical and biographical writing will still be admired for its ability to portray real life, yet will be discouraged because too accurate a description of a single real life will distort the picture of a typical real life. As long as amateur writers with little education are valued, they will continue to require help in producing their works. Gao Yubao is to be admired because he encountered these contradictions and yet was not defeated by them. He



began writing in 1949, the same year that the People's Republic of China was founded, and is still writing today. This is quite unusual in China. In a history of contemporary Chinese literature published as late as 1980, Gao and his autobiographical novel are given warm praise.<sup>1</sup> Gao is presently writing a new novel and is very active in the literary world of Liaoning Province. Gao's willingness to adapt and the adaptability of his novel helped assure his literary survival. One hopes he will continue to be able to adapt to the environments of the future.

## Notes

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1

# How I Helped Comrade Gao Yubao Correct His Novel

by Huang Cao

Gao Yubao is soldier writer Comrade Gao Yubao's autobiographical novel. The first draft of the novel was started in August, 1949, and finished in January, 1951. At that time Comrade Gao Yubao's educational level was very low--out of each ten characters that he wrote, he would have to ask someone about seven or eight of them. On top of this, he was a soldier engaged in maneuvers, fighting, and busy at work and it was not convenient for him to ask people here and there how to write new words. He would draw a circle and a symbol to stand for the new word and would wait until his comrades had free time. He would ask about all the characters at once then copy them again in another notebook. His writing time, then, was the free time in between fighting and working. Comrade Gao Yubao's first draft was written using this type of stubborn perseverance.

I have earlier introduced the moving process of his writing and study in an essay, "An Heroic Soldier Engaged in Art and Literature," so I will not say more of it here. I would now like to talk about how I helped Comrade Gao Yubao correct his novel.

The first draft of Comrade Gao Yubao's novel had forty chapters in all and was in the form of a serial novel (zhanghui; 章回). The contents started with the second year after the Japanese imperialist occupation of the Northeast and went up through the time that the Chinese People's Liberation Army liberated Guangxi Province. The whole

book had about 200,000 characters. Comrade Gao Yubao himself was the main character in the book. The first thirty-four chapters were the history of the exploitation and oppression he suffered under Japanese imperialism and its traitorous running dogs, and the feudal landlord class. In the last six chapters he wrote of fighting, work, and progress after he joined the army. The whole book was actually an autobiography. The thirteen chapters I helped him correct and publish--about 125,000 characters--made up only about one third of the contents of the original manuscript. Comrade Gao Yubao is now studying in a preparatory course for the Chinese People's University and the remaining two thirds of the story will best be left for correcting until after he has finished his studies.

In his first draft, Comrade Gao Yubao wrote basically of his hate for imperialism, traitorous running dogs, and the feudal landlord class and displayed his incomparably strong love for the working people, the Party, and the People's Army. In many places the personalities of the characters were lively and detailed, the language extremely natural, which imparted an intense sensation of realism. It was very moving to read.

However, owing to Comrade Gao Yubao's educational level, artistic and literary level, political theory level, and the restrictions of his life experiences, there were many places in his first draft, in the depiction of characters, the arrangement of plot, the choice of material, as well as in his expressive powers where some shortcomings still existed. In addition, there was the difficulty of his standard of literacy. If this rough draft were to be corrected, it would not be easy without a special person to help.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army is an army with a tradition of revolutionary culture. The political organization of the army has always paid attention to a unit's cultural and artistic work. Comrade Gao Yubao's first draft was written with the encouragement and concrete help of the army's Party members and commanders. After writing the first draft, the Chinese People's Liberation Army's central political branch, cultural branch and the political and cultural branches of the South Central Military District all paid special attention to this manuscript and decided to call me to come help him with the correcting. Therefore, in the summer of 1951, I started to help Comrade Gao Yubao with the work of correcting his novel.

As far as Comrade Gao Yubao was concerned, there were two aspects of my helping him correct his novel. First, was to help him successfully correct his novel. Second, through the process of helping him correct, to raise his writing abilities and at the same time to raise his educational level. As for myself, through this process of correcting, I thought to study Comrade Gao Yubao's many good points.

How did I help Comrade Gao Yubao correct his novel?

Of course, the aim of correcting Comrade Gao Yubao's novel was always to raise the quality of thought and art in the work. But, concretely speaking, I helped Comrade Gao Yubao to settle through the method of popular language the following problems.

