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Production Internship

By Jeanette Roberts

A novel set in Nineteenth Century China

Following the Pretext:
I decided to take advantage of criticism and the pressure of time that I wanted to write a long piece of fiction before I graduated, and suggested 1860-80 as a period of deciete, I could focus on, and suggested an historical, recommended books on late imperial China, a satire on the late imperial system of transition from the two-thousand-year old imperial system to totalitarianism in Chinese landscapes. I also wondered about the passive philosophy, fascinated me, especially when the poems were course was stimulating and refreshing, a mystic and mystical.

Mr. Prent and Mr. Barnes' ten unit Chinese civilization with that of an eastern culture.

Chinese poetry, I wanted to broaden my thinking through comparison and oriental departments in the world, besides being interested in writing workshops. I heard that Durham University, England, was first exposed to China through its poetry, in less from writing it. I learned from writing it, the process of writing it and what I have

I want to talk about how I choose to write this novel, it's

Introduction
hierarchy of responsibilities on which important society depended.

duties to family and state, which was destructive to the concept of
the gentry. They taught peasants to put religion above other
opposed gentry leadership, and began to erode peasant faith in
Western gunboats, made their way into China's interior. They
were

By the late nineteenth century, mass movements, backed by
classes, such as China's mother, were a problem in all society.

an increased tax burden for the Chinese peasant. Also, optimism
trade surplus for optimism. This caused inflation, which resulted in
Western countries, especially Britain, forced China to

plundered remaining peasants.

and increased formation of bandits and revolutionary armies that
number of floods and droughts occurred, resulting in starvation
In the second half of the nineteenth century, an unusual
left their land and became bandits and rebels.

 grew smaller, as descendants continued to divide them. Peasants
were impoverished, and consequently, population exploded. Land lots
were improved, and consequently, population exploded. Land lots
In the late eighteenth century, agricultural techniques

some causes of decline, which constitute the novellea, His-

in the face of a disintegrating socioeconomic system.

By summer, I knew that I wanted to deal with
along with creative writing and literature.

novella and theses, and utilize history, philosophy, and religion.
enshrined peasant Hakka's, a cultural minority. I have dramatized
a women's army. The movement began in South China, and they
practices included separation of the sexes, and the formation of
practical steps. The Taipings were the case to be Christ's younger brother. The Taipings, a Tantrical quasi-Christian sect led by Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, who
share land equally, and to establish a heaven on earth. They were
the Taipings started their tradition. The Taipings proposed to
wanted to usurp the throne. Some Chinese communist historians say
before arose, the Taipings. Previous revolutionaries had not
peasants lost faith in the gentrify and the Imperial
peasants went into debt to greedy usurers, and often deserted
their land to join bandits or revolutionaries.

Peasants went into debt to greedy usurers, and often deserted
share of tax dollars, so total tax increased to compensate.
200,000 between 1850 and 1865. Gentry took a greater and greater
government had augmented the gentry population from 12,000 to
fight bandits and revolutionary armies. Also, to raise funds, the
overburdened gentry. The government had to pay soldiers to
overburdened peasantry. The government kept increasing taxes on the already
mistake. The class system was beginning to break down.
which was one of the balances of power that had kept peasants sub-
tstraints. Peasants lost the incentive to study and rise by merit,
wealthy merchants and aristocrats made careless, corrupt admirals-
available only by passing extremely difficult examinations.
positions for sale. Gentry positions had traditionally been
(5) The Manchu government increased the number of gentry

(6)
insert cultural details that made China immediate. Hence, the Chineseess or humanness of my characters, although I could develop.

are sketchy and the action captures emotions and insights can’t moments of vivid description of scene and action. The characters story of a particular individual at a particular time, despite I don’t think the novella succeeds at these goals, or as the friendship, love.

do to people, and parental, romantic, and student/teacher and I also wanted the novella to dramatize what victimization can extremely, the plightry of Chinese women.

because the traditional Chinese woman’s role dramatizes by this decided to write about a woman partly because I am one, and partly decided to write up during cultural change for me to find out. I affect Chinese people. I guessed that my main character would I wondered how the cultural upheaval of this period would century.

ence, they became more powerful and despotic in the twentieth later these warlords-gentry were involved in anti-massonary who-the manchus had allowed local warlords, such as Yi, to arise.
defeated by the manchus in 1864. In order to defeat the Taiping’s, after fourteen years of civil war, the Taipings were finally Hakka's.

light the problems and experiences in accentuating to the and exaggerated the differences between Han and Hakka to high-
towards that.

to write a novel that works? this novella is a definite step
the problems of a long work better next time, and I hope someday
with the experience of this novella behind me, I'll handle
even bad novels.

a master-work and caution: I've gathered respect for novellists,
suffered periodically from critical paralyzation. I wanted to write
then in a short story. So does self-motivation; last fall I
organization and character development became much more complex
greater time-span of concentration than I had ever attempted!

It is now, I've also learned that writing a long work involves a
about first, until my imagination is much better developed than it
set my novella in England. Next time, I'll live in a place I write
culture of which you have no direct knowledge, I'd probably have

If I had known last summer how difficult it is to project a
information or had written an extensive cultural introduction.

what have worked better if I had used a narrator to give cultural
Chinese culture, which is more novelable than ours. The novella
explain beliefs and actions, which is artificial, especially in

dialogue is usually stated; also, I tend to use dialogue to

Honor program paid typing and research costs. Mary Owen proofread it.

drafts. Pamela Morey typed it. The production interstifently

owned. Ellen Ireth and Andy Shumaker critically read early

assisted the research. Rebecca Jelliff, Bill Hunter, Vasyukh

thanks especially for his steady encouragement. Robert Bing

Thanks to Bill McDonald for assisting the writing of this novella.

acknowledgements
Characters

Kong, a peasant girl

Hakka female soldiers, including Sui Po, Rong's friend.

Chou Hon, a Hakka captain.

Hung, the king of the Taipings.

A Buddhist priest.

Hui Pui, Rong's maid.

Tu Fei, Yi's wife.

Yi and Chung Ho's Mother.

Rong's son.

Chung Ho's yamen runner, a missionary lady and her husband.

The Priestess.
almost ethically rich earth. She and the crow would join Chiu Young

ending her shoulders. It belonged to the sky as she did to the
one she saw last week. "Hallo, there," she thought to it, straight- 
A crow skated across the sky. She wondered if it were the

them in cold gusts and was comforted.
on chattering normally as they tilted through the air. She felt
no longer seemed to crouch behind trees when she came; they were
would do. Like them, she belonged here. The spirits of the place
felt like one of the reeds, waiting, to guess what a stranger
scared her, but she knew where to hide, and how to listen. She
which marsh was her favorite always-new world. Berie sounds
explore as she did now, and laugh at magistrates and old women.
way. Hong didn't believe it; she would stay herself and always
irate is the nameless supreme god. That's what mother said, any-
from them. All were like unconscious spots of a spider's web nearby.
made them honour you. In the end, they saw you were no different
ot till then bury you with honour, as one of them, was it play that
testing near the palace, they pull you down into a pot of hot
she would be one of them. She'd heard that it enormous caught you
around her and pull her down into the swamp. In her next life,
guessed that if she scared them, they would turn themselves
her ears and nose. The reeds watched her as she passed. She
toes. She felt powerful, the creator of tops, till her feet touched
The soil was mosst, almost swampy, stepping under Hong's
time for your betrothal. Before we can find you a husband, we
now that you have six winters, Hong, it is getting to be the
tolerate it.

mother raised her eyebrows at Hong. Hong hated Grandmother
mother-in-law were here, you'd sleep the night outside for this.

Why, it is my

your family neglected to teach you this. Why, you know my feet are delicate, petite.

and you know, you know dirt-floors should be swept daily,

and shook her head. You know dirt-floors should be swept daily.

rocky? My feet are sore. She gazed anxiously at her tiny feet.

"You lazy witch," Grandmother said to her. "This floor is

mother stirred vegetables over the fire.

paddles brown for harvest.

her family's hut looked thin and shabby in the midst of rice

she was a spy on important events. No one knew.

she had been, until they examined the lettered, fed and growing earth.

birds would be singing, making all anisms unsure the night-storm

seeds. In the morning, she would return and assess the changes.

go home and wait for Mother in the warm hang, and hope for the

cant, and become the mud that killed it's child seeds. She would

they would wait out the storm, clutching loose mud: many would

reeds looked lonely, frail and naked. Was this fate for them?

she shivered, clouds were knottting, darkening the sky. The

all over the earth.

and she had dreamt of guilaung streaming dragons as they spat rain

In his golden chariot; rather had read her Chu Yuan last night,
Rong, Rong, Mother called.
Stop her, Grandmother said.
Ran to the door.
Little girl. Rong saw mother put down the big bathing tub. She
who was she talking about? Rong would never marry? she was a
when you are married to a prosperous man,

"Don't cry, Grandmother said, "You'll be happy with this"
Rong's eyes.
Mother gently set Rong down on the Kang. She would not meet
Mother.
"Go get the hot water and towels, Grandmother said to
"Please, mother, don't do it, Rong said. She began to cry.
She hugged her.
Mother looked at Rong and shrugged. Rong ran up to her and
Her childhood has been quite long enough.
put it of for longer? She'll put up a fuss whenever we do it.
ability as a wife. And, you know we must start the process soon; why
know that it her feet are unbound, she will be much less desir-
you would deny me, and deny your daughter's best interests. You
Of course, no one asked your opinion." Grandmother said.

"Have her childhood end.
"Wait a while, Mother-in-law, Mother said quietly. Let her
at night.
there always. She did not want the pain her cousins cried from
Rong's eyes widened. She could get to the Kang and stay

must bide your feet."
3
What sappy stuff was mother saying? Rong socked the Kang. All
ter, perhaps you will suffer no more in your life. I hope so.
ther... "I wish you enough pain to placate the gods, little daugh-
Rong felt mother's hand on her hair. Rong would not look at
her down,
Rong pounded the Kang. Her legs and feet were like huge stones, held
and she couldn't know, not being able to get there. She cried and
the other, she felt like screaming. The sun would spot the marsh
know she could not stand on them even when one foot just bruised
she stepped, they would become whole again, she
The ground, she could not believe her feet could remain like
stumps scattered in white. Pain pushed through them up her legs and
when she woke her feet were no longer hers. They were short

come shimmering black dots.

Rong screamed. She saw Mother's face grow and separate, and be-
Grandmother hobbled over. Grandmother broke Rong's feet quickly.
He put Rong on the Kang. He and Mother held down white

Fighting all of them,

He carried Rong in the Kang to his arms. There was no use

Father frowned and looked pained. "So soon" he murmured.

Her feet.

"Bring her in!" Grandmother shouted. "We're about to bind
He looked at her guiltily.

"Please let me go, Father," Rong screamed.

Laughing.

This kicking and screaming? He said, holding her arms and
Rong ran square into Rafter outside the door. What's all
Not enough given, though, to show our cousins how well we are
prepared red for the clan, and gold paper to burn for the ancestors.
"We must have a grand ceremony of thanks, with fresh eggs
will be given bigger this year than last, honored mother," he said.
They heard farther laughing in the next room. "Our harvest
to the marsh.

ved to hurt, keeping her in bed some days, but she still jumped
now than she had before her feet were bound, and her feet would
all a little girl, eternally eleven. She had more homework to do
Rong shrugged. She still felt as though she would be eaten
Rong and mother swept the kitchen floor.
"Your betrothed,"

In only four years! My daughter, you'll go to the home of
as she could.
Mother extended her hand, Rong held her fingers as tightly
Tears.
I'd go if I could watch! Rong whispered, and broke into
no home.

trying to hurt and confuse her, to make her feel as though she had
Rong didn't know what to make of that statement. Mother was
Maybe you should go," Mother said.
though sobbed, Rong was glad she'd hurt mother.
marsh and live there, eating bugs. "Rong saw mother crown, as
I hate all people," Rong shouted. "I will crawl to the
that mattered was the pain, that would never end, Rong believed.
her. They did not deserve the privilege of an adventure. That

village children were either too young or too old to come with
year it was empty, and forbidden. Rong came once, alone; all the
spring and autumn rituals were always held here. The rest of the
theless, Rong could see nothing but trees and wet grass.
grade was near the village, by the stream: a secret place, none-
trees glittered wet where Rong felt it as cool fingers. The
half-acknowledgement, a vein in his throat stood out.

than usual, but he waved at Rong in his usual jerks that were
had already jutted out him with her curse. His eyes seemed larger
moved around the ceremonial fire. Rong wondered if the priestess
father’s eyes were also glazed, and on the priestess, as she
looked ready to pass on her curse to anyone whose glance she met.

priestess, with her black hair frizzed and eyes circled in red, but knew the priestess could see her anyway, if she wished. The

The priestess spoke somberly. Rong hid behind mother.

Mother swept impassively.

thought. If a new woman came Rong would put snakes in her bed.

Grandmother should keep her mouth shut about Mother, Rong
credit to our ancestors, your father, bless him, will be proud.

my son, and purchase yourself a fortune. Comprehend, we will be a
bring bad luck on us all. Now, if only you can pass your exams,

He is your cousin, my son, and do be respectful. You will

land for outstations with the money?"

Why give to Jo? just good-for-nothing, when we can buy

really doing. "Grandmother laughed.

6
could be his made some day, and eat the remains of this pork, and no
Kong wanted to touch his roses that looked like ice. Maybe she
felt and shyly. His large nose perched regally over his chin.
men. He opened his chair’s thick curtains, and emerged, splendidly
magistrate’s, in his red satin robes, appeared on the backs of four
something was rustling and thumping beyond the trees. The
standing long on her bound feet; Kong knew from experience.
face blanched, but she stood straight. She must be in pain,
"No words from-interluted voices today," he growled. Mother’s
red, and snapped her.
Kong frowned at her, surprised, father turned, his eyes angry
"And so the gods may be bribed for peace," Mother whispered.
Scooped the offerings in the dust into the fire, which grew.
Prostrates herself, all plants and beasts and earth-forces, she
harks, like smokes, Kong wanted to be the prostrates. As the
of gold and copper cash, some fell and hungquistening from her
father, as she vanished headman, threw the prostrates handfuls
the prostrates, garbled sounds, and gasps.
I saw spirits uniting through the prostrates. Her
Now Kong saw spirits uniting through the prostrates. Her
power came out, Kong heard it. Though she could not see it, her
eyes widened and narrowed, and she rocked. Her mouth opened and
and was surprised she was allowed to leave; she expected branches
felt water rushing, bursting in colors in her head. She ran away,
which would drown you, dearer you, if you were aware of it. Kong
her. The river’s quaking held the intensity of the trees’ action,
day Kong had felt rain and wind coursing through the trees around
and have her thonged," he said in a low voice. "Not to death.

The magistrate stepped back. He reddened. "Take this woman

stiffly and looked at the air.

The priestess' tongue came out. It was only half a tongue,

alive again.

The priestess cursed the magistrate; the priestess' eyes were

ground. The priestess' hands were on her hips. Hong could swear

no one spoke. All hunched their backs and stared at the

visit next week. You have brought enough to serve your purpose.

忳忳, and use the rest for the deputy governor's unexpected

We will take the rest of this cash; burn part of it to con-

Yum's eyes; tired and mute.

Her eyes were normal now, even a little dull. They were like aunt

"Not long," the priestess said, her voice cold and harsh.

Funny, thought she.

"How long have you been here?" he asked. Hong wondered at his

the priestess and bowed stiffly.

The magistrate did not watch his runners. He walked up to

wars proud of him; he was acting without grandmother.

help him in a fight. Rather looked bigger than usual today. She

lips were tight. Hong doubted that any of the other men would

rather stepped back, directly in front of mother. Mother's

she wished he would punch them; she would help.

at them. They were gathered and don't much weaker than rather.

