



SUE IN TIBET



by Dorris Shelton Still



Illustrated by William Arthur Smith



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✿ SUE IN TIBET ✿

I

EXCITING NEWS

IT WAS COLD. The winds from the snowcapped mountains were icy as they swept across the barren plain. The lonely man on horseback pulled his sheepskin gown higher around his neck, and the tail of the wolfskin cap he wore on his head whipped sharply back and forth. The jingle of the silver bells around his pony's neck made the only sound. Hour after hour the man rode on, his deep-set eyes squinting in his lean brown face as he stared straight ahead.

Suddenly he muttered, "*Ah-da-da!* The news I bring. It is going to be a big surprise. It won't be long now until I reach the village. A hard trip it has been. At times I wish I were a farmer instead of a runner of messages." Then he grinned. "Ah, but the message I bring this time is worth it, for it will cause plenty of excitement." He bent over and patted the warm neck of his swift-moving pony. "You and I, we know something, don't we, Tudy? I wager the whole village will be upset when they hear what I have to tell them. I wonder what it will mean? Oh, well, as soon as I give Gezong's letter and message to his family, I will be through with my part. It will not be my worry then whether it is for good or bad. I am only the runner, but I'll have fun watching to see what happens," and he reached

inside his gown to be sure the letter was still there in its leather wrapping.

The pony's feet moved even faster when they reached the narrow trail that wound down the mountainside into the green valley below, for he knew he would soon be home. For a while the path followed close beside the mountain stream which went winding down the center of the warm little valley between the patterned fields of grain. Then they crossed a bridge into a village of red mud houses. The clatter of the pony's feet on the wooden boards and the sound of his bells announced their arrival to the village. Brown-skinned children ran from everywhere to stare as they went through the narrow cobblestone streets between the high mud walls of the Tibetan houses.

"*Ama, oh, Ama,*" one of the boys called to his mother. "A runner just came to town."



“Watch where he goes, son, and come and tell me. Then we can go there later and find out the news.”

Before she finished speaking, his brown legs had sprinted down the street after the rider and sharp eyes had seen the house where the rider dismounted. “Why, he’s stopping at Gezong’s house. Maybe it is a message from him. He has been gone a long time down to the Chinese border,” the boy whispered to himself. “Gezong is such an important man here. Everyone will want to know about it. I can run fast, so it won’t take me long to tell them all about the runner that has come.”

“I wish to see the A-ye. I have an important message for her,” the messenger told the servant who greeted him at the door, and his eyes twinkled.

“*La-so*,” answered the servant, “yes, sir, I will go and see if she is through with her rest. You know she does not like to be disturbed, but first you sit here and rest, please, and I will pour you a cup of hot butter tea.”

The messenger sat cross-legged on the floor and sipped the tea from his wooden bowl with relish. “This is very good tea,” he said to himself. “It is nice to be back again where they can make good butter tea. There is nothing quite like it.”

It wasn’t long before a tall, rather heavy-set old lady came slowly into the room walking with a cane. Her long blue robe reached to her ankles and was fastened at her waist with a wide red sash. Her black eyes snapped as she asked in a deep voice, “You have a message for me? Is it from my son?”

“Oh, yes, A-ye, it is from your son, Gezong, in Ta Chien Lu,” the messenger replied, and bowed low.

“Well, is he coming home?” asked the old lady impatiently, as she seated herself in the one high-backed wooden chair. “He has certainly been gone long enough.”

"*La-so*," the man answered, "oh, yes, he is coming home, but he said he would not start for about twenty days after I left, as he is helping to get things ready for a large caravan he is bringing to Batang with him. Then, my lady, as you know, it takes about twenty-five days of riding after they start to travel from Ta Chien Lu to Batang."

"A large caravan? What should he be doing with a large caravan? Sounds like a lot of foolishness to me. Come, come, what else did he say?" the A-yee said with a sharp gesture of her hand, which was covered with huge rings set with coral and turquoise, and heavy silver bracelets jangled on her arm.

"*La-so*, I will. This is the message. Gezong said to tell you he was bringing some strange friends with him to Batang," the runner went on slowly, and was highly amused by the puzzled expression on the old lady's dignified face.