First was to help Comrade Gao Yubao select and organize material anew in accordance with the first draft he had already written and his life experiences; to remove excess characters and stories; to let Comrade Gao Yubao fully use his own imagination; to concentrate the characters and story; to make the characters in the novel even fresher,



the plot even more lively, more complete, and to have even more typical significance. But since Comrade Gao Yubao's first draft was an autobiography, if this type of new composition were imposed, it would inevitably influence the factuality of Comrade Gao Yubao's personal history.

At first, Comrade Gao Yubao was very concerned about this point. He was afraid that his comrades and those from his area who knew his history would say that he was fabricating his own history and changing the personalities of certain still living people. But if one did not carry out the corrections and process it in this way, the educational significance of the work for the reader would be greatly reduced. Because of this, many of the characters in the first draft did not leave a very deep impression. Much of the plot was not significant. And even if (certain) characters threaded through the whole novel, they were not lively in every place, nor rich enough in educational significance. With regard to this problem, I analysed it with and explained it to Comrade Gao Yubao and as soon as Comrade Gao Yubao understood the rationality behind the factuality of life and the factuality of art and literature, he started to correct the first draft.

As seen from the main theme of this novel, the oppression and exploitation that the working people suffered under the enemy's cruel rule was infinitely tragic. Some people's spirit of resistance at certain times vanished but, at that time, under the brilliant influence of the Anti Japanese People's War of Resistance led by the Chinese Communist Party, the vast numbers of toiling, heroic Chinese people never willingly yielded. They used every way and method to battle with the enemy-- Comrade Gao Yubao's personal history testifies to this point. Therefore, the theme of the work became that of the oppression by the enemy

suffered by the working people. Not only must it bear witness to the evil exploitation and oppression by the enemy, and write of the misery and disasters borne by the working people, but it must also be written so as to point out the heroic, battling spirit of the working people and their intelligence and wisdom in the midst of battle. It must also give a true account of the Chinese Communist Party and the influence of its leadership in the Anti Japanese People's War of Resistance. As for the people who are pessimistic, it must also point out their mistakes. Only in this way can it correspond to the real appearance of history and be of educational use to the people. Comrade Gao Yubao's first draft was influenced by certain 'speaking bitterness stories' (let's call them this!). It did not sufficiently represent the battling spirit of the working people or their intelligence and wisdom. The influence of the Party could not be seen. In the book, the life of Yubao and his family was mostly a tragic, pitiful life of crying, beatings, and indignities. There was very little to rouse the people's will to fight or their confidence in victory. Of course, one must also write about the tragic lives of working people, but it is even more essential prominently to bring out the battling spirit of the people and the influence of the Party. This lifting up of the content, then, was the main task in completing the correction of the novel.

The second task was the depiction of the Japanese imperialists, the traitorous running dogs and the feudal landlord class. If most of the enemy depicted in the work were rogues who were outwardly evil, unreasonably savage, and always beating people, it could not accurately expose the evil of the enemy's cruel oppression and exploitation. In the enemy camp, of course, there are not a few

of this type of perverse and unreasoning scoundrel, but the outward appearances of many of the most cruel enemies are not evil, some even go to the extent of displaying a seemingly 'humanitarian' face. For real evil, one must write of their inner evil. Then, and even for those enemy who are outwardly evil, one must at the same time write of their inner evil. Only then can one accurately expose the evil of the enemy. In another respect, the evil of the enemy is only, after all, temporary. In the presence of the Anti Japanese People's War led by the Chinese Communist Party, the enemy will inevitably perish. If the work did not write at the same time of the enemy camp's outward strength but central weakness, its inner contradictions, and its fate of inevitable doom, but only wrote of what the enemy's evil is like, this also would be counter productive. In Comrade Gao Yubao's first draft he emphasised the enemy camp's outward evil, unreasoning savageness, frequent beatings of people, and so on, but he did not write enough of the inner world of the enemy or their fate of inevitable doom. If it were not corrected it would not be sufficiently able to rouse the reader's deep hatred and to raise the self confidence of our people. Because of this, in the correction work, this became the second important duty.

In short, the aim of the correcting was to add sharp portrayals of the characters and to make the work even more true, even more moving and of an even richer educational significance for the reader.