The magistrate's runners eyed mother, leaning. Hong knewed

Yum. One would bother her, because she could blackmaill them through the
the lowest class, and their looks alone could contaminate a young
their parents flushed, fathers tensing, runnels were of
side, runnels were now eying the village girls, and winked at
uncle Pu, mother’s brother, stepped to cover mother’s other
would beat mother later.
father looked down, but said nothing. young wondered if he
shrugged. "I regret this.
"No one from this village has passed."
quietly.
"When will the examination results be published?"
father.
grandmother pounced her cane into the soil. she stared at
you from the hill-painters.
that they, too, must eat, and that they are the ones who protect
remember, the army is stationed only seven miles away. remember
officials cannot easily handle more tax; come now, don’t look angry.
tax is due one week from this day. peasants who can afford such
he said, looking at each man. "There’s the password to suppress.
of grain you owe the emperor have been increased by one-tenth,
the magistrates drooped, then stood straight. the measures
their faces tight.
she did not seem to notice. the woman looked away, reddening,
tied her. they put their hands on her breasts and laughed, but
she sat at his feet, but did not struggle as the runnels
village, young deh.
"has evil in her eyes. " He looked at her. "If you return to this
only ten strokes, for manners. put her outside the village, she
"Yes, it's time for someone else to have a chance at them,"

quickly. "But you have talked twice."

Not that we begrudge you the lessons, uncle Fu intercepted

his eyebrows at Father.

obviously not the best teacher, right? He laughed, then raised

your high and mighty lessons that we pay for. His secretary is

Mother's cousin's husband, said to Father. "That's where you take

"Why, you are the only one to go near his yamen."

Everyone looked at each other. Rong hugged Mother.

him, who betrayed our meeting place?"

he is a dyed-in-the-wool Southern belle," Father said. "Who told

greedily told."

reptile's service. It brings bad spirits; he knows that, the

Left. "Why, when I was younger, magistrates never dared disturb a

"What importance," Grandmother said loudly, after they had

walk. She tripped now and then, but never fell.

priestsesses, her hands tumbled to a long rope, was pulled to a fast

seizes, they looked like wizened turtles chained together. The

formed on their backs now seemed part of the chair and of them—

not a bit awkward. The runners lifted it, pads of flesh that had

the magistrates clambered slowly into his chair. His feet were

the runners did! Mother slept with Rong on the small Kang.

Mother was hidden, too. Too bad Father didn't see Mother the way

girls and young wives were hidden. Rong was always surprised that

girl, at harvest, when the runners were expected to come for tax,
Final time. Like the priestess, she now saw spirits, not people.

Try of her own neck. St Jo's eyes widened as he surveyed the
Kong pressed her head down, thinking not to think about the fright-
hand. St Jo's head shook and protruded a farther throttled it.
grabbed St Jo's head, and Kong watched, holding grandmother's
from foot to foot, was he really going to be killed? Father
stit to cried, his head down, as they held him. Kong moved
’ Run all eyes pinned to Jo.
Five years, the exams are fixed. I tell you! No one looked at
years! No one from this village has passed the exams in twenty-
treat whom we should blame. Resting our taxes again in a bad
“Come on, Uncle, I said, just extirpate him. It is the magic-
cried her on her knees.
be fertile.” St Jo’s wife faltered. Mother ran to her, and
be fertile.” St Jo’s wife faltered, Mother ran to her, and
Uncle Jo said, "We have families to support; our land had better
"Perhaps his death would destroy the bad ghosts loose today.
" St Jo’s son was just her age.
Ron bet you no planned to marry St Jo’s wife and take his land.
"Strange how, extirpate him, you know, St Jo’s neighbor said.
before he died.
father died three years ago; Rong remembered she had rarely spoken
— She had been the oldest member of the clan since Grand-
that you'd betray us for a few cash," grandmother said, waiting her
we know your ambitions for your son are high; high enough
"Of course not,” St Jo twisted his gaze desperately now.
Rather asked with quiet intensity. He stared at St Jo.
"Are you sure it was not you who told the magistrate, St Jo?"
he floor. "Oh, thank you," Hong said. She arranged the stones in stars.

"Here are some pretty pebbles for you," mother said, smiling.

Knotted hands and snapping the knuckles. "What will guilt him."

"We will bury him honorably," father said, stretching his arms.

There were no knittings until father joined that society.

Hong hoped his angry spirit would not come to her warm Kang.
murder of St. I. No one will testify; I have been to ten houses. The magistrate has ordered your son to be taken for the
father by a short rope.

The plump-nosed clerk looked irritated, but came, leading
she called from the doorway, "Come, please!"

Grandmother's eyebrows lifted and her jaw fell. "Clerk!
"Go outside, Grandmother, now. Father is being arrested!

I limped out in her night-clothes. She looked somewhat alarmed.
Why wake me so early, you good-for-nothing?" Grandmother

in-law!

outside Grandmother's door, Mother shouted, 'Honored mother-
"Hurry up," Hong said. "Get Grandmother!"

then your poor father."

let me watch. Now he's tying his wrists. Oh, our fortune is
He's talking to your father. Don't be so imaginative, Hong!

What is he doing, Mother?"

in the doorway.

The man nodded, then strode away. Mother leaned on her cane
stood very straight.

"He's out in the fields, as usual," Mother said quietly. She
Hong stopped crying.

the smallrig.

stood in the doorway. He shone, sweat-dappled, like a stream in
stood in the doorway. He shone, sweet-dappled, like a stream in
where's your husband? A man wearing the colors of the Yemen
her body.

Hong turned her head away from Mother and cried. Would she

13
always treated her as though she were stupid. "I know that," Rong said, drumming her fingers on the table. "Grandmother had to die."

"Still, he will listen. He has held land here for many generations. He doesn't want revolt, and understands why it is so."

"Yes, but's daughter has just married the magistrate's son."

"If she should also go to Pu, "Grandmother said.

In the bath of the hotel with each stroke, as if he were lifting large weights and striking Leader Li as he was in death, he had screamed and cried just a moment before the room remembered the hot noon when she had seen a bandit.

"Of course not," Grandmother said. "You exaggerate."

"Will Father be beaten or beheaded?"

Mother nodded and left, jerking from side to side in her hurry.

"Still, there's always next year. Get it over.

"We will reimburse the council. A shame: our savings."

"We will send your brother to the clerk, "Grandmother said.

A few feet, and then it was quieter.

Father shrugged at Grandmother, and then the clerk pulled him away from the doorway. Rong could not hear them distributing gravel for bringing us this food."

"Oh, that heater will not report himself. Good day, old mother."

"Of course, the paif outfits, and smitted, leaving his eyepieces."

But we know he did it, and it's only a matter of time before some-
heavy on his pony back. grandmother pulled herself up by her cane toward his feet. he laughed at the sutured cut on the bag.

he spat at her. it trickled down her nose and she waved her face away. "no face comes from chopping wood."

"get out," grandmother said, sitting up and waving her cane.

father's. why wasn't he on his own farm?

leather eye skin. his hands were large and work-knotted. like her could he eat rice uncooked? through his rage she could see how father's mouth too, and chewed. rong was shocked; how beans

her aside gently. serious now, he stuttered his bag with rice and blanket tight around her knees but he pulled it off, and pushed cursed him, but did not move. he laughed louder. rong pulled the wildly, pushing her to the ground, before scooping it up. she arms behind her back. the cash fell to the floor. he laughed as rong watched, a ragged man ran out and planted grandmother's

grandmother and father whispered about, came?

breast and burdied them in the walls. had the tarbings', whom

the guilt. she pulled rolls and rolls of copper cash from her sleeping in our kang today. "grandmother began laughing loud under

oh, blessed ancestors, may they not come here. bad luck is

stood and pain pressed her down again.

"what's that?" rong asked, trying to get out of the kang. she

they beard shouting at the next farm.

advise to your elders."

"you've got a lot to learn, rong. for one thing, not to give

want to fight the magistrate."

15
Moreover, all day long looked forward to the moment of first taste, they each had only a tiny serving, mother cooked each meal tasteful to feel the pleasure of chewing, of tasting, even through long time until tomorrow morning. She ate just enough luncheon meal a day now, breakfast, and the sun was high. It would be a meal, breakfast, grown for food. They had only one

Rong’s toasted steamch groomed for food.

Leaves mother alone, how could she get the prettiest power? Would kill all bad spirits, rescue her feet, and make grandmother would kill all bad spirits, restore her feet, and make grandmother would kill all bad spirits, restore her feet, and make grandmother. Rong wanted the prettiest power. She came, time went fast, and had luck captured over itself. Obviously, since the prettiest grandmother shook her head.

Well, we’ll get food from the can, mother said, laughing.

Father were staring.

Rong wondered whether grandmother would still feel that way if

...Yes...

Stealing?

Rong put her head to one side, should men die, to avoid... hired laborers, now there are too many laborers for jobs.

ability laborers, in my day they protected us, and poor men became as well be bandits. In my day they protected us, and poor men became spread his bad fortune to others. Nowadays the soldiers, too, may is drought. Or maybe he is the youngest brother. But he should not a bad crop or two, probably. I hear that farther north there why?” asked Rong.

“Never will your father rob hard workers. That man has...
When she heard of her marriage, Hua Red not tell Grandmother should be honored to make. "Hua Red not tell Grandmother that she had eaten husks in previous droughts; it was a sacrilege a few years ago. Because they made Mother eat husks to save rice, Grandmother said.

He rarely mentioned Father! He hated Father and Grandmother.

"Plumes for you to play,", "mother, your marsh-waves and all. I will come and fetch you and your marsh and its ghosts that he said hung in her hair. She shielded her feet and blushed. "I'll still tease her about the she did not know how to tell him she would miss him, and that is one part of the South; this is another."

"Grandmother says many bandits are from the South."

"Can dodge their Father's holdings and still live well."

"Trees and bushes, and there is so much land that even ten brothers hang on."

"We are going South tomorrow, "It Pu said. Food hangs on stems hopelessly.

"Hello, Little Hua."

"She turned and saw It Pu. Does your Father have any spare food?"

"In spring, but when would it come for her and the villagers not people, to look depressed. New life always come to the fields, as like as she felt. It was winter, the proper time for fields, light didn't warm her as it usually did. The bare fields looked self to ignore the pain. The air smelled dry outside, and the she picked up her camera and carefully stood. She told her.

When she still had several bites,
would not meet his eyes. It's pure hatred. bowed to Father.
Father stepped in. He flushed at the sight of it, and
with her brother.

Rong was amazed that Mother could be brave enough to disagree

"I see."

that because I am too. We will wait for you and Rong until sun
limits. In this unlucky season, you're afraid to go! I understand

"Pa said, "You know it's likely to die or be killed with bad

If you think a baby will change him, you're mistaken."

at her swollen stomach.

not mean enough for me to leave him, not yet, anyway. She looked

is in your household an irritation to your wife. My husband is

would bring shame on our name if I left with you, and what would I

room, and isn't hard of anything but heart. No, we won't stay. It

"Don't say that so loud, it's Ru. The old woman is in the next

"If you wish to go with us, we leave tomorrow for the south.

"Call down, Brother, you've your own family to worry about.

Renege on their obligation to us. It is disgusting.

"Your husband's family paid a good price for you; now they

know Mother would not act.

"Yes, yes. "Mother said softly, From Mother's tone, Rong

to us. You are entitled to eat."

stare you to death, if you don't stop them, she'd take, or come

"You are looking ill, Sister. That family of yours will

"Why, it's Ru. "Mother said, They bowed to each other, and

she did not believe her.
"What kind of son are you?" I said. "You beat your longer terrified him. She wanted to kick him and laugh. Ever she had been solid. She noted that's fragility but not, and no back. Why was she with her cousins and not with mother, whence

"I'd like to hit you too, Tony." Put said. Tony stepped shaken. Tony had never seen people hit each other in public.

Angrily, Tony's eyes widened, and she turned around a little. Put stepped his. All gathered. He smiled. Tony's face puckered, her eyes shining.

The small face puffed as she smiled a laugh. Tony stepped back a little. Not red and gaunt. Tony stepped back a little. Now's forward. It felt good to insult put. He deserved it.

"You have an ugly, bumpy face, Tony. Said, striking her head.

"She can stay by herself, then," Put said, tossing his head.

"Gangly twelve-year-old.

"Leave your cousin alone, Put," I said, putting on a everything, marsh spirit.

"You'll find out. You were always too impatient to know theygota.

"All right, Tony," Put said. "But don't walk so fast. Where are you will visit your baby cousin a last time."

"Go, then," I said softly to their backs. "Come, Tony.

Iowed father from the house.

Tony sensed something strange in his tenen brows. Mother for -

Come with me," Father said to mother without looking at her.

19
continued laughing in the distance. How could they laugh when her
come and sat right, arrested her cousins would see her week. They
her feet and sat down on the hard, cracked earth, she felt tears
the ones she told herself in the march, she felt standing through
probably telling a story. Why bet his stories weren't as good as
she heard put and run and tilt laugh as put spoke. He was

banged her.

a few steps and felt like a tree about to be cut, as cold wind
his wife had the only covered place, a deserted shed, she walked
the rolling bare hills for a place to hide until night. It run and
long felt herself get hotter. She looked around her, over

her.

with that would go away. "He pointed at Hong without looking at
I put nodded gravely. "Good job, hu, he said, smirking."
Hong looked around for it run, but he had gone.

was Hong's age.

"What an ugly face you have, Hong." He said, laughing.

Grandmother's huge wore that firm and emotionless.
tune reading, her hand touched her, but only when they were alone.
read together, he looked as though he wanted to, but wouldn't con-
through glass. Rather never had hugged her, sometimes, when they

held her and stroked her hair. Hong watched them as though

I'll subject, still cradling her head. She can to it run, who

constin, I am the father here, not you. Remember that.
not see you do that again, and I'd better not see you touch your

sisters for no reason; no wonder they don't honor you. I'd better
Even though Kong was only a girl, she was his older sister's child.

Kong hoped he felt ashamed before mother and his ancestors.

"The root. His voice died off.

Few beans left, anyway. They're not really worth much more than

I'm sorry she won't feed you anymore, child. We're only a

She shook her head. She would not look at him.

"Come sleep with the children, Kong? You'll be warmer."

"It ru, this white called quarrelously. He looked down.

them. She never glanced at them anymore.

canes mancalgaly. Kong had hoped the first farmers could help

They had been walking for three days up the winding path,

old marsh sprite."

"Shit and tenderly now. That will make you forget you are hungry,

scraggly thing with firsts of soft dirt on it. "Suck and chew the

"Here's a root to chew, Kong. It's pu said. He held up a

wind, but it touched her with less violence now.

was in the warm Kang with mother beside her. She still felt the

cutted light on it, pretending a quilt was over her, and that she

wanted to sleep them. She took off her jacket and shivered. She

found a woman who had been sold? Her cousins Laughed again! Kong

this new year. They must be at home again by then. How did you

jacket made! Kong had loved to look at it. Where would they be

her New Year's red jacket. What a splendid thing of red the

cutting delicately over rice, with mother smilling near the dish in

Their laughter sounded like the squeals of pigs. Kong saw pork

stomach and feet throbbed. They were bad humours of the soil.
Nu looked out and saw Hong shiver, her face set. She

"since she likes to be alone."

"Ignore our cousin, put growled, "Let her sleep alone."

"Hush, " Nu said, squeezing TzL's hand.

"she said, Griffith.

"TzL moved, and saw her. "Hongy don't like the night isn't cozy."

"It had been.

She stood apart. "She stopped and waited. The wind was colder than

Lumpyurtle. Hong walked slowly, thinking, "I'll knock their

under a tent of their jackets, put, Nu and Tz looked I like a

better, then tearful, by turns. It hurt to stare.

uncooked rice. She pretended that that's what it was. She felt

string. The soil was the best part, saity and meaty, almost like

she chewed at the root. It was like chewing dry strokes and

would wait until it was fully dark, then find him.

Nu and Tz would laugh at her if she ran after their father. She

made a jerky movement to get up quickly, then stopped. Put,

pull her down through the cracks in the soil. No one would know.

step well. She stared not sleep alone; spirits would grab her and

and. She had dug deep in their sleep-sounds and body-smells, and

though alone at one

something, or at least stay with her. It was almost dark. Last

hadn't want him to walk away! She wanted him to do

Well, goodnight then, child," he said in a low voice, turn-

wordsheeted thread.