"What do you mean by strange friends?" she growled.

"Well," drawled the messenger slowly, "he didn't say just that. He said to tell you that he was bringing some friends. I put the 'strange' in there myself."

"Oh, come, come, stupid one," said the A-yee, growing more impatient. "When did it become your business to put words into messages?"

The man shrugged. "Well, I think they are very strange, and if you knew who they were, you would think so, too."

"May the gods be patient. You are a most irritating man," cried the old lady. "Who are they?"

"It's a shame," the man said, shaking his head, "but they wear the queerest clothes."

"If you don't hurry and tell me who they are, I'll pray that the devils will chase you," yelled the A-yee, now furious.

"Yes," went on the man, even more slowly, "Gezong told me

to tell you that they were his good friends." Here he reached into his gown for the sealed letter, which he handed to the old lady. "This is the letter he sent you. Maybe it will tell you more than I can, but I would say for myself that it was all very queer business indeed."

"What's queer about it?" said the old lady sharply, as she broke the seal on the letter. "My son has a right to bring friends to Batang, hasn't he?"

"I guess so," said the runner with a grin, "but I don't think you'll like his friends."

"My son is very wise and does not have a fool's head like you do. I'm sure that whoever he brings will be all right. That will be all. You may go now," and she dismissed the messenger.

The man bowed and smiled as he left the room, moving backwards a step at a time. He was still saving the most exciting part of the message. When he was safe outside, he called back, "My lady, I haven't told you yet, but the friends of your son are—*foreigners.*"

For a moment there was perfect silence, and he could see the face of the old lady growing red at the thought of his words. Then she slammed her cane on the floor and screamed, "Foreigners? Foreigners? Coming here?"

"*La-so*, that's right," the man laughed back over his shoulder.

"May the gods be patient," exploded the old lady as she read the letter, her face burning brighter with the excitement of the news. "My son must have lost his mind. *Latsu*," she screamed to the servant girl. "Go and bring the family. Tell them all to come here at once. Go quickly, do you hear me?"

"Yes, my lady, I will go right away."

When the family had gathered, the old lady was still sputtering, but she managed to control herself and said, "While my

son has been away I have tried to rule this household wisely. Now I have news for you. Gezong, my son, is coming home." And as some started to talk and exclaim, she interrupted sharply, "That is not all. There is something else. Some very queer news he has sent us. He is bringing *foreigners*," her voice screeched on the word, "to our village. Do you hear me? A man, his wife, and a child, a little white foreigner. I do not understand what it means. Whether it will be for good or bad I do not know, but we must remember this. My son says they are his friends."

It was a shock to the others, too, and for a moment there was not a sound. Then everyone breathed the same question, "Foreigners? His friends?"

"Yes." The old lady's mouth shut tight as she replied sternly, "He calls them his friends, and you know how we treat friends. That is all. Go now, all of you. Go. Do not bother me. I need more rest."

A few moments later Nogi, a slender, dark-eyed girl, found her grandmother with her face buried in her hands. Nogi was the A-ye's favorite grandchild and the only one who would have dared to disobey her orders. "Grandmother," she called softly.

"Yes, dear," muttered the A-ye.

"Don't let your heart feel so hurt," and Nogi slipped her arm around her grandmother's shoulder. "I'm sure Father wouldn't want you to be so upset. His letter sounded as if he were really pleased that the foreign ones were coming."

"Oh, oh," groaned the old lady, "he must be going crazy. I can't understand it. Foreigners bring bad luck. They are so stupid and think they know so much."

"Grandmother, I'm sure these must be different or Father

wouldn't work and help them to come. Please don't worry any more."

"How can I help it?" answered her grandmother, shaking her head. "My son must be losing his mind."

"Oh, A-ye," said Nogi, "you know better than that. I don't believe it will be so terrible. I'll be so happy to see Father again, and I am anxious to see the small foreign one. Isn't it strange that we should both be the same age—twelve?"

"Oh, oh," groaned the old lady, "it can only bring bad luck."

"Let's wait and see, Grandmother. I just know it isn't going to be nearly as bad as you think it is."