In fact, to fulfill this duty of correcting, the novel then had to be corrected on the basis of the original draft. In order to allow these ideas to be able to help bring Comrade Gao Yubao's imagination into full play; in order to let Comrade Gao Yubao unrestrainedly

write of his rich and true life; in order to make Comrade Gao Yubao be able to pass through this revision process and raise his writing level, in this plan for raising the level of the work, Comrade Gao Yubao and I concretely researched the contents of the first draft, pointed out the important faults in the first draft and then let Comrade Gao Yubao himself freely proceed with the corrections. As for whether or not it would be in serial style after the corrections, I felt that it was best to decide on the basis of the contents. Comrade Gao Yubao, faced with this plan, industriously corrected the whole rough draft. As a result of the corrections, the number of characters was increased to about 300-400,000. But this correction got rid of unnecessary characters and incidents and added many stories that, although they were not Comrade Gao Yubao's, yet were lively and had educational significance and were thus incorporated into the life of the main character, Yubao. Some that could be integrated into a single character were thusly integrated. Stories that were not lively were exaggerated. Therefore, the level of certain parts of the novel was raised much higher than that of the first draft and to make the endings of certain of these more lively, I again helped him proceed with a little touching up and so produced the first chapters to appear in newspapers and periodicals within the country such as "The Rooster Crows at Midnight", "At the Porcelain Works", "The Devils Are Coming", "Sun Hamlet Is Plunged in Grief", "The Two Coffins", "A Fine of Two Dou of Grain".

After the introduction of Comrade Gao Yubao's writing accomplishments and after these chapters were published in newspapers and periodicals in the country, they lent great impetus to and were of great use in the movement at that time to expand study among the troops and the vast numbers of workers, peasants, and masses, as well as young

intellectuals. They encouraged the creative fervor of the workers, peasants, and soldiers, and in the literary world of the whole country they also attracted extremely great attention. After being introduced in the People's Daily, the Soviet Union and several other people's republics' newspapers and periodicals and other capitalist countries' progressive newspapers and periodicals also introduced Comrade Gao Yubao's writing accomplishments and works. The Party, the Chinese people, and the people of the world in thus paying attention to the writing of Comrade Gao Yubao, encouraged both his writing and my help. Comrade Gao Yubao had then even greater determination to correct his work and I also had an even greater determination to help Comrade Gao Yubao correct his work.

But a work, every chapter, every paragraph, cannot be corrected all at once. The parts that had already been published, in the opinion of Comrade Gao Yubao and myself, still had a lot of shortcomings. The greater part of the manuscript which had not yet been published was still completely unpolished. In order to make it into a long novel, though one already had the basic content and structure, if one did not again adopt the method of detailed correction for each chapter and paragraph and 'freely' elaborated on only the basic plan, one would not be able to correct it. Therefore, we afterwards took up the method of detailed correction for each chapter.

With one hundred percent stubborn determination Comrade Gao Yubao proceeded with the detailed corrections. These sections which Comrade Gao Yubao rewrote later he eventually went over ten or more times. For each rewrite, after Comrade Gao Yubao thought of how to correct the content and structure, he then proceeded with me in careful research.

After this investigation was finished, he rewrote. Until the novel had reached the level demanded, I continued to help him proceed with fixing up the content and written language a bit. There were a few chapters that after Comrade Gao Yubao had corrected many times, still could not reach the demanded level and I worked hard and again helped him with fixing them up. But the other chapters were still corrected through the stubborn and painstaking hard work of Comrade Gao Yubao himself. The fixing ups or corrections I helped him with were all done on the basis of work that Comrade Gao Yubao had himself done and I merely did the work of 'barber'.

While proceeding with the work on the detailed corrections, Comrade Gao Yubao met with difficulties. In fact, the difficulties he met, compared with the difficulties he met in the written language when he was first writing the first draft, were incomprehensibly greater. The first and biggest difficulty that Comrade Gao Yubao met was that he did not deeply understand the life he had lived. This matter is not strange. What Comrade Gao Yubao wrote was the life he himself had lived. Why is it that he did not deeply understand the life he himself had lived? The reason is, what Comrade Gao Yubao wrote of was his life as a child, boy, and young man. He was, after all, at that time still young and he lacked education. In addition, he was constantly on the run while in the Northeast and the time he spent in each place was not long. Even if the pain, the oppression and exploitation inflicted on him by the enemy was very severe, the hearts and inner worlds of people are rich and complicated and and this he did not understand deeply. Toward people's thoughts and behavior he often had a naive and unsophisticated understanding. Because of this he