She did not know how to speak to him now that he was no longer her

whom she had offered to care for. She heard him clear his throat.
eventually people could build white hills of steps topped by high
hills. Kong had never seen building except when father had dream
hills. "Look," put said, pointing ahead. Powers rose between two

"Quiet," it put said, waving his arms.

"a disgrace," she said, raising her eyebrows at Kong.

"If Pū's wife stopped and sat heavily. "begging relatives are
bound feet would not help.

able to help him in the Heights also, Nu was so ugly that even
strude easily, as Kong once had. It put said he wanted Nu to be
their bound feet. Kong entreated Nu; Nu's feet were unbound, and she
two of walking, Kong and it put said she would have to stop to rest
shook put, and called to the rest of them. After every hour or
they started walking, as usual, when the sun came up. It put

and took-punched back hurt. The path was even and forgettable.
were tough. Kong felt tight and drowsy, through her stomach, feet
marveled at the softness of Nu's hands; mother's and grandmother's
and the girls followed. Nu and Kong held hands for a while. Kong
then was silent. He settled under the jackets.

wastn't as ugly as Kong had thought. Kong smiled at Nu.

tiny features coming out of sourness for a little while. She
her and relaxed. She looked at Nu carefully. Nu smiled, her
moved over. Kong sat on the warm bit of ground Nu had allowed
beckoned her over, then put her finger to her lips. Slowly she
"I don't matter, he wouldn't do anything to help him."

"I hope your father doesn't see him."

from the wood the carriage.

They're turning him into a chicken. I could see wets on his back

out and he painted. His neck looked long, like a chicken's.

side. Yesterday I saw him carrying firewood. His eyes bulged

"We could take some of it to put," Nu said, her head to one

family loyalty.

women snarling around it. All because of Nu's extreme

imagined herself shivering on the platform, with jeering haka

ordered, and would settle at an execution's efficiency. Hong

on right behavior. Chou hon would kill her self without a sigh, if

detected features jutting out, she detected the woman's camp

exceeded them. Hong could see Chou hon, their commander, her

betrayed her, she and Nu could be beheaded, unless their ages

Rong bit her lips. "If I'll total, and the täpping troops

"Who's going to believe a little girl?"

"Tell, though."

can give her some of what we get when we get back. She better not

"She's too little to be quiet. We'll be caught for sure. We

"But it's my sister."

"Come on, Nu, Rong wheedled."

II

gracious stone bridge. Hong knew it. She was in a pausing.

dragon, the world below tiny and absurd. They walked over a
Around effectiveness.

I'll be lookout, I'll whistle if someone comes. "Nu looked
shook her head again. Nu turned, "Rong, I'll wait, " she said.

"Don't be a baby. " Rong's voice became more desperate as Nu
"I'm not going. " Nu said, shaking her head.

"It's not a shed, it's made of rocks, see?"

"That shed?"

They walked slowly. "Where is it, Nu, beyond those trees."

Rong had found it while exploring one day.

conviction. The storehouse was unguarded, and in a lonely place.

"Tell you, it's safe. " she was surprised she could say that with
told you, it's safe, " Rong said, stamping her foot. "I"

"But we haven't eaten, " Rong said, stamping her foot. "I"

safe.

pretended we stole the food, and are eating, and have fun, and be

"I'm not scared, I'm just not stupid. We could sit here and

herself. " Go back, then, " Rong said after a while.

"Don't do that. " Why was she begging Nu? She could go by

back.

"You're always rushing, Rong. Just be quieter or I'll go

change again."

hands, "We've backed out three times. Let's go now. Before we

You never do what you promise, Nu, " Rong said, rasing her

knees.

You know, Rong, maybe we shouldn't try this, " Nu hugged her

bright sky.

Rong didn't know what to say, and watched a crow cross the

kickled a rock.
The night was roovy and fresby-scented, unlike the long hut
led hands smashing her face, and shook.
led past crowy Haka women guards. Hong thumped one of their
and was bland, Nu again, bating her eyelids sleepy. They tip-
Hong felt her hostility, a stranger, a and drew back. Nu sat up,
looked evil in the dark. She opened her eyes and stared at Hong.
"Nu," Hong whispered, shakibg Nu's arm. Nu's tiny features

to sleep with, play with or talk to.
didn't want to make Nu angry. If Hong did, she would have no one
entitled to share thereward, were people always like that? Hong
nodded, Nu hadn't done anything, and now, she felt
"I'll tell Put to come late tonight," Nu said.

storeroom.

was getting dark and the spirits might have followed her from the
walked back towards camp. But she was glad Nu was with her; it
although they had not eaten, Hong felt much stronger as they
and later we'll feast. We can build our own fire.

Nu emerged from behind a bush. She smiled. "Let's hide this,

and squash, and ran out.

the lurking deceptively in the air. She sought her bag with rice
that was empty, as before, except this time Hong felt hungry. She
in the darkness. She drew a quick, full breath and ran forward. The
running back, she listened hard for Nu's whistles, could she hear
the last whisper there. She stopped at the clearing, and considered
"Oh, all right," Hong said. She walked down the path between
who played with sticks near the fire, humming to herself.

She shuttered her feet. There were two of them. She glanced at Zit,
were sparkling excitedly. So were Nn's. They wanted to fight.
then any other in their village. She wanted to hit Phil. His eyes
family? They used to be richer than Li Fu's, and were more educated
Rong plushed. Grandmother had laughed her to be proud of her
sold Mother, no matter how poor we got, "put said.
"Your father has shamed our ancestors; our father has never
Rong couldn't believe Nn had said that. "Nu looked away.
Your mother again? We've all got problems."

Rong's mother again. What is it this time? Playing yourselv about
thread monotonous. "What do you want?" Rong can tell. "Nu said in a
"Rong's angry about something. I can tell," Rong said in a
"Sound, you expected about eating your food again?"
"Why are you so pale? cousin, afraid of the damp?"
acting like it was his food? He's never given Rong anything.
starting white green, the kind Rong didn't like. Why was he
"You've already started cooking?" Nu said to put. "Put was
Rong couldn't understand it."

Frightened, Rong couldn't understand it. Nu was alone with Rong, Nu treated her as a
present? But when Nu was alone with Rong, Nu treated her as a
trust her. Sometimes Nu and put talked as though Rong weren't
dan, did he care? Maybe the food would convince put and Nu
would not show it. He treated her as father did mother, with dis-
trust touch. Put would be impressed by her at last, although he
contact as she thought of mother; she would not let that thought
red sauce as a soup, the way mother did. She felt her stomach
straighten. Food to look forward to; she would cook the rice with
they had just left. Rong's breathing slowed and she walked
and trampled in his mantled tone. She would pray to mother to
smite. "Thank you for the gift, cousin." Hong could hear hate
breathing its sting. She tossed it at the ground near Put. Put
AII right, take it, "Hong said, pulling off the bag and
doubled fl.

"Maybe the bag would be the last concession, though she
tried. May be the bag would seem a hundred times more threaten-
without Nii, the Haknav would seem. They were the only people she knew!
hatred them, and herself. They were the only people she knew!
gnarl on her mouth and throat. It was her gruel, not theirs. She
cold outside. She wanted to feel the heat and roughness of the
water everything at home when she ate slowly, feeling safe from the
to Hong in shrill tones. The gruel's smell reminded Hong of long

"If you want to eat or not?" she said

her hand, and then it was mere cloth again.
strong a protector it was. Hong could feel its power push ag
dark and still from her sweaty palms. Its hardness showed how
shoes for that small piece of satin. Once bright red, it was now
Hong crouched the bag. Mother had bargained many parts of
Put said, looking up. He smiled wistfully.
"She could give us that charm bag that's around her neck,"

"What can she do to apologize, Put?" Nii asked.
"If you want to eat with us, Hong, you'd better learn manners."

"Look at her expression, Nii," Put said, shaking his head.
Hong felt hot and unsteadily, like running away.
"You were right to make Hong do it."

"Of course, no one from our family would steal."

"If you leave, you'll get none of the food you stole," Nii

said.
Grandmother would call her weak; she was ashamed.

There was nothing to do but give in, and she cursed silently.

Now she knew how Mother felt when grandmother shouted at her.

"I do," Hong said quickly. Feeling tears run down her cheeks.

"Gather!" you'll answer politely, from now on, "put shouted, apologized." touched it wondrously. It was tender and hurt.

and she staggered back, confused. Her face turned red and pained. She

threw herself back to go soft. He rose and staggered her quickly,

at her breathing for a long moment. Hong looked back at him, felt

"Shut up, coolie. Hong stood, shucking a little. Put looked

crookedly.

Our cousin is learning, eh, Nu?" put said. He smirked.

"Could she do?"

matter-of-factly. Hong slumped, hating put and herself. What

on her heels, tense. She felt herself redder. Nu withched

I'll finish it!" put said, glaring at Hong. Hong sat back

starting at the gruel.

"Could not savour it. She blamed put. Nu was eating steadily.

the gruel felt as she remembered it, but she ate so fast that she

going to let him have all of it, and ate as much as she could.

already started stuffing the gruel into his mouth. Hong was not

Nu awoke a sleepy riz and handed her two stitches, put had

change the bag to a bad-juck magnet.
They laughed, pointing at her. She felt

"Oo-wan-wen, the hawk-faced Haka said. "The stupid hands."

Kong blushed. They just stared at her. She added, "I don't dare."

Mother or grandmother would have drawn away, disgusted, but Kong

she bent over Kong. She smelled like old ashes and burned milk.

"Sit down and put out your foot, girl, the fat Haka added.

"Were in the marsh alone."

examinined Kong's feet with her eyes. Kong squinted and wished she

"Yes, we'll put you back together, the fat Haka said. She

loudly.

"What a McCoy to cripple a child, a hawk-nosed woman said

stupid to realize how awful they looked.

Chinese girl, Kong was ashamed for the Haka. They were too

such large feet would ruin the marriage prospects of any young

huge boars. Kong rarely stared at them from politeness and fear.

dirtier than hers! Why did they laugh! Hiding behind the feet were

the cloth match bringing disease. But the Haka woman's feet were
dirtier and fresher! No way to wash it, she'd considered stealing

she looked down at them. They did look stoppy. The cloth was

Kong had been finding them herself since mother was sold.

"Look at this one's feet, a fat Haka woman guffawed. She
supported herself partially on her canes, and looked at the hakka.

"To wood-gathering we do go."

"Come on, grilje. "The fat hakka raised her brows at Rong.

They could.

\[\text{theat men into submission, perverting nature. She could see that}\
\text{were of tremendous size. Rong had heard that hakka women choked}
\text{tissues, bunching in warps on her dark face. Her legs and feet}
\text{childish they knappeded. The hakka woman's skin was stretched and}
\text{and watch, laughing? That's what grandmother said hakkas did with}
\text{Rong wondered what the hakka would do to her, burn her in oil.}

I'll take this girl with me."

"Right, the fat one said. "But children are playmates."

"Hank-nosed hakka said, "Then they can avoid work."

"The woman wants to suffer; it's their twisted nature."

"I am angry.

Rong slowly unwound her other foot. Would this enable her to

her. She shook her head.

Those hands are barbarians, "the fat woman said, "look at

wind.

tucked her foot under the other leg, its felt cold in the dry

ugh, the hank-nosed hakka said, spitting near her. Rong

old woman, the skin cracked and withered.

she unwrapped her left foot slowly. It was a bruised, bent

couldn't understand their strange accent.

ashamed again, but it was they who spoke funny, of course she
me for a moment, as a witch. See, my nails are too short for
me when we asked you to undress your feet. I saw myself as you saw
is hard to trust, as you must know. I saw the way you looked at
"we say we are your allies now, against the Manchus, but it
began a long string of compliments.
Rong looked straight ahead. Perhaps now the woman would

down left. I know what that is like."
"we have fought hands for centuries, but I hate to see chilt.
"No," Rong said quietly.
"I hope we did not kill her."
Look less ugly now, and uncumbered.
The woman bowed and shrunk; she seemed embarrassed. She
Rong shook her head.
"Your mother is in the camp." asked the Hakka.
 wasn't sure the curse would happen.
Het the Hakka was trying to reassure her, although even the Hakka
your head, the Hakka said quickly. She glanced at Rong. Rong
After a while, the path will go away, and your feet will be
the path of walking.
trees bristle and how the Hakka wasn't even, trying to drown out
Rong nodded, bitting back tears. She thought about how the
need you to work; you can't carry much when you're running on cans."
"We only meant to help," the woman said, shurgng.
and we
whenever. She felt like allowing herself to cry.
"stop slowly, girl," the woman said gently. Rong's eyes
her arm. Rong drew back stiffly.
The Hakka looked down, she stepped over to Rong and gave her
could be listening. The Hakra wicked.
Hakka blushed. How dare she talk about the Hakka in such a manner? Many spirits burning together to protect old gods.

"We're at war, at least we have a plan, and hope. It's better than to lose. It's better than waiting to attack when you're not ready. It's better than gathering wood and talking."

Hakka's mother spoke. "Many of us are new to the world where the Hakka live."

Hakka's mother was not a self-centered like Nu's, but more sensible. She wanted to please all to make her daughter more. She had heard the Hakka's stern tone just then. Mostly, though,

"Yes, quickly. Let's stop. You gather wood until the path is clear, then wait for me. Oh, by the way, I'm still Po. You are --?"

Hakka's mother taught her about laughing strangers would not work here. a deep, shuddering breath. She was not at home any more, what her heart turned and smiled, laughing her tears away. Hakka returned to it, taking hakka looked at her expectedly. Her hakka protected. The woman that, she added quickly, looking at her woody hands and laughing.
her hand, we have been bound. The might have had as

right god, and not to the soul, but would not have humiliated

Now she understood. If she had prayed to the right god, this

first, speaking, shaking his

worst unsteady in all China's history! He shouted, shaking his

scholars talking over wine, and now we have nearly vanquished the

be yours. We show that, we tratlings. We begin as three poor

When you have god holding your supporting you, victory must

open.

Rong looked at su, po. Her head was forward; her eyes wide

continue. Accept him, and remain his loyal child.

"Know what it is to have the power of God flow in you."

"It.

Rong wondered if she was already condemned and didn't know

head.

through all time. He looked at them searchingly, nodding his

And for those who disobey, there is only fire, fire and pain

energetic. The crowd hushed.

He looked around at them. His eyes were sharp, his movements

he says, with heaven, if we kill those accused thugs, the Marchans.

has chosen me, humble scholar that I am. He will reward us all,'

the devil's voice, but with the real, all-powerful one God. He

I am filled with God -- not like a shaman, who screams with

the heat, transequity shimmering.

cotton she had always worn. How could such thin cloth hold

Rong was fascinated by it, how different from the tough

41
eternally young and restless.

hands high. He was tall and gray, but straight. He seemed

"Real God in you, feel him!" Hung raised his long, white

voice, but I do believe it.

real God's voice, suit to believe it.

at her, then folded her. Now Hong knew for certain that Hung was

suil go cheer and clap. Hong and the other women looked

and gain more as your believe in him grows.

dreamed, you, with God in you will keep the power you have now,

is established, your lives will be better than you have ever

mettle of those such as you, Hong, your teacher. When our kingdom

capability; they keep you at home. Our God appreciates the

you, as women, can fight. The confusions don't realize your

Kneel.

music. Suit go, however, was stilled, her head cocked, and broods

The women cheered. Hong folded them gently. Shouting was

rejoin your families, on your own territory land.

grace, you will have proven yourself by obedience. You will
disseminated. After we conquer the march, you will be given God's

and sisters' sex would be toughest. That is why your families are

you are all God's children; Hung continued. "As brothers

crime; she had stolen food. What would be her punishment?