That evening the messenger walked the narrow streets of the town. He found a spot where most of the people passed and leaned against the corner of a building. The tail of his wolfskin hat danced when he laughed. "This trip was very worth while. I was right. I knew it would be like this," he chuckled to himself. "Just look at the people. Everyone is excited over the news I brought. They can talk of nothing else. All they seem to be able to say is, '*Nga Nee Ma Nee, Nga Nee Ma Nee!* Oh me, oh my! How can it be possible? Foreigners coming to live in our village. Three of them. Two big ones and a little one!' They just can't believe that it could happen. I wager that tonight strange white faces will even haunt their dreams."

2

SUE

SUE WAS LEANING over the rail of the balcony watching the Tibetan porters working in the open courtyard below. It was a lovely day, and Sue could see over the tops of the red tile roofs the blue mountains in the distance and here and there the pear trees in bloom along the fast-moving river which ran through the center of the town. "I still can't believe it's really true," she said to herself, "yet I know it is, for those are our boxes they are wrapping for the trip."

Over on one side were two Tibetan porters, bare to the waist working together in the sunshine. Sue heard one of them say to the other, "Look, the little foreign one is up there again."

"Yes, I see her," said the other. "She watches from there almost every day."

"Funny thing," said the first one as he cut a strip of leather to wrap around a box, "you know I thought the little foreign ones would look terrible."

"Well," thought Sue to herself, "I wonder if I better stay and listen. I might hear something I didn't want to hear. It is almost like eavesdropping and yet it really isn't. They just don't know that I can understand what they are saying." But she couldn't resist the temptation to stay.

“So did I,” nodded the other, “but this whole family is not bad looking. The other foreigners, I’ve only seen two others, had such red faces and loud voices. They seemed to think you should understand them just because they were loud. They never did learn to speak our language.”

“Yes, I know,” said the other, “but this little foreign one’s father is very different. He speaks our language in a wonderful way and he is rather good-looking.”

“Yes, he is,” admitted the other, “if he only didn’t wear his hair so short, and the little one looks very much like him. She is not bad. If her hair was only darker, she would look almost like one of our own girls. Isn’t it a shame she combs her hair in those two little queues and wears such funny clothes?”

Sue put her hands over her face to hide a smile.

“Come here,” the head porter called to the two men, “and help us, will you?”

“*La-so, la-so*, yes, sir,” they both answered and hurried over to him.

Sue smiled and then heard a voice at her elbow saying, “It wasn’t so bad was it?”

She turned her head quickly and looked into the keen brown eyes of her father’s Tibetan teacher. “Oh, Gigi, I didn’t know you were here. Have you been here long?”

“Not very long,” said Gigi with a smile, “but I did get here in time to hear a part of what the men were saying. You were lucky, Su-aye. Sometimes people who overhear things do not always hear remarks as nice as the ones you heard.”

Sue flushed, “I know, Gigi, but it was fun really to hear them say just what they thought about me and not have it too bad.”

“But did you stop to think how embarrassed the men might have been to learn you understand their language?”



W.A.
Smith

“I’m sorry, Gigi, I never thought of that.”

“It’s all right this time, little one, for you were not hurt by what was said, and the men have no need to be ashamed of their words.”

“Oh, Gigi, it has been so much fun watching the men work. I don’t see how I can wait much longer.”

“You have not much longer to wait, my child. Just three more days and we will be on our way.”

“Yes, I know,” said Sue, “but it seems as if it’s taken ages to get ready to go.”

“Youth is most impatient. It has only been about three weeks, Su-aye, and preparations for long journeys like this take time and care.”

“Oh, I know they do. Dad says he knows it would have taken months if you hadn’t helped him.”

“Your father is most kind, Su-aye, but I have done little. His being able to speak our language as he does has helped much.”

“Gigi, I guess he wouldn’t even be going at all if you hadn’t written to that high Lama and your other friends to get permission for us to go to Tibet.”

“I was glad to do it, Su-aye. Your father will be a great help in my country. I know, for I have watched him. We need his knowledge, for we know little about how to ease pain or cure diseases.”

“Dad’s so thrilled, he’s almost like a kid, Gigi. You know he’s waited three years to get to go.”