experienced difficulties in deep portrayals of the inner world of the characters. Next, the quality of Comrade Gao Yubao's behavior displayed in battle, work, and study, of course, was very good. This explains his already correct point of view on the world and life. But because Comrade Gao Yubao's educational level was very low, his study of the theory of Marxist-Leninism was still not enough. Because of this, his ability to recognize, analyse, and grasp the rules of life's development was still weak. In many places he stopped with the recognition of life's surface phenomenon. Thirdly, Comrade Gao Yubao used to love to listen to drum-stories and loved to read old novels. Of course, this was very helpful for his writing, but because the old society deprived Comrade Gao Yubao of the right to an education, he read few books and read even fewer literary books. He still was unable to understand foreign works and classical Chinese works. In addition, it was the first time he had studied writing and he lacked creative experience. Because of this, in portraying characters, composing the work, and arranging the plot, he also met with great difficulties and it goes without saying that in using the written language he also had great problems.

In the course of the correcting, Comrade Gao Yubao profoundly realized these huge difficulties. I also soon saw them. But what caused one to be moved was that, nevertheless, in the face of these great difficulties, Comrade Gao Yubao did not lower his head. In the course of the correcting he often used Comrade Lenin's famous saying, "Study, study, and study again" to encourage himself, to examine and, with the greatest courage, to do battle with these great difficulties.

Furthermore, helping him with these great difficulties was my duty. I helped him recognize life, analyse life, and choose and gather together life's experiences. I helped him research the composition of the novel, to arrange the plot, and to dig out the inner world of the characters. At the same time, I gradually introduced him to a few works to read and analysed a few works for him. I used the places that I had corrected or fixed up in his novel to help him study the method of writing and to raise his educational level. This method of uniting this with the practical experience of Comrade Gao Yubao's creative work to help him improve himself was of definite use toward raising his literary writing abilities and educational level. In the last few years, Comrade Gao Yubao has greatly improved in these several aspects. His ability to recognize life has been raised, his literacy and artistic level raised, his ability to organize and compose essays raised, and his descriptive abilities also raised. He can also read some foreign works. When writing, he no longer needs to draw circles or symbols to represent new words...but one must give credit for this progress of Comrade Gao Yubao first to the Party's policy of attaching importance to and cultivating the writing of workers, peasants, and soldiers. Secondly, one must give credit to the hard work and open minded study of Comrade Gao Yubao himself under the leadership of the Party. Although my help to him was of some use, it had, however, not a few faults, so the usefulness, I must say, was very small.

This novel has now already been corrected and published. There are many moving places in the novel, but there are still many shortcomings. These moving places were basically created through the hard



work of Comrade Gao Yubao. As for the shortcomings in the novel, I must accept responsibility since the Party assigned me to help him correct his novel. If there are any shortcomings, this can only be explained by my help to him not being enough.

Of course, generally speaking, when the educational level and artistic and literary levels of a worker, peasant, or soldier writer are both rather low, for the sake of study it is better to write short compositions. If at this time one wants to undertake a long creative work, the difficulties are necessarily very great. Particularly when the educational level is low and one wants to raise the writing ability one must first start by raising the educational level. All work is like this, without a certain educational level one will always meet with many difficulties. However, this is not to say that without a high educational level one can never undertake creative work. In history there were many poets from among the people and although they were not literate they still created many beautiful poems and songs in the popular tradition. Comrade Gao Yubao's situation is also like this.

Now Comrade Gao Yubao is in the midst of working hard to raise his own educational level. For the time being he has stopped correcting the remaining parts of the novel. But this is extremely necessary in order that he can hereafter correct this novel even better and in order that he can hereafter work even better for the people. Because the leadership of the military's art and literature section saw this point, they decided he should temporarily stop correcting and sent him to People's University to study. In a short time, when Comrade Gao Yubao once again returns to his work post, I will still be willing

to use up my meagre strength to help Comrade Gao Yubao completely finish correcting this work. But I believe that at that time it certainly will be much easier than it was.

These several years that Comrade Gao Yubao and I have been associated have been extremely valuable. Comrade Gao Yubao has many things about himself that are of value for me to learn. Comrade Gao Yubao views his writing completely as an undertaking of the Party. In the process of writing and correcting, the great sense of responsibility and the serious, energetic spirit that Comrade Gao Yubao showed, Comrade Gao Yubao's spirit of open-minded study and humbleness, Comrade Gao Yubao's stubborn will and determination to fearlessly overcome difficulties... all these fine qualities are of value for me to learn. The strong hate that Comrade Gao Yubao showed toward the enemy in his work, his warm love toward working people, his enthusiasm for life, his Chinese folk style, his popularized language...all of us who are engaged in writing must not be lacking in these things. The shortcomings in my work are many. If in recent years I have made a little progress in my work, one reason will be the encouragement and impetus that Comrade Gao Yubao's spirit gave me.