Hong's heart beat fast as she realized she had committed a

youngest son, and will be killed.

every-victorious army, but doesn't obey, is a thistle, an ungrateful

and absolute obedience. Anyone who pretends to be one of God's

side. "Like our honored ancestors, he demands loyalty, reverence

what does God demand? Hung said loudly, his head to one

much land as Hung did by now. Mother would not have been sold.
white temple, Rong watched out for those thronging shrines and grew.

screamed, everyone would cheer. Pouting towards a squat, off-

began to like being in a military parade. She felt that it was

felt even more like a performance. But Po smiled at her and she

They came to the square in the village's center. Here, Rong

whose mouth was set straight.

told her. A few Hakka women guffawed. Rong looked at Sig Po;

a Hakka nudged a Khangst woman with a pack on her back. She

feet would now be unbonded too; that was why they were

feet would be unbonded. Perhaps the local women thought their
duchesses.

unbundoned, her feet were like seaweed; unlike than the Hakka.

Hakka struck, despite the path in each foot and hit

Rong shivered at the back of the mob, she tried to mime

heads to one side, their weak tails raised uncertainly.

sience. Scrawny dogs ran out from behind huts, barking, their

 frauds look so funny, Ma'am. The children were hugging into

quiet. Except for the small children who asked: "Why do those

men, VIllagers came to the doorways and stood, mouths open, and

They carried their packs over their shoulders, and swaggered like

They swept into the Villlage, packing the street's loose soil.


dong. But Po was in her own ecstasy. If only God would stay in

with God to show himself. Mother, who had cared for her, was

too? She tightened her body until it hurt, and asked and pleaded

Rong looked for God inside her, where might he be? In her

36
"No," he said, clearing his throat. "I am a priest. This is straightshake of his long torso.

"Will you help us, old man?" Chon Ron said.

A man in long, tattered robes stood in through a side door. She was afraid, nervous or just angry. Her eyes were loose. They bounced, large and yellow-stained, with each movement. Her brows were knitted. Kong couldn't tell whether she was sweating, and her brows were knitted. Kong couldn't tell whether she was feeling about the importance of idols. She whispered her fears to Kong thought his smile twitched. It couldn't be the taunting were guilty. For a moment, watching him, he did not move, although because he knew he would have his revenge? The Hakas stood intact, and Kong had a feeling it watched them. Did he smile

intact, and Kong had a feeling it watched them. Did he smile

and hardened over the soft earthen floor. His smile remained like a mere porcelain dish, but looked like a man's guts spread
topped the benten Buddha standing near the temple door. It broke

like screaming dogs. Their cries were low and sharp. Chon Ron
she seemed to forget the woman, but they shouted, and followed her

kneel, and strode away from the crowd, her eyes on the temple.

worship? Prove yourself to him. "Show your god that you hate idol-

"Come, Chon Ron cried. "Show your god that you hate idol-

mood that was hers too.

not aware of herself, but rather of each nuance in the crowd's

Itted Kong, and strengthened her. She stood at ease, but tense;

Kong shouted, and felt the sounds pushing themselves out. They

power in her movements was beautiful. Kong was proud of her.
Burn him with his accused temple, Chou Hon said. They shouted, throwing more bits of rock and porcelain.

“As the straight of his blood the woman laughed and threw it. Her powerful arms twinkling. It hit the priest beside and left a large piece of the Buddha and land, had spoken of her husband’s death. He had died fighting for his her voice had a wild quality. Hong remembered hearing when she Po stopped and turned a large piece of the Buddha and

“Then let him die,” said Po said, drawing out the last sound.

Chou Hon said.

murdering devils must die; it says so in the Taiping Canon.”

stood thus, hesitating to strike, but wanting to. remembered when her partner had killed the intruder. Everyone had they looked at their hands. But Po’s test was clenched. Hong the women looked at each other. Their eyes flashed. Then the house last night. Just because we would not give to his temple, is spying because he cursed her. I saw him shouting around our friendship him. His voice trailed off and he looked at them.

“No, why...” His voice trailed off and he looked at them.

“Are you the devil?” Chou Hon asked the priest.

her hand. Hon’s signal for quiet, and looked down, blushing. But Po grabbed

He is the devil,” said Hong loudly. She hadn’t noticed Chou

38
thought, know. With her tiny feet, mother would arouse the feeling.

Mother had gone to temples often; Hong was glad the temples would just have to understand the execution and temple-burning.

Rather she had a fine woman intended to take care of her. Mother had made her one of the Hakka, that was good. Mother would be slow. She blushed. His death must have been the right thing. It strengthened and she felt brittle, while his dust touched her eyes. The throbbed and she felt brittle, while his dust touched her eyes. The

Hong backed down the steps, stumbling a little. Her head

priest had stopped screaming.

had done this? The temple was beginning to fall around them. The
her, looking exhausted and dejected. She could not believe they
fire of the mob in her was dying, she felt. People stood around
where she could play games with nu, or better, with sun po. The
thunder, Hong wanted to follow it out of the temple to a quiet meadow
lull, predictable. The sun sent a long beam in the man's direction.

as she heard him scream again and again. It was getting to be
obscured that showed his real identity. Hong stepped back and forth
everyone else, when they weren't? Perhaps he would burn into an
looked at each other. Why did we let beagles look and sound like
hated to hear him cry out the way she would lit in pain. The woman
screams. Like the Inquisition, this man had to die; still, Hong

Hong grabbed his polo's hand and he'd it during the worst

straightly, as it towards him.

began to crack. A couple of times Hong felt suit to move forward
to hang in her hair, pulling it tight. Her eyes were bloodshot.

"What did they call people like him?"

"Long raised her brows. She'd ask Surp to what she should do.

"Grill, you didn't know that?"

Rulers who can't rule right lose their mandate. I guess, being a

destroy a temple? These acts will lead to the Temple's downfall.

"What are you? Come on. Spirit's stuff is nonsense, wherever preached it'll

be."

ones; that's what he was.

"What do you mean? Long rose on her toes, then came down

sharply. "He was a devil! Where I lived, we only killed evil

What do you mean?" He stood on his toes, then came down

head.

He shifted the packs on his back.

read over his delicate neck. "Maybe it's too bad you're not hurt."

she said. He brought his brows together, and his square jaw

"So, you're one of the messengers?"

He looked up the steps.

Long hair that was only half-grown and stood out all over his

from the sides of her eyes. He was tall and thin, with Taiping

tall as hard as the Great Wall!" He laughed. Long looked at him

you're all right," said a high, strident male voice. "You

rose, dazed and electrified, just crying her mouth.

had been listening; a moment ago she had been fine, and now she

coming off the lowest steps, Long tripped and fell. Someone

you could never be sure of priority.

What a traitorous thought? Long hoped mother wasn't listening.

the Kanghsen woman did. Maybe it was better mother wasn't there?"
suit to frowned up at the temple. Women shouted as they lit

"Let's go find the ice-pot," Hong said.

"For luck," she laughed. Hong dist但是 its edge.

fight the Tathrina's, and ins probably dominating heavily to temples
district. I bet he's changing his tune now! He's too cowardly to
probably hiding somewhere, sharking, with the Tathrina rule his
was old and well-tricked. He didn't need them. Now he's
at least long enough to learn, maybe. Our magistrates denied spirits
"Crazy boy!" suit to said, sharking her head. "He hasn't been

"What all spirits are nonsense."

"What did he really say?" suit to asked.

Ewray

He bowed slightly, without looking at them, and walked slowly
she nodded, giving

needles.

"That was all, wasn't it?" He stared at Hong, his eyes icy
what else did you say?"

nation removed. "He nodded his head vigorously.
Oh, just prattling your day's work at the temple. An about-

face.

"What were you saying, boy?" suit to asked, searching his

"I heretoo, I think," Hong said slowly.

packs.

"Who's here?" suit to whispered, the boy again disappeared his
Hong relaxed in the arm's strength.

"Well, grrr," she said slowly, putting her arm around Hong.
her mouth droopy, her skin blotched with aches.
its pale walls. Sui Po shivered and seemed to shrink.

"What's wrong?" Rong said.

"Never mind," Sui Po said in a low voice.

"Yes, yes, a blessing!" Hung said, clapping his fine hands.

"Tell Chu Hon that Elder Brother is with her brave women."

"Tell Chu Hon that Elder Brother is with her brave women."

"Do you think God will let our people, the rightful owners of this land, fail to regain it from foreign intruders? Do you?"

"Do you think God will let our people, the rightful owners of this land, fail to regain it from foreign intruders? Do you?"

"The pale missionaries recognized me for who I am. The people will regain their wealth, our band of victims will gain its ordained rewards. You, too, little girl, will get yours."

"The pale missionaries recognized me for who I am. The people will regain their wealth, our band of victims will gain its ordained rewards. You, too, little girl, will get yours."

"Pointed at Rong seriously, then smiled. His eyes shone. He looked like a small, happy child."

"Pointed at Rong seriously, then smiled. His eyes shone. He looked like a small, happy child."

"She smiled at him. The army would win, and all of them would have enough to eat, and lots of land."

"She smiled at him. The army would win, and all of them would have enough to eat, and lots of land."

"What was God, who upheld them? They prayed to him, as they had to their ancestors, and to fat, gnarled god-idols whose powers no one remembered. Only God had them live rigidly by new rules, such as men and women sleeping apart. His rules weren't Mother's and Grandmother's."

""
mother and began to feel hot. She could be. She remembered the Yemen Burners who had appeared at the gate. She screamed, "She would show Hung how brave she'd be."

"He spoke courteously. "It's Hong saw a man cut his hand, she'd return only with his help."

"With God's help, you will get back to you now -- remember that you human government. Remember that as you return with my message."

"The punishment of God is longer and worse than that of any other."

She nodded. "Should be for a young sister. You will learn."

"You are afraid," she said, "nodding gravely. That is as it Hung was so close that she could smell his heavy perfume."

"Imagined it as eternal itching."

By Hung's first, forever -- through all lives, all time. She stepped towards Hong. "I love him forever."

"God hates lies, you know that? His eyes glittered, and he white."

morning for any spirits who might need it. "No," she said after a

she dried, want to tell him about the food she had eaten each

"and you worship no one else?"

er, she stood there. "I burn gold paper each week, and pray." "Do you worship him?"

She looked down. "Of course," she whispered.

"Do you obey God, little girl?" Hung said, squatting at Hong.

43
The fighting had moved to the town's walls. Tapestries were
your throat.
looked at you, you could feel her eyes about to jump out and grab
first wife? Rong felt she had positioned the wife. When Chou Hon
them. had Chou Hon been a concubine, abused by some autocratic
ogamous; made remarks about Han backwaterness. Chou Hon glared at
her first.
her. Everyone will be a first wife," Chou Hon shouted, kadang.
"Aiter we win, there will be marriage again, but no concubin-
Han women fought with the Hakas, few of these had bound feet.
ston of nature. Mother could not have fought; only the strongest
grandmother would have said that a female army was a pervert-
from a golden chariot.
Rong felt she could shout away, over the battlefront, and watch
"Yes, the king has told me that he and god bless our army!"
eyes, their own eyes widening.
Hakas began to clap. They crowded around Rong, staring into her
"Go, Fight," Rong shouted. "God is with us!" some of the
stiffly. The other Hakas raised their eyebrows.
shouted Rong's blessing at Chou Hon, who reddened and nodded
The Hakas were shivering in groups around campfires. She
through the forest. A few birds screamed.
Rong wanted to fight. God would keep her alive. She bounced
was a God, and when one fell, with a scream of shocked affront, turned between men, between horses rearing sweaty, each horse streaked with blood was in the fight. They fell over each other.

"Rrrrrrrr!" she heard a male voice call, was it in the fight, they ran, shrieking, their blood was dark, spraying everywhere as they slashed, the Hakkas, their clothes changed, they were cows, pans at

Manchu were on the fighting, running over them, long curved swords No one heard Manchu horses over the noise of battle. The new

Heaven.

which lay empty, and everyone knew their spirits would go to could conquer a new home. They had obviously left their bodies, longer seemed wasted. They were beads, killed so that the live red, Dead, fighting, their faces twisted and limbs missing, no

The Manchus retreated towards the town, their fallen heads

forbade.

tall and lithe from behind trees, calling their God's name

battalion, the men no longer guarded themselves, they stepped out like a bright day in the fields. It was almost a religious cere-

that the fighting were winning, however, the battle no longer was everywhere Hong saw blood, smoke and叫机 gunners.

end.

from their sabres and rifles, their knives and pistols, like to black-trousered soldiers, they drew their pistols

Hong saw the heretic boy jumping behind the lines, carrying joining a defeat.

terribly! They were glad the men were advancing. They weren't
grey stone. They screamed as they fell, the Hakkas shouted bols-
bettering in one capitcious God was stipped. At least if you
solutely had sprung the women to flight. Grandmother was right!
like children after a nightshade,
burst up the Manchus. Kong could still hear men screaming, begging,
say 'when this men died, perhaps God would descend as a dragon and
boy. They moved away from the cities and smoke. What would hang
Kong's stomach hurt. It punched her as she ran, behind the
their red jackets. Kong was glad but... was not here.
women in front of them, standing their wrists, and pulling it.
Manchus shouted, laughing cutthroat. They scooped up a few men
cities as they were stabbed. "Too ugly to rapel" Kong heard
the Manchus were fighting the women, too. Kong heard their
quietly,
teach them who rules. "You are master, God!" Kong repeated
the Manchus. Grandmother said God's like to play jokes on men, to
ster horses. Perhaps he had deserted the Tatlings and found
the Tatling god was not as strong as the gods of these men-
again, Kong followed.

She nodded. The boy turned and began to push through the ranks
looked around. She could not see Sant Po, only strangers fighting.
shouted. "I'm going to a safe place!" He stepped his foot. Kong
shook her head, stepping back. "Don't you understand!" He
school her head, shaking her. "Come with me," he said. "I'm
heretics, boy. Kong pulled away. "Someone grabbed her hand. It was the
Kong jumped away, shakingly.
worshipped many Gods, they would desert you at different times.

Rong would kill God. How could she kill God? What if he were still powerful, and heard her?
"I agree," Rong said. "I thought of Li Pu powerlessly and

"Familiez! That can't last!" mercifully threatened; he didn't even know our names! And to break up the for him. That is the utility you need. My Taiping Supervisor teaches each man to be loyal enough to his commander that he would

"If I were running an army, I'd do it like Tseung Kung-fan. He pompous." 

"He looked at her and laughed. "I can really be a peasant." "How rude you are," Li shook his head. Of course, a reality of spirit power.

"If I were the one who's crazy," Rong said. She thought about

"You're the one who's crazy!" orders of the spirit world. "What's all this fuss, a garbled shaman, pretending to give the well-run world doesn't need croakposts and shamans," Li said.

"It is important to honor the ancestors, of course, but a priestesses.

Rong remembered Hung's eyes that were like those of the Hung remembered Hung's eyes that were like those of the Manghuz."

They were angrily, unjustly blaming all their problems on anyone; they were angry. The peasants were ready to follow

"He didn't do it, Rong. The peasants were ready to follow that huge camp. One defeat is minor in comparison."

"You don't know that, Yi. He amassed all those soldiers, and a stone out of his way as he climbed."

"Hung's nothing, Rong; forget the Taiping's. Yi said, kicking

III
He had shouted. "Rong stopped, what was wrong with him?"

"I told you -- to the Taotao Monastery where my brother is."

sound nonchalant.

"Where are we going, Xij?" she asked, trying to

leave it need be. "Where am I?"

Try to

on the way to a hiding place. She stood straighter; she could
donw the hill? Xi would not notice she had gone until she was well

loose, gravelled path. She could hide in that grove a short way

moment; she reminded her of Put from behind. She looked down the

a

it's back was bony and strong. Rong distantly him for a

they slept. That night, blockading began again.

western, and vice versa, as they destroyed it together. Sarcotened,

women, and vice versa. As they destroyed it together, the

they burned the temple. The Hakka's forgot they hated the 

Kong remembered the blood-sistle in the eyes of Hakka's as a

camp."

settled kingdom? You could see the beginnings of decay in our

settled era. I remember the, the, their gravenesses, wait until the, their actuality set up a

you'll see I'm right. In the intensity of battle, people forget

well, maybe they haven't been fed long enough. Just wait, I

know.