“It is best this way, little one. Now he speaks our language like one of us, and many problems fade.”

“Will you be glad to get back home, Gigi?”

“Oh, yes, little one. Many times my heart has longed for

home, but no need to think of that. We will soon be on our way," Gigi said with a smile.

Sue's face was serious as she looked up at Gigi and asked, "Gigi, how do you think your family liked it when they got the news you sent by the runner?"

"That is hard to say," answered Gigi. "They will all find it hard to understand at first, for they do not even care for the idea of foreigners. Some of them, however, will trust my judgment, but my mother, I'm afraid, will not like it at all. She will think I've lost my mind."

"But how about your daughter, Nogi? Will she—will she be glad?"

"Yes, little one, she is one that I know will be glad and waiting anxiously for us to get there."

3

THE PET HEN

SUE TIPTOED QUIETLY to the door of the kitchen and pushed it open a tiny crack. She wanted to see if Shensi, their fat Chinese cook, was in a good humor. He hadn't been himself at all ever since her father had said that they were going to Tibet. It was strange for Shensi to be in a bad humor, for he was usually jolly and good-natured. Nothing ever bothered him but the word Tibet. If it was mentioned, Shensi would simply fly into a rage. To him it was the end of the world and the people from there were barbarians.

Sue couldn't see him through the crack so she pressed her small freckled nose flat against the door and listened. She heard him muttering something to himself, but he didn't sound too angry, so she pushed the door open and slipped inside. "Hello, Shensi. What are you making? It smells so good in here."

Shensi's round face beamed. Sue was his favorite of the Selby family, and praise of his cooking made him happy. "Thank you, Su-aye, me numbel one cook. Makee some velly fine cookies. Want one, please?"

"Of course I do, Shensi. I love to eat," and Sue took one of the golden-brown cookies and munched on it. "Yum, yum, Shensi, it is good. Thank you."

“You nice gill,” said Shensi smiling.

“Shensi, will you please help me do something?”

“Whatee you want me to do, Su-aye? Coulse me help you.”

“Well, it’s like this, Shensi. I want to take Annie with me to Tibet and I’m afraid Dad will think it’s too much trouble. I thought maybe if we could figure some good way to carry her so she wouldn’t be too much bother first, then I could ask Dad about it after that.”

“Why you wantee take that big black chicken up thele?” asked the puzzled Shensi.

“I couldn’t go without her, Shensi. You know I’ve had her ever since she was a tiny little chick, and it would break my heart to leave her. Why I’d rather play with Annie than any of my dolls. She lets me dress her and put her to bed or do almost anything I want to with her. What’s more, Shensi, Gigi thinks she is wonderful because she’s so smart, and he says she is ever so much bigger than the chickens they have. I think it would be fun to show her off up there.”

“Maybe can think up some way to cally Annie,” said Shensi, “but me no undelstand why you wantee to go to such tellible countlee.”

“Now listen, Shensi, it’s not a terrible country. I don’t know where you got such an idea. Won’t you please change your mind and go with us?” pleaded Sue. But as Shensi’s face glowered she added, “Now, please don’t get mad, but I wish you would go with us. Mom and Dad and I all want you to.”

“It velly foolish to leave nice place like China and go to such wild countlee. Velly velly bad. Chinee people think people up thele no civilized. Call ’em *Manja*.”

“What’s that, Shensi?” asked Sue.

“It mean people low down. Balbalians. Velly wild. We no

likee each othel. We have wal all the time.”

“But, Shensi, if the two countries do fight, why should that bother you?”

“Oh, they velly fielce people. Me tell you some things they do to my people. Sometimes they catch Chinee man and put in big pot with plenty cold watel. Then cook velly slow ovel big file. Thinkee that nice?”

“Of course I don’t think it’s nice, Shensi. I don’t believe they ever did do any such thing.”

“Les, they do. Sometimes do even wolve things. Me tell you. Sometimes they sew Chinee man up in flesh yak skin. Leave only head out. Then put him out in sun to dly. Skin it get smallel and smallel. Squeeze man tight till he die.”

“Oh, that’s awful,” and Sue shuddered. “Are you sure anything like that ever really happened?”