This novel of Comrade Gao Yubao has been published. I hope many comrades and readers of the artistic and literary world will come forth with their opinions and give me advice concerning the contents of the novel, especially concerning the work I did to help Comrade Gao Yubao correct the novel.

The circumstances of my helping Comrade Gao Yubao correct his novel, as explained above, have been used as the 'postscript to this book.

13 February 1955  
Beijing

2  
Postscript to the Revised Edition

by Gao Yubao

When I finished correcting the last page of the manuscript, I once again studied Chairman Mao's Talks on Art and Literature at the Yanan Forum. When I recalled the experience of writing and correcting the book, I could not calm myself for a long time. Many readers have written letters asking about my experiences writing the book, but I really have no experiences of which I can speak. I realize profoundly that I owe everything to Chairman Mao's leadership and Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

I am from Fu County in Liaoning Province. In the terrible old society my grandfather, mother, uncle, and younger brother, one after the other, were all killed by Japanese imperialism and traitorous local tyrants. I was also forced by life's circumstances from the age of nine to tend pigs for a landlord, to do child labor, and to be a laborer. Many times I barely escaped with my life. It was Chairman Mao and the Communist Party that saved me from the fiery pit and led me to take the revolutionary route.

After my home region was liberated, in order to liberate all of China and to avenge my dead relatives, on November 19, 1947, I joined the Chinese People's Liberation Army. During that movement to rectify the army, which was personally led by Chairman Mao, I went through speaking bitterness and the three investigations. This made me understand why in the old society the poor people were so poor

and suffered so, and it deepened my hatred toward the old society. It made me understand for whom I had become a soldier, for whom I was fighting and it raised my political consciousness concerning the liberation of all of China and the liberation of all of mankind. In order to impell myself to remember class suffering and national hatred and in order to eternally carry out Chairman Mao's revolution to the end, I decided to pick up a pen to bear witness against the terrible old society; to expose imperialism and the hideousness and cruelty of the traitorous landlords; to sing the praises of workers, peasants, and soldiers in order to serve the Chinese people and the people of the world.

My ideas received great support from my commanders and comrades. My commanders not only encouraged me to write for the revolution and to raise the level of my political thought, but also concretely directed me as to how to write. In order to overcome the difficulties of the low level of my education, many comrades helped me to learn to read and study. After this, I then, on the one hand, fought in the army and, on the other hand, took care of my time so that I could study and write the book.

With the training and help of my commanders and the Party, in more than a year's time, I finished writing the first draft of the novel. Afterwards, the unit's Party committee and groups of people helped me correct on the basis of the original work. I cut out some of the characters and plot in the book, concentrated it, generalized it, and finished writing the novel.

After writing the book, in order to train me, the Party again sent me to study to raise the level of my Marxist-Leninist-Maoist theoretical thought and my writing abilities. It is worth mentioning

that at this time I continued to receive many letters from the numerous workers, peasants, and soldiers. They warmly encouraged me to obey the teachings of the great leader Chairman Mao and to continue to enter deeply into the midst of the heated struggle of the workers, peasants, and soldiers. They hoped I could make a new contribution to the cause of proletarian art and literature. But at this time in the world of literature and art, there were some capitalist "authorities" who exerted all their strength to advocate to me the three famouses and the three highs\* and in vain used the thoughts of capitalists' fame and wealth to corrupt me, to make me break away from the true line of the three great revolutionary struggles, and to change me into a mouthpiece for capitalism.

Chairman Mao taught us saying: "Seizing victory in the whole country is only the first step of a 10,000 li long march....China's revolution is great, but the distance after the revolution is even longer, and the work even greater and more arduous. This point must now be made clear to those in the Party. Make sure comrades continue to keep their modest, prudent, humble, steady style of work and make sure comrades continue to keep their work style of arduous struggle." Chairman Mao again and again warned us to watch out for the favor of and the sugar coated bullets of the capitalist attack. Chairman Mao's leadership made me see and think clearly and recognize that a big

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\*The three famouses principle (三名): advocating the use of famous writers, famous directors, and famous players. The three highs policy (三高): desiring high wages, high copy money, and high bonuses.

problem in our taking that road is whether to keep the revolutionary spirit of arduous struggle continuously going forward or to seek ease and comfort and stop progressing. That I could do a little work for the Party was because it was what I should have done and because of Chairman Mao's leadership and the training of the Party and people. I had to carry out and protect Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and continuously struggle.