-- afraid of what will happen to them if they desert? God will

terrorizing God to bring victory to them. They are afraid of God, too

expected to have hope, and they deepley believe in the power of the

maybe you did, "Rong said. "No one I knew did. They were

they're being treated."

"Yes, but once they've been fed, they'll realize how badly

whether separated or not."

her cousins untretched. "But the families were glad to eat,"
was the old creep asking her questions? He'd intened her phrase.

"I don't know."

"The one-legged monk, Ching Ho, was leaning on his crutch.

"What do you think of the paintings, Hong?"

accentuated! they chanted in unison.

recognized erratic yamatee gores. Here, their steepness was

way. The pictures on the scrolls were faded but vibrant. She

tossed her head; reading was a waste of effort for a woman. Any-

walls. The calligraphy on them looked like bled footprints. Hong

cautiously. The hall was long and bare, except for scrolls on its

she had never been inside a true temple before, and entered

central pagoda. Its curved roof a cheetful red against a blue sky.

Hong wore between dingy monk's huts. She reached the immense

again.

this bone-exposing cold? It was acting like the pompous self

expect from a confection like this? What difference did it make in

he making such a big point of the tiller respect that anyone would

continued. "I respect him, as a younger brother should."

"My brother's reflection isn't really relevant, anywway," Xi

mean I won't use a temple for shelter, he said callously.

"Just because I think spiritualism is unnecessary, doesn't

it was like put after all.

she catch, alone, without weapons. In a forest? She bit her lips.
cold, though, and her feet hurt, she needed to eat. What could

wanted to hit him, as she had wanted to hit put. It was getting
would you like to learn to paint? Chiang Ho asked seriously.

"would you like to learn to paint?"

"Looking at her...

"How do you like the paintings?"

"Not bad."

"The gentlemen would put him to work. The gentlemen were good, but..."

"Just thinking about all this...

"What good did he do anyone?"

"There are many like him."

"Think about his old man."

"She thought he was crazy."

"He kicked her out of the room."

"Looked at him."

"You don't have a choice."

"I hope I wouldn't care."

"Chiang doesn't care."

"Who cares?"

"She said sharply."

"Your going, and here he was talking nonsense."

"There was a meadow down the mountain."

"She shrugged."

"She shrugged."

"He laughed, shaking his head."

"He was a butterfly."

"He was a butterfly dream."

"He was a man."

"Or a man who'd dreamt he dreamt he was a butterfly."

"And when he woke he didn't know whether..."

"Not knowing is a good start, Chiang."

"I've looked worse than her father had before the paintings came."

"He smelled."

"He stood, threadbare and dirty, against the tree."

"Why is that?"

"Explanation."
"Yes, I was here when your father brought you, Su Fu."

"Gentleman."

"Ladies, this is Chung Ho, one of our oldest refugees from

could see. She hated the Teutonry unjustly to his voice.

hastened to the half-darkness. He had never felt hunger, Hong

hall, "Chung Ho," the young priest said offhandedly. His

parasites, the parasites had said.

the two women did not impress Hong. Gentleman were usually the

effort distinctly enuncial. The parasites said gentleman weren't superior;

she wanted to stick her tongue out at them, to awaken them from

seemed empty to Kong, next to the deterrent motion of the gorgets.

and Chung Ho, then focused impassively on the sculptures. The ladies

side, upheld by slander, shunting cans. The women glanced at Kong

hall. A young priest approached, a satin-draped woman on each

she heard faint voices and laughter, and looked down the

Rong rushed.

my patience and bruises when I am asleep."

"Really?" he said, sounding surprised. "And you won't steal

"No," she said.

fit homeless spirits, who would attack her in her sleep.

curse her through the bush he gave her. The forms she made would

looking at the Yangzte gorge, and humming. Perhaps he wanted to

why would he want to teach her? He was strange. He was

farther's fields nestled in spreading growth.

river seething at noon under the junk she had pulled, or her

they, not like talking over confusing ideas. She could patent the

like to patent, but distressed Chung Ho. Patenting would be exact-
He laughed raspishly and jumped down the path.

"I am falling in, and will leave first. Touch me, Pu!

"The Chuan Tzu talks about men's inverted traps!" Ching Ho said. "I'll leave in, and will leave first. Touch me, Su Pu!"

Su Pu looked at him through slitted eyes. Ching Ho jerked and reddened. Su Pu looked at him through.

of promise, whom will I bring honor to this clan?" Su Pu's voice rose.

"Sure your parents will be overjoyed. I hear he is a young scholar.

"Your brother Yi is here?" Su Pu said mockingly.

If I'm the monks and ladders stood stiffly, even Ching Ho.

The secret place. She could go there if she needed to.

alone. She would go out, down the mountain, until she found a
talked and talked, when she had wanted to explore the pagoda.

What were Ching Ho's arms? Hong was getting impatient; they

toward.

pretended I could have. "He raised his eyebrows. The ladders fell-

although, because I have studied physiology, I am sure

"I am honored, Ching Ho, and regret I misunderstood you.

voice. "Come sometime, and we'll talk."

"You misunderstand my aims, Su Pu. "Pu!" Ching Ho said in a low

pretended.

Trying forever? That was a practical goal! Hong was sur-

and exorcise. "Su Pu shook his head.

not on the many-pronged method of our ancestors. He neglected the

ladders, "Su Pu said, shortening. "Ching Ho refuses only on thought.

Unfortunately our ways to immortality aren't the same.

seemed to turn at his own response! Hong wondered why.

up amused. Perhaps he wasn't the idiot she seemed. Then he

The ladders nodded stiffly and Ching Ho wrinkled them. Look-
able, she would not think of mother and I'll do so much,perhaps.

teach her to paint, then the quitenesse here would be more bear-

wasn't dangerous, however; she could see that. She would let him

Rong cocked her head. Perhaps Chung ho was bewitched, he

shook, bleating pronouncedly. To this day he won't talk about it.

n ahead, when the bandits left, we emerged and found Chung ho in

as head, who was reading Tao Zhu. He wouldn't come, that, he stared

Hetian Taoist monks we must stay here, I came on hurriedly, I said to Chung

of superiority, he'd run away, like any other man. Hearing this, we

detached. They beat that when a philosophically Taoist was approached

shaking his head. For a few months some bandits occupied our

It was his dammed un-Taoistic stubbornness, Su Pu said,

"How did he come to lose his legs?" asked the tailor lady.

She pitied Chung ho, but was angry at him; she didn't know why.

Sons of Chung ho was like his father, a deserter. But Chung ho

Lady said, shaking her head.

He frowned his sacred responsibility to his sons, the other

"What Jack of flinty pretty, the tailor lady said.

Young Wu was forced to do so to escape the bandits.

coming Chung ho and none of them have come here since, until this

father wanted it all back. The monks were in an uproar. He dis-
had donated to the monastery for years, but when he did that, his

to come here, Su Pu told the ladies in an undertone, "His family

"The old man left his wife, family and material position

Su Pu half-smiled. Rong wanted to zap him.
merely try to make Hung the new Imparcox, without getting the
has ever succeeded in destroying China’s system. Now, if they’d
ey, that was why. They’re not going to win no revolution

"Huh?"
"Kill me."
"We’re here. I just went along with them to prevent them from
"Rong, we’re not with the radicals anymore." Yi flushed.
with the radical leaders and the priests."
and here you are pretending this monastery won’t be destroyed.
Remember what the radicals said about the new kingdom coming?
"Oh, you’re crazy too." She shook her head. "Don’t you
grey stone. It made patterns like those on a frog’s back.
Rong followed his finger, but all she saw was cool, uneven
see the dragon’s head? It’s spitting fire."
its model. I agree, but I see more in the subject than a rock.
"Heath Ho said it’s important to have a patinating look like
"rock."
"What are you trying to do? It’s not doesn’t look like a
around. It was spring, and the pond was a jungle of lotus stems.
Yi sighed, and continued to pat. Rong watched, looking
"Su Pu said to Chung Ho."
"All right, I won’t, and you can find out for yourself what
"Aw, come on, Rong, don’t watch me."
so, but one day she would show him how to really pat.
book now mildly he copies the rock’s form, she wouldn’t tell him
Rong watched him quietly from behind. She would pat it too, soon.
It was sitting in the garden, patinating a tall, pointed rock.
"With." Why would your family go to a temple that said that? You "usually say the opposite." "Life are illusions, anyway." Life is illusions, anyway. The Chinese says societal and family prejudices, or we've have none. The Chinese says societal and family prejudices. But society must believe that you're too old to join. But society must believe that you're too old to join. He was married. She was married, though, pretty, they say. He stuck it at home, smoking opium and seeking excessive courtesans. He hated it. It's all true; it was my brother's fate. He was withering, "It's all true; it was my brother's fate. He was withering.

"It's all true; it was my brother's fate. He was withering.

"It's all true; it was my brother's fate. He was withering.

"You don't forget. You just don't care."

"You don't forget. You just don't care."

Woman's priorities! I was raised to a proper home."

"Woman's priorities! I was raised to a proper home."

I'm sorry. Please. I forget. You have tenacious ideas about artistry, so forget it now," she said.

"I'm sorry. Please. I forget. You have tenacious ideas about artistry, so forget it now," she said.

"You don't care before, when you were posting as scholar."

"You don't care before, when you were posting as scholar."

She knew he'd follow her; he did, his lips set tight.

"She knew he'd follow her; he did, his lips set tight.

"Really?"

"Really?"

For cursing him. "Sorry, paced away."

"Sorry, paced away."

Today saw took away your brother's face, so don't chide me well as my brother."

"Today saw took away your brother's face, so don't chide me well as my brother."

"Please, to support you and me, as he did not know; I'm no lover of such manner, but remember that's blasphemy!"

"Please, to support you and me, as he did not know; I'm no lover of such manner, but remember that's blasphemy!"

genre and the priests enraged. . . .
She heard the stirrings off.

"Go on, Hong," Chung Ho said. She didn't shiver again.

"Faded as he saw Chung Ho's hurt expression."

"Yes, she propped it up addressed. "WELL! I... It's voice"

Hong clutched her brush tightly. She growled at Xi.

"Slowly. And Hong, after all, is only a peasant at that."

Teaching a woman to paint is unusual, brother," Xi said.

This encouragement.

She ignored his jargon, and moved the brush again, warm from

A start without antlike -- good!

"That curvy's like a tree is bent in wind." Chung Ho said.

She had made it; it had not been there before.

That was her mark on the stick! It was a blotch, but one

clumsy. In her hand; smooth and cool, but

the brush felt clumsy in her hand. "Yes," she said, looking down.

"Yes," she said, looking down.

at Hong.

"I'd recommended for me, and now you wish to paint?" he looked

bad recommendations for me. And now you wish to paint?"

"You can forget courtesy manners with me, boy," Chung Ho

said quietly, bowing.

"Yes, older brother," he

had blocked his entity.

was no earth spirit, Hong now knew for certain; on the whole would

Chung Ho stepped through a round hold in the garden wall. He

stayed.

"I said in a deep voice. "He came here to see what he could learn,"

"Even part of Yi Teels courtesy rigidity is false", someone

said. 97
he.

With his eyes wide and large, she looked away quickly, and so did she. She had helped drive farther away. It was looking at her strangely.

Mother and grandmother, and then Bill, and who knows but what embarrassment about hearing the Tarbungs. First she had felt almost futility shame for hearing her, while feeling confusion. But then she realised she was just, oh, that she worried about her, that she breathed that she missed her, oh, that she worried.

But Hong's shoulders were already hunched. He never remem-

"Teasing." I'm only Tarbungs. "I'll Submitted and shook his head, then smiled. "We've known each other for two years, and you still haven't learned to be polite to me. Even though I rescued you from the Fireball, you still haven't.

Then the rest of his hair.

He stood still and frowned, his eyebrows sticking out more

She laughed.

"I don't get it. And he shouted his feet."

"Leave it to you to notice unimportant details."

Like it used to when you were a Tarbung."

"Of course it's not. Go fix your hair. It's sticking out, "That's not a bad profession, Hong, "I said.

wouldn't say so, but she would know.

and Chung Ho might think she was too stupid to continue. He

would laugh. Perhaps she should hide it? We would laugh

wasn't a very good tree, though. Not as good as it had seemed

up; Chung Ho, too, had gone. She felt strong and light. It

She realised she had been lost in patterning when she looked
"It's no excuse," I said. "All my ancestors have led when content with peace.

"A convenient excuse," she said, smirking. "I could never be of course. It's my duty. He raised his head.

"And you're still planning to go to the war, on the march.

"Maybe when I'm gone you'll appreciate me better.

"That was a commitment," and you misinterpreted it. "You don't listen to me, Ronny," I said. "I committed you politely, like mother.

less those days. She would have to change, become passive and less the appropriate were why China had called for her Less and out the inappropriate were why China had called for her Less and clumsy contours of it. Perhaps her ugliness and tendency to blurt built. Under the covers, she had felt her face, and knew the mother. Instead she had grandmother's flat face and manish her strong, wide hips and shapely. Why wasn't she wispy, like po or grandmother, although she loved them. She looked down at Rong hated to think of herself as tough and bossy, like but read well enough to understand his attention to her da-Yu. Rong shrugged. Was he insulting her? He knew she could not

"It's, I hate to be run." He smiled slyly. "I'll live a long life, and I'll leave a long life. I live with your shamelessness, can everyone in you'll live a long life, and with your shamelessness, can everyone in thing this effect. But you're not weak. I like da-Yu; you're strong. you alone. And you hide the reason for your sadness, while I'm doing it. I'll leave you alone. And you hide the reason for your sadness, while I'm doing it. I'll leave you. Said softly, "You strike out swiftly, so people will leave sometimes you're like da-Yu, the melancholy heroine,"
fate, it was her shame; she should have stayed with her mother.
head and explained that although her family's tragedies had been
first time he had asked her about her past. He had shaken his
them? And yet he had made her feel worse; he always did, from the
father, of grandmother, of our pa. Who knew what had happened to
worse than I. Her stomach tightened as she thought of mother, of
"Stop preaching at me. I know what I must do; you're no
your ancestors, as I must.
join shame, which is your own shame. You must regain face for
duty should be. When you marry, you must expedite your parents!
you're a woman, so of course action's no issue for you, but
"Is that so?" Hong shook her head.

"Faith is for when there's no hope."
ting here, strewing over the Pathways and over my family's past.
y and knap that I go, I can feel it. Too long I've been st-
yt began to pace. "I know it, but it's the right balance of
won't like you going.
"We don't need more killing," Hong said slowly. "Chung Ho
regret her partipcation in collective violence.
It was too late to change it, however much newst books made her
profess's cries. She blushed. Well, she had been a part of that.
Hong knew he was recollecting the temple-burning, and the
he shrugged. His mouth gathered and he frowned.
been out of the monastery.
"We both know their ways," I hoped as though she had never
fit to the Confucian general.
"Greater reason to kill them. And, I know their ways. I'd be use-
the hearing in his voice. And no one cared for him, understood he would realize he loved her, he must. Why else would he have did he know it must be changing, no she would marry, or no one? voice started off. "I wonder who you will marry?"

His own, that doesn't suit you. And you will marry? What else can you do? Be a mystic to you. And you will marry? What else can you do? I'm like a brother certainty made her want to attack him. He made him more himself than ever. She envied his certainty! his doubt himself! the talking hadn't affected him at all, except to

His old self-righteousness back again. He never seemed to better by now. "He seemed loudly. "Of course you won't listen to me, "I said. I should know"
soulds. No, she was no contradiction invention, but part of human away. No, she was no contradiction invention, but part of human could tell. He spoke of his family in a tight voice, then looked controlled. She didn't believe him, for he felt shame too, she could tell. Now changing, he told her that shame was a way the contemporaries family didn't matter, that only loyalty to the wearing army now she had believed the talkings, she had wanted to believe that of daughter to parents as they sat making shoes in winter. And somehow, she again heard grandmother telling her about the duttess
held the table edge to steady herself. The bowk crushed onto the table and Hong jumped. She
sparks. The bowk crunched onto the table and Hong jumped. She
head spun on the spatterings. It was black, except for the
through the doorway spattered the great and Hong looked up, her
Hong shook as Chian handed her a bowl of gruel, tight pattering
looked away.

the adventures he should? He must know she loved him. He merel
Oh, it was too modest to think about it. Why didn't Chung Ho make
it all appreciate her? She couldn't be completely unattractive.

with her head sideways, she shifted, then shook her head. Odd that
shoulders up, the way it always moved. Her hand touched ankle.
down. He grabbed her hand and squeezed it, then strode off. His
May your fate be good, as you deserve, he said, looking

from it.
care for her. She shuffled her feet. She had never wanted this
he looked at her serenously. She stopped daydreaming. He did
and ready to find something else new to try

nothing; he'd have his adventures and come back soon, satiated,
of course she should be here. He was making a lot out of

still be here when I return. His voice rose.