“Les,” said Shensi, nodding vigorously. “Happen all light. Some of my fliends see ’em do it.”

“Well, if they have treated the Chinese like that, Shensi, I bet the Chinese have done some pretty awful things to them, haven’t they?”

“Les,” boasted Shensi, “we do plenty bad. We have levenge. Sometimes we can think how to toltule bettel than they do.”

“I’m ashamed of you, Shensi. You act like you were proud of it. I don’t think either of you have treated each other very nicely. If you don’t do anything to them, I’m sure Dad wouldn’t let them hurt you. You’d be safe. Won’t you go?”

“No, no can do. Me no likee those *Manja*. Me plenty scaled. Me heal we leady to fight big wal with them now. Spose me go and we have big wal. What happen to me? Too tellible, too tellible. Me not even think to go.”

“I don’t think they’ll have a war, Shensi. There are always

lots of rumors, you know, and even if they did, you'd be safe with us."

"No can do," said Shensi.

"Well, I still hope you'll change your mind," and Sue reached for another cookie. "I'm going out to see how Annie is now. You won't forget to figure out some way to carry her, will you?"

"No, me thinkee."

Sue went out of the kitchen and down the wide stairway and ran across the cobblestone courtyard. "Annie, Annie," she called as she bent her head and went through a small door in a little house near the compound gate. It had once been the gatekeeper's shelter, but now Annie lived there alone.

At the sound of Sue's voice the big black hen clucked loudly with her head tipped on one side. Sue sat down on the dirt floor and lifted the hen gently into her lap. "How are you this morning, Annie?"

"*Cluuck, cluuck, cluuck,*" said Annie.

Sue stroked the glossy black feathers. "Annie, do you know in just three more days we'll be leaving? I can't believe it's really true. Isn't it wonderful?"

Annie blinked her yellow bead eyes.

"If it hadn't been for Gigi we wouldn't have ever had a chance to go. But he's a very important man up in his country. Hey, Annie! Stop trying to eat my buttons. His real name is Gezong but we are supposed to call him Gigi, for that means teacher. He has been so nice to help us get ready."

"*Ghrrh, ghrrh, ghrrh,*" sang Annie.

"He is so anxious for Dad to go to Tibet because he says they don't know very much about how to help the sick people. They don't even have a word for doctor."

“Cluck,” said Annie.

“Annie, aren’t you excited? Just let me tell you what those poor people do if you have a pain? They give you a cup of hot melted butter to drink.”



“Clu-u-u-uck,” said the astonished Annie.

“Then you wait awhile to see if it’s going to help you. If you don’t feel any better, you tell the family priest. He takes a little piece of mud and rolls it into a pill for you. Gigi said they were usually about the size of the end of his thumb, so they must be hard to swallow. How would you like that, Annie? You could take it pretty easy though, couldn’t you? The priest blesses it for you, and it’s supposed to cure you.”

“Ghrrh, ghrrh.”

“You mean you don’t think it would? Well, if you aren’t better, you go to the high priest. He takes a long piece of paper and writes a note to the evil spirits who have made you sick.”

“Cluck, cluck,” said Annie, and wiped her bill on Sue’s knee.

“The note tells the spirits to go away and let you get well. Then you roll it into a pill and swallow it. You have to be careful though and not chew it, or the spirit might not be able to read it. Can you imagine that?”

“Ghrrh, ghrrh, ghrrh.”

“Dad ought to be popular. His lovely big pills and capsules will be so simple for them to take. Don’t you think? I still get cold shivers when I think of the night Dad got his permission to go. Mom and Dad almost decided not to take me along to Tibet. Mom said it was sort of a wild place and that few people had ever gone up there. Dad thought maybe I’d get lonesome for some other American kids. They thought I should go back to America all by myself. Can you imagine that? I had to promise I’d study hard and keep up with my lessons. I think I’ll learn an awful lot just by seeing the country and the people, for there isn’t much about it in books. Everyone’s so happy about going,” and Sue lifted Annie up under her chin and gave her a little squeeze. “That is, all but Shensi. He thinks it is a terrible idea

and he isn't going with us, but I hope he will change his mind. There is only one thing that worries me now. Dad said last night that he thought it would be better if I gave you away, but, Annie, I just couldn't. I'd feel terrible. I talked to Shensi about it this morning, and he said he'd help me think up some way to carry you. Gee, I hope we can. I'm just dying to show you off to all those scrawny little chickens up in Tibet. Don't you worry, Annie. We'll get you there somehow."