Chairman Mao personally launched and led this great proletarian cultural revolution to smash the capitalist headquarters of bosses such as Liu Shaoqi, to expose and criticise their plots and intrigues to restore capitalism, and to greatly consolidate and strengthen the proletarian dictatorship. This is the great victory of Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line. Participating in this type of great revolutionary struggle made me advance one step in deeply understanding that Chairman Mao's revolutionary line is the life line of the whole Party, the whole army, and all of the people of the country. With Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, the revolution will be victorious. If one deviates from Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, the revolution will receive a setback. Only if revolutionary workers in art and literature follow Chairman Mao's revolutionary line to forge forward can they best serve the cause of the proletarian revolution.

The creative experiences of the model revolutionary operas personally cultivated by Comrade Jiang Qing all have great educational and practical significance for the problem of how literature and art serves the workers, peasants, and soldiers, socialism and the proletarian government; how to sing the praises of the workers, peasants, and soldiers; and how to expose the enemy, and so forth. After studying

these experiences, my perception in this respect was raised and my thinking made even clearer and more definite. Because of this, when I looked at this work, Gao Yubao, again, I felt that there existed in it many shortcomings and problems and it needed to be corrected.

While I was correcting, the army's Party committee and commanders created a very good environment for me. Comrades from the publishing company and I together entered deeply into the lives of factories, communes, army units, and schools and listened to the opinions of the numerous worker, peasant, and soldier readers and entered into research and discussion about the correction of this work.

When I started to write Gao Yubao, although I was already a soldier in the Chinese People's Liberation Army, because I had not been enlisted long, and especially because of the circumstances of the fighting at that time, I did not have the conditions under which I had time to study some political theory and I lacked a deep understanding of the great Mao Zedong thought. At that time, I did not sufficiently expose in the novel the objective truth of wherever there was oppression there would be the spirit of revolt. At that time I especially did not know what a novel was and I did not know that the characters and plot in the novel could be fictionalized. Because of this, what I wrote was basically an autobiography. This time I met with this type of problem while correcting: if I departed from the distinguishing features of the work in correcting, this would be the same as creating something new, so I could only correct on the original foundation. While correcting, I appropriately gave prominence to the spirit of resistance of Yubao and the masses, and strengthened the working people's class feeling of united struggle and deepened the exposure of the reactionary

nature of the exploiting classes. Also, on the basis of the circumstances of the struggle at the time, I rewrote, in chapters ten, twelve, and thirteen, the influence of the Party and so forth on Yubao. Although I did this, it still has many shortcomings. Let it, however, be a reference material for class education!

Although this work has been printed again, I feel it is still distant from the needs of Chairman Mao's thought on the proletarian cultural revolution and from the needs of the vast numbers of workers, peasants, and soldiers. I am determined to use this as my new starting point in continuing the revolution; to use Chairman Mao's thought on the proletarian cultural revolution as a guiding principle; to use the worker, peasant, and soldier masses as teachers; to continually progress in the practice of the three great revolutionary struggles; and to make a new contribution toward the cause of proletarian art and literature.

I want to make use of this chance to give my heartfelt thanks to my commanders and comrades for their concern and guidance, and to thank the great numbers of worker, peasant, and soldier readers for the help, support, and encouragement they gave me!

the author  
December, 1971, Beijing



### Why a "Circle and Suppress" Essay<sup>3</sup>

by Gao Yubao

In October, 1972, while the rectification campaign to criticise Lin Biao was developing in depth, in order to criticise the "inspiration theory" and "special genius" theory that Lin Biao advocated in literature and art and to clarify some confused problems in the relationship of literature and art to life, I wrote a short, 1000 character essay on literature and art which was published in Jiefangjun Bao. Unexpectedly, it stirred up a 'gang of four' hornet's nest. The 'gang of four' and their trusted followers violently jumped up to denounce this short essay with such charges as 'deliberately speaking against central authorities', advocating writing about real people and real events, and being against typification in literature and art. They continually published essays to 'encircle and suppress' it.

In the past several years, I have always thought this essay was based on the leadership of Chairman Mao and stressed the importance for literary and art workers of entering deeply into the life struggle of workers, peasants, and soldiers. This is also my personal understanding of creative work. To propagandize the materialistic theory of reflection, to stress that literary and art workers enter deeply into life--can this be wrong? Can this be a crime?