"Goodbye, then, he said huskily. "I don't suppose you'll
der, brothers?"

pretty; who could tell that he had Chung Ho, who was wise, and ten-
out, red. He was like a woman to her: incomparable, impulsive and
looked awkward; his skinny arms hung stiffly and his chin jutted

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Rong dreamt that a man with long braiding hair, wearing Manchu robes, came up behind Mother while she was cooking over the fire.

"He will sort this, Mother."

"Chung Ho won't be needing this room, Mother."

"Making the master stay out of his own room!" muttered Chan. bare space. It felt as she had hoped, safe and dark and deep. carefully study Kang stood in the center, contemplating this small.

They had reached Chung Ho's small, stark room. The magnet - combined to realize this bed.

"Next, he'll be taking a said under his breath, shaking his head. "One would be able to see her."

Chung Ho had offered her his Kang, the thickest one she had.

"No, no one will bother you."

"If you like, he looked at her, his eye - get into it now, Rong, if you like," he said. "The Kang should still be warm enough for you to rebuild the fire under my Kang and take her there, Chan."

"Can't you see she's till, Chan?" Chung Ho had turned from harder.

the fire, where he had been warming his hands.

"What have you brought you here, I can't guess, peasant scum."

"Why Master Xi..."

Chan shook his head. 

Chan's bald head was growing and shrinking. She batted her eyes at the shadowing colors of the room. Every time she opened them, things had moved, and changed shape. She gripped the table. ever brought you here..."
and they would play their ears, their bloodshot eyes expanding.

"Like a ghostly into the wind, only the tortured would hear her,

and let her die. She would pay for her shame. She would yield,

been so petty as to hold what Mother could not help against her,

green hemorrhages asked her how she, a good daughter, could have

and the tears came, scratching her cheeks. Spirits with long

ach tightened and she clenched her fists. She thought of Mother

those cups and dragging the pieces over Mother’s face. Her storm

ago when her feet had been bound. She had felt like shattering

mother had brought her the last time she had been bedridden, years

When Chan brought her tea she tasted again the tawny cups

tossed.

The speckles were relentless; they would not leave her. She

not speak or eat. She tried to dream of the marsh, but could not.

harshly, and stamping her legs. Always long watched, but could

magistrates; the priestesses, her eyes bloodshot and huge, laughing

out, pools begging on a dusty road; rather, being trod by the cat

her, her dreams consumed, just fragments of scenes, there was

her, she dreamt and woke, dreamt and woke. She could not remem-

derependable it felt, and now good the sheets, resting lightly over

she lay as still as she could, feeling herself breathe; now

when they first arrived at the monastery.

knitting whisked through the air and Hong woke, feeling as she had

stirred the soup, not noticing the man’s breath on her neck. The

the room, somewhere in blackness, watching. Hong screamed, but she was outside

teeth protruding like knives. Hong screamed, but she was outside

at home. He raised his long knife and his mouth curved open, the
"Would you pour us some tea?" he said. "You've been tossing and turning all night, I've seen her tossing and turning."

Rong cocked her head. "How did he know of her dreams?"

"You're looking better," he said, nodding. "Relax, I'll be straight.

Imagine the smiling young man she had been. She sat up very straight. He seemed young inside, as young as she. She had grown.

Long, white hair looked thick and healthy today, and his eyes were still lit up. She had not heard his footsteps on the dirt floor. His

"Hello, Rong," Chung said. Had he known she was thinking about

have been days!

why Chung had left her stay in this room all this time? It must

neck to see out the doorway. No sounds, no shapes. She wondered

throat twitched. Time wouldn't move. She sat up and glanced her

heavily into the kang. Her breath rose regularly above her. Her

the air buzzed, thick and fragrant. Her arms and legs sunk
dark.

his existence anymore. It was only she and they, and the empty but at night, the spirits came back, and she could not believe in

her in the smoky light, when the room was filled with only by soft peace.

repeated his name softly. She could believe he had been there.

Chung had been a dream of brightness, kindness, and she
tossed.

The spirits would not leave her, no matter how violently she
When the bandits came and took my leg, I was quiet and passitive, as
you took sprit and respectful, he said, 'That makes sense.'

You must be his friends. He stopped and turned, near the door.
He moved over his crutches gracefullly; the spirit is in their wood
cut off his hands of his leg and arms under his rough cotton rope.
He stood slowly. He raised himself smoothly. Hong noted the mug.

'I'll tell Chan to bring you food and pipes and brushes.'

'Yes.'

'Yes, to substantial questions. Are you hungry?'

'Yes, they trained you to become a proper peasant wife.'

His eyebrows rose, and he nodded. 'And your family, we know
the tea slowly, looking at her.

What did the tauntings lead you to expect?' He stepped his
and shrunk back, redder.
she gave him the small blue cup. She brushed his hand at she did,'

'It doesn't matter,' Chung Ho said, putting out his hand.

Why,' yes,' Hong said, standing carefully. She smiled some
some, today. Would you like that?'
and joyous. In swirls and peaks, the fragments of her dreams fit
landscape swelled, its mountainous like waves, with energy both dark
between them, although she could not say what they meant. The
timid, as before, as she stared at them, she felt the connections
Thus time her sensations were undisturbed and yet detached, not
way the ink settled and thinned.
the ink had dried and she soaked the brush again, smudging at the
lines shifting in delicate patterns, like those she wanted to draw.
raised it. But the clean stick was beautiful, with its own tiny
picked up a brush and plunged it in ink. It shown wet, and she
chan had left the paintings, flouting and shaking his head. She
find by herself than changing her diet.
and cared for her, but changing her diet seemed more mystic-
changing her standing before her again, and smudged, but did and mother
between the harsh tea and the gateway’s sweetness. She thumped
right on her tongue. It was still hot, she savored the contrast.
The gateway Chan brought soothed her throat and rested just
changing her diet.
then she? He could name it, while all she could do was elected.
understand. She did feel, though, that he knew her pain better
rung smudged back. She did not want to tell him she didn’t
He shook his head and smudged patiently, and began to walk.
because he loved me, and what had I left to avoid, but to feel?”
because I had left, distracting the ancestors. Mostly, he cried
never, like you. I saw my father, a censor, crying at his desk
the city with greater pain than I really felt. I went into a
a Faust should be. Inside, though, I stepped them, and heard
she blushed and her eyes focused on the only master they'd fetch and carry for. "He winked at her.

"Laughter," literary ladies don't obey mere servants! Why it's telling you to go to bed, but I knew it would do no good." He jumped burning in here last night when I went to bed, I thought of lamp burning in here last night when I went to bed, I saw the

"Well, just work through breakfast and see if I can clear this head. You don't have to start at sun-up!

laughed and shook his head. "You don't have to start at sun-up!

Well, just work through breakfast and see if I can clear this head."

they rooms clean, looking straight tells at X. Who arta't.

her better now; he had once told her he liked people who kept room strong and smarted, and continued mending. She nicked around the doorway.

"You look like an old madame, with her legs apart," said Rong Shuang and smitted, and continued mending. She nicked around the doorway.

She leaned over her mending, humming.

right after she had washed it, she felt a tiny hole in it. She pulled the threads down from the mended, distressed sheet above.

put them, and unfolded them slowly. They smelled fresh, and the needs. She picked up her clothes from the table where she always

up. Rong looked around her tiny room, pleased at its clean white-

on, whom she had been reading, the patting, looked tidy, totted would show him her latest patting, and they would discuss changing

she smiled, and spring up. She would see China in this morning. She

Rong woke, and sunlit the bed, then a resting dance of dark and light.
"But you, I'll only be a concubine," Hong had said. "What if I have without children?"

"Who will take care of me if I grow old here?" What face

when Hong asked her whether she wanted to go. "Of course," she

been told to a patron who fancied her. Put pago had laughed lightly

better, she realized she hadn't been. Two months ago, pago had

had thought pago was laughing at her; when she'd known her

the young woman with a peaked chin had laughed her guilty

Robes for the monks, she sewed from midnight to supper. Pago,

sometimes she helped him, although her duty was to make and repair

she walked down the narrow hallway. Chum kept it very clean.

dressed especially for him. He would think that extraordinary.

arranged the jacket a bit. She did not want him to think she

enjoy it, she would see Chum ho today! Then she carefully dis-

sewn was smooth under herfinger. She put on the jacket, straight-

the mending made it even more her jacket. The bump where she had

calm, good to see the cloth become almost perfect again. Anyway,

Hong nodded. She could work again, now. It felt good to be

"eat, silly maiden."

when there will be something to tell?" He whistled. "I'm off to

I know it, unfortunately," he said. "But you never know.

she raised her eyebrows. "There's nothing to tell," she

about young ladies like Chum said.

"Don't worry, I'm not about to go telling tales, especially

cloth, but her hands would not stay controlled."
and he beckoned her. She followed him to his study. Her legs

"Hm?" he said, she faced him, knowing she was blushing,

she turned away, chewing rapidly.

He was tired. He was tired. When he rose

and sat in some subject that distracted her from him, unless they were

cold by turns, as she always did with him, watching his back, hoping no one noticed her. She felt hot and

watching him across the room, Chung ho liked to eat alone, so Hong stood across the room,

in the garden or in their cells.

others ate with gentility, guests from outside, or alone, meditatively.

He was the only monk to eat breakfast with the servants. The

since his leg was cool off, he needed warmth all the time, he said.

the day as they ate, Chung ho huddled by the fire, as usual.

wants stood around it, talking of the weather and their work for

Chan's guard watched and grumbled at the long table. The ser-

ker.

He had said today, Chung ho must know. Why didn't he speak? Per-

had said today, "Mien, see, put Baq had said, shaking her head. "Rong had

never mind." Rong had answered quickly. Put Baq had wrenched

"I know why you don't want to leave," put Baq had said.

bitten her lips.

We'll see, put Baq had said, shaking her head. "Rong had

"I'll never leave," Rong had said. "I'd dream myself first."

"If I never leave," Rong had said. "I'd dream myself first."

they can make a profit of you when you're young.

too," put Baq had said. "They won't let you grow old here when

put Baq had just shrugged and laughed louder. "You'll go

his wife is mean to you? And he's so fast, and wicked."

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When you brought you here, I could see you match someday be able to
well, to yourself." Ching Ho beamed. "Why is truly a fine work.
Good. The mountains move, breeze, light. Ching Tzu has led you.
I see my Pet in the looseness of form, in the gymnasm of shapes,
"This is a gymnastic harmony," Ching Ho added in a low voice,
She had changed."

She had taken until now to realize
of her family members' names. It had taken until now to realize
gone away sometime since Yi seat, and it no longer hurt to think
artistic images of Father, Mother and Sun Po. The gymnastics had
think about her name anymore? nor did she dream of ghosts and
turned half away, he shoulders hunched, she realized the din't take this time."

"Yes," he said. "You have captured the Tao in those mou-
He nodded. She unrolled it carefully.
She raised her eyebrows at Ching Ho, holding out the scroll.
"The hall was warming up as the sun got stronger.
The scroll felt strong and secure in her hand. She walked
snake. Rong's stomach hurt, and she showed her usual fast walk.
out quickly. The hall was cold and long, like the inside of a
she looked down. She dared not let him see her eyes. She walked
the other. She looked at him. His eyes were shining, humorous!
"Oh, yes, I forgot it," Rong said, shifting from one foot to
are you going to show me a new patitation?" Ching Ho smiled.
not see her. Her head, body, tingled.
seemed still; she was conscious of each movement, although he could
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chrenched her fists, and pounded them into her lap.

I impulsive to rip it pass through her, and leave her cynical. She
she looked at the three sticks, ready for her parents, and felt the
After he left, Rong set down. She could not move or think.

Looked down.

Convulsion side to me, too. I love my father. He shrugged and
I don't know when and if I'll be coming back. There's a

"Someday?"

want to see your new work someday.

want to see your new work someday.

"If you wish, of course. Continuing printing, I will
"Oh blitked. "If you wish" of course. Continuing printing. I will
\chun will want you to stay here, although I am gone.\chun

Young girl to travel with him at this serious time.
He did not invite her to go with him; it would be improper for a
Learning? Why should he? She was not his kin, or a male friend.
She only nodded. Of course Chung ho had not consulted her about
"Rong wanted to shout: "What do I care whether you return?"

"From the war."

"Stillly. My father is dying. You will be there, too, come back
I wanted to tell you that I leave tomorrow," Chung ho said,

He looked at her. She shouted watery eyes.
would keep the spirits who ate prosperity away. Hong shook her

They shook the rattles harder now, and wailed louder. That

Love's purity.

Powder, for she had no face, no courage to die to preserve her

Late to escape, she bowed her head. She might as well hide under

realized he was afraid of the bundles with long knives; it was too

began to sweat. She knew now how Chung Ho had felt when he

heretofore; she had no money to buy herself into a wonder. Her hands

now, how she had seen her only after-

many other recalcitant courtesans? Suicide had been her only alter-

she shivered. Why hadn't she drowned herself in a well? Like so

would he still be scattergy, bony, self-righteous, and stubborn?

She had not seen yet since he left the monastery years ago.

would not have pushed him.

a maid or secretary, to be near him as he worked and thought. She

would have agreed, but she wished he had let her stay with him as

could hope for from marriage. Before she had met Chung Ho, she

that if I would care for her, and perhaps what was all she thought she

perhaps he really believed she would love him someday. He knew

or surrogating. He had other things to think of than her happiness.

what she felt, he would know. Perhaps he was shaking his head,

Chung Ho was out in the street, looking at her chair, wondering

expressive powder made her face still? she felt masked, maybe.

up and down, and Hong's head bobbed in the heavy head-dress.

been allowed to eat for three days. The chair swayed up and down,

interrupted the heavy red curtains. Her stomach hurt; she had not

inside the sedan chair, Hong sneezed as dust which somehow

IV
Last thing yet.

... the smile twisted, 'realizing she had not meant the other. She smiled twistedly, 'realizing she had not meant the her what was important: to paint and not to interfere with her intoa Laddie, the concentrated fool. Chung Ho had already laughed more him until he sent her away. Maybe he fancied he could make well, if he wanted to be suppressor and humiliate her she would try.

Laddie, Rong had heard; he had always abhorred Rong's ortugis... His wife was perfectly educated, a fine poetess, and read well. I... Laddie, anyway? Probably his old pride, and stubborn....

Promised the end of culchunthage, but the parrtists had lost. Why read if he spent all his nights with the first wife. Chou Hon had the wife would see that Rong had no interest in Laddie, Rong would be was Laddie's first wife, out there? Was she planning to torment Rong?

her, but now were qustily partitapating in the protection-ratio of the compound shouting; they had not been allowed out to escort she wished the ride would last forever. She could hear the woman like grandmother? Rong squirmed. She was afraid to be set down, old one; wouldn't she be rusty and mean to her daughters-in-law?