"*Cluck, cluck, cluck,*" sang Annie, as much as to say, "I know you will. I'm not worried at all."

"Dad says you're an awful funny chicken to let me play with you like I do, and he said he never heard of one that liked to go to sleep on its back, but you do, don't you, Annie?" and Sue turned Annie over on her back in her nest, and the hen went to sleep contentedly with her feet up in the air.

4

LOOSE ENDS

“SUPPEL IS LEADY, suppel is leady,” Shensi called.

“That sounds good to me,” said Dr. Selby as the family went into the dining room. “I’m hungry.”

“It does to me, too, Dad,” said Sue.

“That’s not unusual, is it?” said her father. “It seems to me you are always ready to eat.”

“Sure, I am.”

“Yes, she certainly is. It seems to me she is empty all the time,” said Mrs. Selby.

“Oh, I guess she needs it,” said Dr. Selby with a laugh. “It looks to me as if it were going mostly into freckles and pig-tails.”

Sue giggled. She was used to her father’s teasing. “That reminds me, Dad. The other day I heard a couple of Tibetans talking about us, and one of them said he didn’t like my pig-tails.”

“Why was that?” asked her father.

“Well, they said it was a queer way to fix my hair.”

“What else did they say?”

“They said the whole family was rather good-looking for foreigners. They seemed to think you’d look all right, Dad, if

you just wouldn't wear your hair so short. They didn't like it cut."

"Well, it's nice they approve of us," said Dr. Selby, "but I don't think there's much I can do about my haircut." He sighed as he ran his long slender fingers through his crisp dark hair, "I just don't think I could stand a pigtail."

"No, John, I don't believe it would become your style of beauty," said Mrs. Selby. "Did they say anything about me, Sue?"

"No, Mom, I guess they must think you look all right."

"Well, I guess she does, too. Your mother is a lovely looking woman, Sue."

"I know it, Dad, and I am sure the Tibetans just love those long heavy braids of dark hair around her head because it is almost like the way they wear theirs."

"Thank you both," said Mrs. Selby.

"I guess we must look very strange to them when they first see us," said Dr. Selby. "They have to get used to us gradually. Now just take Gigi. I'm so used to seeing him I think nothing of the way he dresses or looks, but I know very well that if he walked into a parlor of an American home back in the States, he would cause a terrible commotion."

"Yes, can't you just see Aunt Jane's face," giggled Sue, "when she saw him in his short skirt with his full white bloomers showing below and stuck into the tops of his high boots."

Mrs. Selby laughed aloud. "Yes, I can see her, and I doubt if she would ever look the same again. Wouldn't she be horrified at his funny little brown felt hat he wears all the time?"

"It would be better than any show," said Dr. Selby, "and his long braid of hair hanging down his back would be the last straw."

“And, Dad, he is really a handsome Tibetan, isn’t he?” asked Sue.

“Yes, he is a very good-looking man with nice features,” said her father.

“Have you noticed how he wears that safety pin right in the front of his coat?” said Sue. “Do you remember, Mom, when you gave it to him and showed him how it worked? He thought it was wonderful.”

“Yes, I do, dear,” said Mrs. Selby. “It looks so strange just sticking in the front of his coat.”

“Well, family,” said Sue, “I have some good news for you. Shensi’s finally decided to go with us.”

“Heavens, what a relief!” said her mother. “I’ve been almost sick wondering what in the world we’d do for a cook. He isn’t too unhappy about it, is he, Sue?”

“I don’t think so, Mom. He says he got worried because he knew we couldn’t get a good cook up there and that we wouldn’t get the right kind of food. He told me, though, that he didn’t think we’d like it and that he bet we’d come back plenty quick.”

“I really can’t blame him for feeling the way he does,” said Mrs. Selby, “going up to a country where they don’t like Chinamen any better than they do, but I don’t think anything will happen to him, do you, John?”