There is a saying, "the cleverest housewife cannot cook a meal without rice." This simple reasoning very clearly explains the relationship of literary and artistic creative works to society and

life. If a writer leaves the heated struggle of the lives of workers, peasants, and soldiers, relaxes the remolding of world views, and does not have rich source material from life, then he definitely cannot write the revolutionary works of literature welcomed by the workers, peasants, and soldiers. In the terrible old society, from the age of nine I tended pigs for the landlord, was a child laborer, a worker, and always struggled at a point between life and death. This experience made me personally feel the deep suffering of the working people in the old society and also made me clearly realize the sinister and vicious nature of the landlords. This book, Gao Yubao, is the main thread of my own life story and at the same time, it was also written, refined, and processed from the vast raw material of the bitter lives of the working people in the old society. The writing and correcting of this novel made me deeply feel that the people's lives are the only source of creative work in literature and art. If we depart from the lives of the people, creative work in literature and art then becomes water without a source, a tree without roots. Therefore, revolutionary workers in literature and art must not forget this source or discard these roots.

But why did the self proclaimed 'standard bearers of the revolution in literature and art' and 'Marxist philosophers'--the 'gang of four'--become so upset about the propagation of the idea that creative works in literature and art cannot depart from life? Why did they fly into a rage over the criticism of Lin Biao's 'inspiration theory' and 'special genius' theory? Originally the 'gang of four' and Lin Biao were one of a kind. Their minds were stuffed with idealist apriorism and basically they were against the materialistic theory of reflection.

Under the pretense of 'creative works in art and literature must not be limited by real people and real events', the 'gang of four' dished out the trash of the 'anti-real people and real events' theory.

What they advocated, then, was the idealist line of creativity.

The 'gang of four's' theory of 'anti real people and real life events' was not only against the naturalism that copied life word for word, but it also wanted to deny that the source of creation in literature and art is in society. That creative work in literature and art should not be confined by the limits of real people and real events is common knowledge. However, the 'gang of four', with ulterior motives, emphasised this common sense question to an absurd degree. It seemed that if a work of literature or art had a trace of people or events from real life then it wrote of real people and real events. They completely confused creative works in literature and art having their source in life with writing of real people and real events. To be created, the characters and story in any work of literature or art must be based on real life and it is absolutely unavoidable that besides having some similarities to real life, there will always be traces of people and events that actually exist in life. If there is not this kind of basis in life, the creation of literature and art is out of the question. Lu Xun said it well: "A novel is like painting, though I have a model, I never use all of it, but just bits and pieces. A certain resemblance with an individual is unavoidable--if there is no resemblance to a living person, then it will be a work without any imagery." However, the 'gang of four' brandished and struck out blindly with the big stick of 'anti real people and real events'. Many creative works based on worker, peasant, and soldier heroic characters and progressive

deeds were charged with 'writing of real people and events' and suffered great harm. Their smothering of the great film, "Pioneers" (创业), is a typical case. Wherever they did not want creative work in literature and art to receive the limitation of real people and events, they clearly wanted to sever the relation between creative works in literature and art and life and society, to deny the 'source' and 'roots' of society and life. In denying this source in society and life for creative works in literature and art, they then took out the basis of typicalness in creative works in literature and art. They prattled about typicalness--isn't this complete rubbish!

The 'gang of four' raised the black flag of the theory of 'anti real people and real events' and said fine sounding things like 'portray models' and 'increase profundity', but in truth they were against literary and art workers entering deeply into the life of struggle of the workers, peasants, and soldiers and were against socialist literature and art extolling the workers, peasants, and soldiers. They attacked in every way possible the writers who persisted in uniting with the workers, peasants, and soldiers. They willfully smothered the positive reflection of the life of heated struggle of the workers, peasants, and soldiers in works. They even went to such an extent that works in literature and art in basic military units that drew their material from good people and good deeds, praised progress, and inspired one's fighting will were harshly criticised because they were suspected of writing of 'real people and real events'. In a word, their 'anti real people and real events' was simply a butcher's knife to hack at the creative works of the workers, peasants, and soldiers and the revolutionary literature and art of the workers, peasants, and soldiers.

They reversed the relationship between the 'source' and the 'current' of creative work in literature and art. They used 'current' to represent 'source'. The creative achievements of the other people secured by trickery became to be known as 'creation'. They even went to the extent of using the phrase 'gaining experience' to dig into an assorted pile of feudalistic, capitalistic, and revisionistic literature and art to discuss 'life'. Their so called 'source in life' really is the 'source' for their counter revolutionary government's needs, so they can use literature and art to build up their own public image, to usurp Party leadership and mould public opinion.