How's mother, who, now his father had died, would be the venerated Chung Ho's, not Laddie's, conchunto. Perhaps she would meet Chung Rong hear a whistling crake. It must be the outer gate of Chung Ho's family compound. If only she were going to a court as preserve some of her freedom.

could get her to do it, she would make the girl a buddhist nun, to father. If the child were a girl, Rong would pity her, and if she father. Maybe if she had a child, he would look like his uncle, not his would see Chung Ho sometimes, as his younger brother's conchunto.

heard, she felt not lucky, but accused. At least perhaps she
tue trees.

around it, dense with potted plants and carefully cultivated shrubs.

happily under a sleek, black curved roof. A patio stretched court needed must be the first wife's. Its bright red beams shone to face. She stiffened and looked around her. The magnificent

wanted to go to the garden and sit with hut pull. But there was a gate high, white walls. There was a moon gate, not more than fifty feet away, towering peasants and a sharp, tall rock. The summer sky pointed beyond the sedan chair. Young turned and saw the garden's pointed roof. "We're near the main garden," Hut pull said eagerly. She

little house was probably nothing to him.

least it wasn't striking. Of course, he was a rich man, and this was just a burbling water fall around the corner of the house. At the front, and Young could see a tiny rock garden surrounded by bloomed flowers. Young looked up. The house was small, but neatly pointed.

old and canthexcuses.

young and rich and just, she did not want him; he might as well be gentleman as a chamber-maid. Young bit her lip, for although it was girl could stay with her always, and would not be sold to some age, and felt regretful at the girl's fresh skin. Perhaps the could not be older than thirteen. Young remembered herself at that

1, I'm Hunt put, your madam," the girl said, looking down. She

with a frightened smile extended her hand to Young.

creek? This must be her court. She opened. The drapes opened. A thin young

er the curtains put her down gently, and heard a door
panted, she felt the room resist her attempts to settle into it. She felt the air over the table. No dust. She liked that, but as she
and two chairs, it was empty. It felt like a temple. Vong rubbed
seemed formal on display. Except for the Kang, a heavy table
seemed cool and cavernous. It was not stuffy. It felt like the midst. It
started. "Why, yes. Hut put steppe out. The room
"Should I bring you tea, mistress?" Hut put said.
empty. She released her breath.
breath. But the Kang, covered in blue and gold brocade, was
entering the large room she knew was her own, she held her

consuming again.
ate in a moment and she would be huddled on a cold thread with her
would evaporate. The house would evaporate. She had never been in so fine a place! surely, she
stirrups. She had never been in so fine a place! surely, she
savored the smoothness of the polished wood floor under her satin

healthily. They passed the tiny, neat, small's chamber. Vong
a few chairs and tables stood in precise symmetry. Plants alone
They walked slowly through the pleasant, cool verandah, where
to her new home.
Rong knew it must be hut put's first time conducting a concubine
Hut put quickly put her hand by her side, looking embarrassed.
and that was all. She blushed.
Rong nodded serenously, folding her hands carefully, as she

"Will you come in?" Hut put's voice was high, and her exten-
servant looked, and that was all. She blushed.
Rong looked at her own small house. Yes, she was a high-class

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fate, the payment for the family shame she had caused, she had ceased.

Lips, and wrists again she had killed herself. Being here was her

towards him. She wanted Chung Ho's child, not his. She let her
she did not want to be with him alone; she did not want to soften
these splendid clothes; she must still see those things in her.
She turned slightly away. She felt sickenly and common under

"You've grown even prettier, Hong," he said quietly.

bending

have considered him handsome, with his vigorous, straight
raised. If she had seen him through the compound gate, she would
longer angelic. He was taller than she remembered. Her eyebrows
self-consciously, smoothly. His body had become hard, but was no
of his face. He shuddered, legs not awkwardly, as he once had, but
and luxuriated, and his skin was clear and taut over the fine bones
and dexterous chin and wide-set eyes, but his hair was straight
cupped, and stepped once, before looking at his face. He had the old
by its new strong curves, under bright green silk. She took the
struck a little. He was astrid, too. She looked up his arm, struck
here," he said. Hong saw his hand holding the teacup, shake-

"Hello, Hong," said a high but not boyish voice. Hong knew

tentatively, and him put rushed out. Hong began to pace again.
putting down the tray with a bump. Hong looked at him put in-

"The master wishes to take tea with you," he put said.

she could not relax here.
eyes, but would not look at him. She felt it was someone else’s
the kang seemed the only soft, safe place. She could feel his
and he undressed her gently. She looked around the large room;
He led her to the kang. She stood before it, her head down,
to feel it was cold and damp.

Ye took her hand. He stroked it. She knew he must be able
to move.

a little startled; his eyes were no longer absurd, but deep
her eyes with his large, wet ones. She looked away. But she felt
He took her teacup and put it on the table. He looked into
Chung Ho to marry her if she could.
love for Chung Ho. She could not blame it; she would have forced
that on wating her years ago, and nurtured it, as she had her
still the same conjuction certainly. He had adopted the no-

His voice trailed off.
them, your strength, your sensivity to nature, your beauty.


will have sons." He looked her in the eyes. "I can see you in
will these years," he said, his head lowered: in any case, we
He reddened. "I don’t hope your feelings would change, after

Hong gazed at him.

won’t you speak?" Ye said, a little petulantlty, with hands

Ye and escape.
she held her shoulders. It only half. Here, they could bind
now why mother had that defeated look in her eyes, and in the way
to believe in. There was no way out, and that was all. She knew
He kissed her cheek and rose, sliding quickly into his arms. He stroked her hair.

He felt stronger than he again, and relaxed. At the white, creamed her neck to see him amazed, he lay, light and quiet, over him. It was breathing heavily. He surveyed and cried out. "What the f*** are they doing?" he wondered. He would get some from this experience; it didn’t matter least she would get some from this experience. As far as he was concerned, it was the world. She could be anyone, as far as he was concerned, at least she was actually there. She tried to imagine it was every time he stopped kissing her breasts. He was just a man.

Chung Ho, not Xi, who proceeded her. Her tenderness for Xi had left. Her eyes were crossed, and he chuckled her short. Xi’s eyes were crossed, and she now knew how dogs felt in the sweaty thighs. Lips. Red waves washed her, and her not head sweeted and shrank. He entered her slowly. She felt him crying out, but bit her teeth; she felt she was dreaming.

Real? she felt she was dreaming. His touches were soft and lightning, not hard enough to be mouth. His hands were soft and lightning, not hard enough to be steady. She was glad he did not try to kiss her young. She felt tender towards him, and tried to remember she breast. She looked at him indulgently. His hair looked soft and sweet, drifting softly lost in the large room. He leaned to kiss her body he was looking at. She was floating outside herself, a
too much, she had felt the way she did when her feet were bound.

was with child already, so it would not have to return. It hurt educated, and she would be honored in her old age; she hoped she

inherited money, position and good looks. They would be well-

he was right about that. It would treat her well; her sons would

who, she breathed deeply. She could have done much worse; China

where brilliant leaves swung violently. The lake rippled in the

rocks at the priest. She looked out her window at the garden,

hunger on the road, and suit po’s with expression as she threw

mother’s tear-stained face after father had beaten her. Her own

brought to her before, so this was her new life; she remembered

the high ceilling and disarrayed kangi. Dinner had never been

stood up slowly. She washed herself, she looked around again, and

touched herself, and felt creased at the corners. She shrugged, and

relieved, Rong enjoyed the stillness of the room. She

her, and strode out.
"She said softly, as she should, she remembered the gift of meet, "

Rong bowed. "The compliments to me are kind but exaggerated, "

stress. "It tells me you are orderly and efficient, and a fine seam-

though an old woman could walk.

She bowed anxiously. She walked down the hall faster than Rong.

Washing her, the Tanner's expression changed several times, and

called, "Oh, what!" the old woman said loudly to the woman

Rong blushed, At least Ching Ho remembered her.

Rong bowed low. "At least you are a lady."

But why would she have her revenge in subtle ways.

so often we get a combination with education and

Ching Ho has praised your path-

WELCOME, young lady." the old woman said, her voice resonant

but who would have her revenge in subtle ways.

She would never forget; who might think she had forgotten?

drew; Rong wondered if she had forgotten him. She looked the kind

must have reacted when Ching Ho let down the family and with-

Ching Ho's mother. Rong guessed she was a brilliant scholar. How

her face looked young, because of her eyes. So this was

Her features were hawklike, definite. Although her skin was

alert eyes boring into her. The old woman's head was thrown back.

"The old woman's head was thrown back.

Rong bowed low. "So did you. She stood to the old woman's

Satin.

She was still sore; it hurt to walk.

Rong walked down the great hall, her hand tightly on Yila's

Yila's mother sat on a dice, fanned by an old woman in purple
"Well, Mother, we'd better be off to present ourselves to the

servant after all. She looked at him questioningly.

Perhaps her thoughts were not her merest as a high-class

boy smiled at each of them. Hong could tell he would like them to

perhaps we'll be friends. Hong thought, she stood straighter.

Perhaps we'll be friends, Hong thought, as she looked at Hong.

brothering her, those eyes in her incoherently white neck. He smiled, her eyes

In the first white, bowed back gracefully, her head hung

Hong bowed again. She was getting tired of bowing.

Lady moving forward on her cane. She must be the first white.

Hong heard something behind her, and turned to see a slender

her head.

could come to her. It was anything of Hong's anything. Hong lowered.

must be worth a fortune. But it was not really hers; the old lady

Hong a jeweled-brocaded brocade purse. Hong's eyebrows rose. It

voice. "And here is your gift. A servant moved forward, handing

"Thank you, my child," said the old lady in a business-like

The old lady smiled weakly. Now greedy she is. Hong thought.

who it was for.

material she had ever worked with; and she had almost forgotten

the cash was. She had enjoyed making it; it was the softest

tangy carried out. She had forgotten how delicate and ethereal

sent her the material and three, with instructions she had received.

brochures on it. It had taken her hours to make. Crunch He had

she handed the old lady a white satin sheet with gold dragons em-

shoddily taken of my veneration for you," Hong said every' bowing.

"Although my seeming is cauty, I hope you will accept this

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Lately, she did not want to fall in; all her dignity as the future extra weight on the baby inside her. The bridge creaked and under- she stepped carefully over the bridge, feeling the funny grand occasion. "He smiled, and Hong smiled back.

My beautiful, concise and our child is welcome at this collapseable bridge to Hong. He extended his hand. 

"You laughed, squeezed him, pet quickly, then stepped over the tion, "That will tempt her.

downed a cup, then drinking another cup in the water in Hong's drawer.

boat, we will have all the wine drunk before you get to it."

She stop primping, Hong, and join us, "We pet called from the pet's mouth from soochow had fixed her hair well.

She felt her face numbing and the smooth bun underneath it. "Hu pet sat in was not as warm as the cotton padding she had once worn.

Moontight stretched the jade, Hong shivered inside her jack-

although she knew she shouldn't, from respect.

to walk with her. For the first time here she felt like smiling.

litter. Hong felt awkward next to them, but proud that they wished Hong sneaked a look at it's handsome profile. "Her pet's was even

his right arm, and to pet his left. They walked out decorously. With usually walked for the convenience to bow first. You gave Hong put pet bowed to Hong. What a great compliment. The first

and managed feet.

Hong wondered whether Xi's ancestors would care that she had come, would they look at her doubtfully, because of her low birth.
So old men dream.
She dances on water with us.

Our eyes close to hold her.

"Sticky is the moon-goddess' touch on our eyelids.

He began:

mess

She almost loved him: this surprised her. It was his fault

that brown knit delicately, like bird's wings, as he looked at her.

This enchanted than our means to describe this precious night.

Come, relax, Hong," I said, "we will invent poems more
gergerated to. She wished she could send the boatman home.

Yi blinked, her. She knew her laugh sounded affected, and

them: she felt like an actress, with him there.

now worked for a class he hated. She wished he were not with
he stood like a rigid parrying; perhaps he had been one once, and

boatman was there, tall and dour, watching the water. Hong thought

brought their own stove and let the servants at home. Only the

I put handed her a cup of hot, fragrant wine. They had

crying from nearby trees and felt warm and light.

sails crowned over them grecfully, secretly, Hong heard gibbons

I put helped Hong up the short ladder to the junk. It's

want in two years.

Take one night, and cried over her lap. I put had not been preg-

without her being witching about it. I put had come to her court

girl? anyway, it would be hard enough for I put if it were a son,

than I put, the mother of a mere girl. Her child might be a

watched her intently. She felt guilty for thinking herself better

mother of an only son would be gone. She looked up at I put, who
a large, balooning glass. "Here is our world," she said.
row of tiny plants in various shapes stood nearby. She summoned
switched blue, green and pink rocks through her slender hands. A
Tu feu pulled out a small chest from under her seat. She
rowned cocked her head; this was a new game.
"Anh, wonderful," he said.
"built...

I brought you a surprise,' Tu feu said. "A garden for us to
to contemplate.

thon and his father's death, and Tu feu dwelled on her inutility
but even they felt unease; they remembered this time with the pa-
safe posts. In past and in had always lived safely, comfortably,
head vet, really. Always existing, displaced, she arrived at
at the monastery when she had waited to pay for happiness. She
she had enjoyed herself so much lately! It was like the time

self?

floating life is but a dream; how many times can one enjoy one-
son. She couldn't help remembering the poet Tu fe was young, still. Waiting for this first
admitting the possibility of disaster could bring it on. She
death. Hong knew that often one's portions are accurate, and that
father had dead recently. He dwelled on it, imagining his com-
guick warmth. They could be meadowsmat at times, but then, this
Tu feu hugged him. Her eyes looked wet. Hong loved her, her
dream," he added, laughing.

"it's voice crackled as he finished his poem. "This is no
The boatman stood guard. She didn’t trust him, but what
pushing, but helping tactfully. She wanted to guard their peace.
kind to her, always waiting for her to learn, to adjust, not
sorbed. They would be happy now, for a while. They had been so
stroked his tiny beard. Hong was glad that he and the rest were ab-
y’d kneel beside her, staring at the plants intently. He
slowly to your house. I knew we shouldn't have gone out without you, your arm around me, "I'll be fine," I said.

"Oh!" Rong said. "Put your arm around me."

OUT of the side of her eyes, Rong looked at her. Rong had them, Rong could become like her. Rong looked at her. Since it was unlikely that Rong could have more children, and it was in memory of her own pain, perhaps she wanted Rong's son to be her fourth child. Perhaps she had cried during childbirth. But she took a deep breath because she worried about Rong. Or the doctors said. Rong was surprised that Rong had survived the birth; a difficult birth. Rong had heard. "It was too narrow, Rong shrugged. She saw Rong's eyes widen. "Tell me, Rong?" The baby's voice was high.

"It's time, Rong?" Rong said. "I can't hear you," Rong shouted. "Your hands are too many hands, Rong said. She had had one daughter. Rong shrugged, although she had not been. Rong seemed to be standing on her toes, Rong shouted. "Her voice was high."

would not be seen to scream. It echoed within her lower body. She blushed a cry; it was beating what they were saying. Rong bent over as far as she could. The baby was beating. "They're secretively, aren't they?" said Rong. "I wonder."

"Don't see them," she said. "Where are they?"

Rong looked up into the trees, looking at the twisted garden. "The birds... they all talk now..."

tiny, fast, and important, perfectly colored hair. "What is it?" Rong looked at Rong, enjoying, as usual, her voice. "What is it?"

Early evening is my favorite time," said Rong. "Listen,"
She wished he at least knew of her state at this moment. She wished

FAMILY. Chung Ho now made all major family decisions. Kong
died; herFastness had left, along with her interest in the.
The old mistress had started smoking opium since her husband
be pleased.
on her breast. If I would reverence her? Even the old mistress would
gritting her a soul. How could it be? She imagined a handsome son
an honor to the here, a maestoso. The spirits of the earth were
pain, but through the achingly, Kong felt strong and glad. It was
wondered why she was so upset. To Pet wasn't the one experiencing
To Pet paced. Kong could see her in her side-vision, and
looked strong; they were large and guarded, protected.
that she wasn't with the automatizing old mistress. Her hands
trusted her terrible old eyes, but her voice was soft and smooth, now
famers who was the family's chief maid. Kong was not sure she
awkward, more tightened than even on her first day, behind the old
when Kong reached the Kang she collapsed on it. But put
consummates.
like when her feet had been bound, or when her marriage had been
Long began to feel this was another accelerated, dreamlike time,
steps To Pet yelled for the maids. Her voice sounded hysterical.
then for now, To Pet held her tighter. When they reached the
another contraction -- Kong had thought she was finished with
beginning. It was like her own smallness to distrust To Pet.
for distrust her. To Pet had always been kind to her, from the
shook her head. To Pet was crying slightly. Kong hated herself
a meal or two. It's my fault: I contrived you to come. To Pet
They hugged, each other, quietly, a little. They put him down carefully beside Hong, and she and Hong stared at the baby. They examined the baby with her eyes. Hong gave the baby to Tu Pei, who prepared to put the baby on the bed. Hong glanced atTu Pei from the side, watching Tu Pei look anxious, doubting something, stretching self-consciously. Again, she doubted, looking at her, Hong saw tears coming into Tu Pei’s eyes.