“No, Jean, I don’t think so, and I’m glad to hear he’s going. He’s the best cook we’ve ever had. I think everything’s about lined up now.”

Just then Shensi came in, and his face was in a big grin as he set down a steamed pudding in front of Mrs. Selby. It was one of the family’s favorite desserts, and Shensi was proud of his masterpiece. However, it had the strangest shape, and didn’t look at all natural. It was usually steamed in a bag and was nice



and round, but this time it was long and narrow, and for a moment no one recognized just what it looked like, though it did seem vaguely familiar.

“Why, Mom,” said Sue, “it looks like a sock.”

“Why, yes, I guess it does,” said Mrs. Selby. “Shensi, what did you use to steam this in? Didn’t you find the bag you usually use?”

“Oh, no, Misse Selby, no can find bag this day. Me use one velly good sock.”

“Sock? That is good,” laughed Dr. Selby. “Well that solves the mystery of my missing sock.”

Shensi grinned, “Me washee thlee times. Plenty clean. Me think make vellee pletty pudding.”

“It is a beautiful one, Shensi,” said Sue. “I am proud of you. You are original.” The whole family was tickled, but Mrs. Selby didn’t enjoy her pudding as much as usual.

After Shensi had cleared the table, Mrs. Selby said, looking at her husband, "You look tired, John. You must have had a hard day."

"It was rather a tough one," said her husband. "Gigi and I were on the jump the whole day seeing to the last-minute details. We finally got the chair-men arranged for, Mother. It was rather hard to get men that were willing to carry the chairs over those mountain passes."

"Oh, John, I'm just sick that I have to go in a chair. I'd so much rather ride a horse. Don't you think it would be all right? It would be so much easier than taking a chair and all those chair-men."

"Now, dear, you know we settled that a long time ago. It wouldn't even be sensible to ride. With those terrific headaches of yours you couldn't even stay up on a horse. It's better this way, anyway. Sue will get tired of riding, and you and she can change around sometimes. It will help you both."

"I hate to be such a bother," said Mrs. Selby. "If it weren't for these old headaches coming on now and then, I'd feel just perfect."

"Whew!" said Sue. "I'm sure glad you settled that problem. I've been holding my breath. I was afraid Dad might decide that you could ride a horse, too, Mom, and that would have upset my plans."

"What plans of yours would that upset, Sue?"

"Oh, something very important."

Mrs. Selby laughed. "You're in for it now, John, and you might just as well make up your mind to like it. Sue's a pretty good little persuader."

"Yes, Dad, Mom and I have already had our talk about it, and it's all set."

“Well, it must be pretty drastic if you have to talk to us separately,” said her father. “Out with it. I might as well know the worst.”

“Why, Dad, you know I never have any terrible ideas.”

“Well, they might not be terrible, but you do have some pretty big ideas sometimes,” said her father.

“Oh, John, this is only a noble one. She handled me nicely, and I have the worst end of the deal, so you won’t have to worry too much, will he, Sue?” and Mrs. Selby winked at her daughter.

Sue grinned. “Mom, you were a good sport.”

“Well, young lady, what is it? As long as your mother seems to be willing to take her part so well, I guess I can stand to hear what it is.”

“Oh, swell, Dad. Do you mean yes?”

“I didn’t say that,” said her father. “Let’s hear about it first.”

“Well, it’s like this, Dad. Annie is setting, and Shensi helped me fix her in a little basket that fits right into the bottom of Mom’s chair.” Seeing a frown come to her father’s face, she hurried on, “You know, Dad, Gigi thinks Annie is wonderful, and we could start a whole new tribe of big chickens for the Tibetans. Don’t you think that’s a grand idea? Please, Dad.”

“Jean, did you really say you’d let that hen ride in your chair?”

“Yes, John, I did. I was convinced I should do my part in the noble plan for bigger and better chickens for the Tibetans.”

Dr. Selby suddenly roared with laughter. “This is a crazy family. We have all we can handle and we decide to take a setting hen. Yes, Sue, I guess Annie can go.”