The goal of the 'gang of four's' 'encircle and surpress' essay was not only to strike at one author. They harbored evil intentions toward and sinisterly pointed a spearhead at the army. They indiscriminately abused power in ordering the army commanders to undergo self-criticism. They even went to the extent of sending people to spy for information, to investigate backgrounds, to seek behind the scenes supporters, and to try recklessly to cause fierce hatred toward and confusion in the army. They naturally met with firm resistance from the army leadership and the masses. Now, this gang of scoundrels who rode on the people's heads Wang, Zhang, Jiang, and Yao have completely fallen from power. Their anti revolutionary heinous crimes, their ultra rightist revisionist line now are being exposed and criticised. Eliminate the spread of the false and pernicious influence of the 'gang of four' in the field of art and literature, then socialist literature and art can definitely progress along the lines of Chairman Mao's leadership to bring about the victory of the workers, peasants, and soldiers.

4

## Gao Yubao's Letter to This Author, 23 November 1979

...I'd like to say a little more about the question concerning the 1955 and 1972 editions of the book Gao Yubao. I won't talk more about why I wanted to write a book--I mentioned this in the "Wo Xie Wo" letter. When I started to study how to write, I didn't understand what an autobiography was or what an autobiographical novel was. I only thought to record the real experiences of my childhood. In this way the places and the people's names were all real. When I understood that I could use creative processing, many chapters had already been published and I did not have another chance to drop the real names of some of the important characters. It was best just to continue writing like that. Because my educational level was too low, I only corrected one third of the novel, then the army commanders decided to send me to school to study. I would wait until after my educational level was raised to rewrite the remaining two parts. I was then placed in Beijing Chinese People's University's accelerated middle school to study. At this time the novel was going to be published. What should it be called? Because two thirds had not been rewritten, it was not easy to give it a name. In the end I decided to call it Gao Yubao. Miss Kleemeier, you have certainly read a lot of books and autobiographical novels such as How the Steel Was Tempered by Soviet author Nikolai Ostrovsky. This book is an autobiographical novel and is also a case of one writing about oneself, but the main character is not Ostrovsky, but

is Paul Korchagin. In this book, Gao Yubao, the author is Gao Yubao, the main character is Gao Yubao, and the book's title is Gao Yubao! I have investigated a bit and in the past and present, in China or foreign countries, there has never been this kind of case. This book Gao Yubao is an autobiographical novel, it is not an autobiography, but many people still consider that it is my autobiography and treat the main character in the book, Gao Yubao, and me as one and the same. This is not good. You study literature, you know that the Gao Yubao in the book is not I, he is a fictional character. This character represents the thousands of children of the old society who suffered extreme hardships, but he is not I. The Gao Yubao in the book not only must be studied by the vast numbers of people, I also must study him, because I, myself, have many short comings and faults and must have people's help and teaching. The hero in the book is not I. You certainly agree with this, don't you?

We'll now talk about the next question: the question concerning the 1955 and the 1972 editions of this book, Gao Yubao. The 1955 edition still had two thirds that had not been finished. In 1962, after I graduated, I decided then not to continue writing it. Although that book was autobiographical, because the people's names and the place names were all real and it suffered from the restrictions of historical conditions, in 1971, when the Renmin Wenxue Publishing Company wanted to republish this book, Gao Yubao, I proposed to finish it off. My leadership agreed with my opinion. They all showed great concern for me and in order to hasten my pace a bit, they asked two comrades to help me correct this edition that was published in 1972.

Notes for "Appendix"

<sup>1</sup> Huang Cao, "Wo Zenyang Bangzhu Gao Yubao Tongzhi Xuigai Xiaoshuo," postscript to Gao Yubao, by Gao Yubao (Beijing: Zhongguo Qingnian Chubanshe, 1955), pp. 206-15.

<sup>2</sup> Gao Yubao, "Zaiban Houji," postscript to Gao Yubao, by Gao Yubao (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 1972), pp. 167-70.

<sup>3</sup> Gao Yubao, "Weishemma 'Weichao' Yi Pian Duanlun," Jiefangjun Wenyi, no. 5 (1977), pp. 92-93.

<sup>4</sup> Letter received from Gao Yubao, 23 November 1979.