This was before, Hong had never seen her look with dark circulars and sharp angles. Hong saw her blush, her face turned red and old, she was beautiful. Hong, Tu Pei said, she had come up on Hong into the bed, relaxed and satisfied, smiling. She lay face, Hong caressed his hair. It was unbelievably soft. She lay there, didn’t look like any of them yet, with this chubby, scrunchy, black hair, he was hot, and breathed heavily. Hong looked at him, amazed. She had never felt such happiness. She saw herself holding him, watching him, for years, what would he be like? He was amazed. She had never seen such happiness. She saw herself, the baby lay on her breast, small and red, with thick, matted voice. It was a bright thread in the midst of pulsing night.

Ching Ho, but it was strong, nevertheless. Of course, her feeling for it was nothing like what she felt for it. She knew too; she felt the child belonged to both of them. Of
from her husband.

Though trustworthy, Jnu Pet could not be expected to keep secrets
Jnu Pet's comfort. No, it would be both bad manners and too risky.

Ho, not Yi, as the boy's father. How sweet it would be to eat it.

Hong smiled slightly. Did Jnu Pet know she had wanted Chung

"Yi will be proud of this child," said Jnu Pet, nodding.

Hong wondered if she did smile beautifully.

Hong's eyebrows raised. A compliment from the lovely Jnu Pet!

you smile beautifully Jnu Pet said softly, looking down.

came apart.

her. She felt buoyant and sure, she smiled at Jnu Pet as they
who had started it. Jnu Pet's arms felt soft but strong around
she heard Chung Ho walking towards them and could no longer
her days alone on the marsh, satiated.

him, but his world was his own. This was true, she remembered;
the baby woke and cried. She soothed him, she soothed him;
she could reach
would still feel as intensely towards him as she had a year ago.

her eyes remained on the covered carpet; she wondered if she
important because of her child. She tried to walk proudly,
but long, could hardly. She felt small as she walked towards him, but

Chung Ho sat writing, his back to her, at the end of the

when she was a child.

phanes, indeed she was glad they hadn't been allowed to live here

tight. Never would they steal him for their own ceremonies. Or

pamphlets he had written against them, she clutched her baby
had told her about what misfortune did, he had shown her the
clothing them as though they were raptities, some shivered. Yet
their mensural poodles, her erect blue eyes remote, and her hands

she could imagine her ordering Chinese girls to give her

the woman. She hoped the woman would be hutsed one day.
rong. Rong raised her eyebrows, she felt hot surges of hate for

like sneezing. The barbaren set not apologetic for bumping into

baranguan. Rong caught a musty whiff of the barbaren and felt

balloned strongly from the waist, as though the hidden legs were

and's outhit was cut to immodest tightsness around the breasts, and

these were western barbarians, then. A tall lady in a yellow

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Chung Ho sat down. The lines around his mouth had deepened.

They stood awkwardly. How odd, Hong thought. That she could think of nothing to say to someone who meant so much to her.

"Sorry to be harsh. This has been a difficult week."

"Why ask me? I've already known about it? No, wait, I'm...

"House..."

"Killed, a mob. Led by gentility, attacked him in front of his baby who didn't respond.

"What were they here for?"

Chung Ho focused on a point on the ceiling.

"Oh, never mind. Ask your husband. Chung Ho hummed at the news.

What were they here for?"

Chung Ho touched the child's forehead. "Hello" he said softly. The baby stepped, and Hong relaxed.

"I'm beautiful," Chung Ho said triumphantly. He smiled, and
I hear you've been going to a Buddhist temple with Tu Fei.

"I'm sorry, Chung Ho," she said hastily. "Are you angry?

He waved his hand, as though all they had felt together
bleary and sharp, and looked down quickly at the carpet.

"I'm sorry, Chung Ho," she said hastily. "She wet his eyes,

not want them, and that made her angry.

Rong just looked at Chung Ho. She didn't know what to say.

"I thought he would improve our lives. He's just another good con-
story of the General. I could see it when he smiled at me or one of

enough man, though arrogant. He had tea with me the other day.

"What do we do, then, Rong? This missionary was a good

Chung Ho shrugged.

terrents: they beat the Tarlings. The Westerners will die.

"Will you ever seen a grenade?" Rong said.

"Have you ever seen a grenade?" Rong said.

"They must be fools," Rong said.

"Attack him. They are not afraid. They know the

Rong hugged her baby. It was a warlord, no one would dare

"Yes, waylay him. That will postpone the invasion, we will

Rong cocked her head.
"My older brother forgets that I'm a man now, a powerful,"

"I said.

"We said we should go to the mountains for a few weeks," Rong

"Rong could tell he was trying to seem offhand.

"So youvisited Chung Ho today?" I said.

"Yes, she's an ardent believer."

Day had fit Pet and I had

mess. She hugged the soft child and bounced him. What kind of

extra, as though walking. The sky hurt her eyes with its blue-

eyes closed, did not seem to notice them. Meanwhile, the art-

ier. She picked him up and steadied out the door. Chung Ho, this

would know food and sleep and love all his days, but she could help

out of the way; he would not ever see the viole. She had. He

would be knitted again, maybe even Chung Ho. She would get her son

would be comforted. Her stomach contracted painfully! People

Rong's hands seemed stuck around the baby. She did not know

generally are behind missionary attitudes. They enjoy revenge."

of leave and stay away for a few months. The Westerners knew the

cut off to learn to laugh again? I'll be fine. I suggested you and

will again after mother dies. It took me a while after my leg was

holidays. He could laugh at paradoxes. I once could; perhaps I

My father was a magistrate who went to Tangtai temples on

good to feel he still knew her, however.

Chung Ho always said that he should leave immediately; it was

"and you, being like myself, are unsure what you believe."

"Yes, she's an ardent believer."
of course, "Ron said, "picking up her emportery. He was

"When and he looked down.

"Oh, did you enjoy seeing Chung Ho after so long?" His eyes

straightened the daggers. "I'm off," he said smirking.

one could.

Ians looked like. No use trying to convince yt ofanything.

could not. She had always wondered what the house of the barbar-

not enough. Ron tried to see the daggers without moving; she

ever went without a war. Hunting animals, and digging his men was

to give up comfort and beauty easier than war. He had been seven-

stick scrotes and ancient peroration vasses. Yt had always been able

were knit, his eyes shining. Ron looked around the room, at the

around his desk, looking at daggers from all angles. His brows

ran away to fight them. He looked out the window, then paced

He was still the yt who possessed and against the daggers, who

have rested each hour of waiting."

My nose, I nearly ran him through, but told myself to wait. I

gance. Why, just yesterday one of them took a rickshaw from under

back them. I hate the foreign devils, colorless eyes, and alto-

long, and this time, the rabbit will have barbarian gunboats to

feed, we'll have another napkin revolution on our hands before

get rice from the missionaries and forget to plant their own

emperor, and not their landlords, is their supreme ruler. They

"Why, they're telling our tenants that the Christian God, not our

threat these missionaries are to us," yt said, shaking his head.

"Chung ho remains his target par excellence. He doesn't see what a

Ron shrugged. "Yt could be stubborn when he felt insulted."
Yi smiled. "Good!" He looked at her. "Would you still rather it be his?" Yi's voice trailed off.

Rong blushed. She did not know what to say.

Tu Fei swept in, like a graceful bird. "Well, Rong, have you convinced him that it's time we take a trip?" Tu Fei laughed.

Yi turned towards her wall. "No is the answer," Rong said softly. "No to both your questions."

"It's decided," Tu Fei, he said. "We go to the mountains day after tomorrow."

"Is he sleeping, Hui Pui?" Rong asked absentmately. She pricked her finger with the embroidery needle.

"He looks as happy as a brook after the ice has melted," Hui Pui said, smiling into the cradle.

"My, you've been getting literary, Hui Pui, since Rong's been teaching you to write," said Tu Fei, smiling.

Hui Pui nodded. She looked pleased. "I want to announce a farewell poetry-writing contest, to take place this afternoon," Tu Fei said, clearing her throat.

"Oh, I'm not good enough for that," Hui Pui said shrilly shaking her head.
the famine. It could not be true; yet, who had survived the war,
Rong sat still, wishing she could hide. She seemed open on
her prospected herself.

The missionary compound. The famine gained quickly at this
word from a cotelle that it was killed this afternoon in a lot at
the door-keeper's house, old Pu, who smokes a lot, had

servants always recognized at Pet first.

Kicked, gassed the old, brown famine-servant, as she strode
into the room. She knelt beside her at Pet; it irritated Rong that

Rong had through she just asked them to pass the time.

Rong had at Ching Ho's. What would explain her questions about him.
Station was soft, not resistant. Perhaps, but put looked at it as

but put continued to push as she rocked the child. Her expression
would at least be generous, Rong looked at but put carefully.

she sold but put, who knew how the buyer would treat her? It
Rong hoped not, but there was nothing she could do, if he had it.

but put dismissed, had it been trying to seduce the girl?

him. He's always kind to you."

for the mountains, afterwards. I don't know why you should mind
well if its coming, I see, said but put quietly. I, I try. But only if

rightly, Rong said. She was glad to pet. I asked but put,

not, don't be shy, but put."

Once, "I won't be coming,"

"we'll give ourselves handcaps to compensate for our expert...

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He looked at her searchingly.

more��tenable than she.

He no longer seemed wise and perfect. He seemed younger and

she had held to many times.

began to cry, and fled the room. Rong felt like holding him, as

he had his head in his hands. Looking at him, the first

birth. He had his head, the only brother; he had played with him, cared for him, from

was his only brother; he did not take disasters impassively. But 1T

wouldn't, Rong squinted at him. He sat down stiffly. Despite his

then to Rong. He looked at Rong as though she were meekly, Or

"I am heartily sorry," he said, first bowing to his feet, and

responded to her thoughts.

Chung ho stood at the door, shaking stiffly. How quickly he

while paying her proper outward respect.

who could do. Still, she wished he could rule the old lady suftly,

not to be the old lady. Of course, there was nothing illegal that Chung

private funds, what would be left for her son. The heather Rong

tolerated. But now that the old lady would have access to it's

be a disgrace she did not deserve. Rong had a son; she would be

in jeopardy. If Rong would be sent home to her family, which would

because of the mistress', optimum habbit, if Rong would be especially

would lose all status if it were really dead. With money tight

Chung watched her. She realized that Rong, who had no sons,

poured from her eyes.

"On, Rong, what will we do?" If Rong stood and paced. Tears

the center of action.

and stayed in the country with them, but it always had to be in

killed by the cunning foreigners? He should have obeyed Chung ho
home. She could farm again, if the land were still untaken. If
ended with tears -- she could go to my pet's house, or home -- yes,
not. Her mind waked -- mention her son, but for some reason, could not.
"I know, I'll be all right, or relatively all right," she wished to
After a while, though, you gain the confidence just to talk. I
say it should," Rong said, smiling shyly. She looked down.
When misfortune comes, it doesn't feel the way the Taosts
He shrugged.

Rong shook her head. "I'll think of somewhere to go," she
held their money for the hard times they know are coming.
jobs, they're excited of battles and stray talents remants. They
that the place is poor. The genity are excited to leave their
said. "I'm sure China would be glad to have you, I hear, though,
you could go back to the monastery, if you want." Ching Ho
but her lips, he seemed reluctant and important.
Ching Ho was sitting at the possessive, her suddenly.
"Ching Ho shook his head. "Those funds depended on it's
stolen from communal funds?"
Rong's eyes widened, but, surely the family will give us a
our family, grasping at grates to feed itself." The government is like
goods will be confiscated, as punishment. The governor is like
said softly. "I heard from the upper secretary that it's land and
you do have as much to lose as she, after all," Ching Ho

Rong shrugged.

pounced at the door through which Fu Pet had freed.
"You're stronger than I thought," Rong," he said. "You didn't
"You're stronger than I thought," Rong," he said. "You didn't
thought she would, after she got used to taking care of herself. It was feeling for six hours on the dusty road, this thing day
were laboring, I wondered how she felt, she felt of her as was pop-

hear that the rickshaw men they had rented undertook very cheaply
He woke and started to scream as they elbowed a hill. Kong could

assuringly heavy on her. She was glad of his weight, his health.
her lap, moved his small fingers in sleep. He felt warm and re-

remembered from childhood, she breathed it deeply. Her son, on
from just like her sedans chair, Kong smelled fresh mossiness she

and approved of what he knew.

been in the old times. No one else had known her so completely,

"Of course," Kong said huskily, "she felt moved like she had

very well there. "And perhaps sometimes you'll send me a poem?"
"yes," Chung Ho said, looking at her intently. "you'll do

"After the period of mourning, I'll be going home, "
"I'm going to get out my mourning clothes, " Kong said.

intended with his mother.

questioningly? He looked down, no, he would stay here and be

the eyes no longer touched and aroused her. She looked at him

her, she looked at Chung Ho. His face had become just a face;

would always be there, as it was there now, waiting wordlessly for

It drought came she might have to leave it temporarily, but it

The land would not go away, no matter who governed, who bought.

she sold her jewelry, she'd have enough money to buy new land.
office. Under Chung Ho's window, it bawled at his soldiers.

starting at a delicate leaf drawn on a piece of stick in his space
where a piece of Buddha stuck in his tip. He became Chung Ho,
became angry. Yong saw the dying priests, blood quivering from
corrupt, and even the Taeping's had looked and examined. Nature
cursed Yong's village; they spirits had. The Mannings had been
the priests was the voice of the spirits; she had not

their matts in each other's necks.
ghostly long matts in their necks, and the people sometimes put
the people felt; they were the people, the people dreamed of
fundamental ones, who cried and sang and danced. They felt what
changed her feeling that the gods and spirits of the land were the
follow her and learn what she could learn. The Taeping's had not
totally than they had. Yong felt her old yearning to touch her, to
fully than they had. Yong felt her old yearning to touch her.
Her face was wrinkled, tree-like. Her eyes pushed out more force-
the wind, she strode with her arms hanging, tree-like, her head up.
once, she was old enough, her long grey hair spread behind her in
the curtain. Up the road walked a priestess. Was it the same
sacred place, the place of the priestess? Yong sat back behind
Yong suddenly knew the grade they had reached. It was the
complained, and talked optimistically of their new life.

To Reel was acting much stronger than Yong had expected; she never
they were, she wondered whether to Reel could have made it. But
reached walking from the other direction, and realized how lucky
trees had paid for them, with patronizing insincerence. Yong re-
charts would be their last, deacons extravagance. The old m-
without matts, and to helping in the fields when she could. These

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The priestess looked at the child calmly, "And for how much?"

"Wet, black eyes in deep sockets," Bless my son," Rong said softly, "Looking into the priestess."

"Then began to walk towards them, her the priestess looked at her skeptically, her she meant only good. The priestess looked at her and Rong motioned, hoping to show the priestess.

"I told the youngest bearer to run after the baby carefully. She told the youngest bearer to run after the boy and he entered the house, as she descended her seat, holding the box."

"You fell, looked back at her, eyebrows up and had tilted, Rong called to the carriages to stop. They did, grumbling."

"Moments of light, when curses returned, she would wait them out. Wait for this had been, she saw it end in. Now, her son's clear eyes. Playful out, Rong was certain, not unsure and afraid, as she once changed his head in his hands and paced."

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- End -

knew he would grow and accepted him.

bearers', felt a sighing in the air, as though all that existed

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