“Oh, thanks, Dad. I just couldn’t leave her behind, and I’m dying to show her off to all those runty chickens up there.”

“You would,” said her mother. “I’m not so sure your motive for taking her was entirely altruistic.”

“Well, now that that’s settled,” said Dr. Selby, “I want to say that I hope you’ve tried to think of all the things you want to take, for we’re going to be a long way from any place where we can buy things for some time to come.”

“I’ve tried to check everything carefully, John. I suppose, though, we will find we’ve forgotten a few things, but I hope there won’t be too many. As far as I know, everything is all ready.”

“I think it is too, Mother,” said her husband. “I hope we can leave early in the morning. It will be much better if we can get started early.”

“Oh, Dad,” said Sue, “I’m so excited I can’t believe it’s really true.”

“Well, it is, Sue, and I want you to get to bed early so you can have a good night’s rest,” said her father.

“All right, Dad, I’ll try, but I’m not so sure I can sleep very well.”

5

STEEP MOUNTAIN TRAILS

LONG BEFORE DAYLIGHT Sue was awakened by the noises in the courtyard, where the men were loading the yaks. She could hear the voices of the porters talking to themselves and then to the yaks.

“Today’s the day we start to Tibet,” said Sue as she jumped out of bed and started dressing. “I can’t believe it. Listen to those old yaks grunt. They are the wildest looking animals I’ve ever seen, with all their shaggy hair and long horns. Every one of them has a mean look in his eye. Gigi said he picked good strong ones so they could stand the trip. He says they aren’t very tame and go bumping into trees and rocks trying to knock off their loads. I can believe that. There’s Mom calling me for breakfast. I guess I’d better hurry.”

At daylight the Selby party filed out of the courtyard. Gigi rode first, followed by Dr. Selby on a big black mule. Then came Sue on her pony, followed by Mrs. Selby’s chair carried on the shoulders of four chair-men. Last of all came Shensi. He was a strange-looking sight, for he was sitting high up in the air on top of all his possessions. He’d been so determined to have no wild Tibetan porter touch any of his things that he had put everything on the back of the pony he was to ride.

When it came time to mount the horse, he could not get up on her back. He was stiff and barely able to move, for he hadn't been able to pack all his clothes into one pair of saddlebags so he had decided to pack his extra pants and shirts by putting them all on, one on top of the other. The Tibetan porters stood around and giggled as they watched the overstuffed little Chinaman trying to mount his horse and had a hard time to keep from laughing out loud.

Finally one of them said, "He will never be able to make it. He is too fat with all his clothes, and there is too much on that poor horse. Come on one of you and let's lift him up, or we'll be here all day."

"All right," another answered. "How shall we do it?"

"Well, we'd better slip up on him from behind, for he'd never let us touch him. He does not seem to like us very much."

The two of them crept up stealthily behind Shensi and picked him up. Shensi screamed and squirmed frantically trying to get away from them, but they put him up on top of his horse and stuck his feet into the stirrups. He was furious. "How dare you dumb *Manja* touch me. You ale — — —." Then he called the men everything that was terrible in the Chinese language, but they didn't understand him and only laughed good-naturedly as he rode out of the gate.

Next came the pack animals, known as *ula*, and the porters in a single file. Altogether it made a long caravan that had started on its way to new adventures.

"Gigi, will it really take us twenty-five whole days to get to Batang?" asked Sue.

"Oh, yes, Su-aye, and if any of the horses should happen to get a sore foot, we might have to rest a couple of days, so you see, it might even take us twenty-eight or twenty-nine days on



the road. It is hard to tell," answered Gigi.

"Do you suppose I'll get bowlegged from this long ride?" asked Sue.

"No, of course not," said Gigi. "There is not long enough time for that. Be very careful, Su-aye, for parts of the road are not very good. Watch always the ones who ride ahead of you. If they get off and walk, remember you must do the same. There are many places where it is not safe to stay on your horse."

"All right, Gigi," said Sue, "but when will we get to eat? We haven't been riding very long since we started this morning, but I'm half-starved already."

“It won’t be long. The caravan will all stop and rest in the middle of the day. You will have a chance then to taste some butter tea, Su-aye,” said Gigi, “for the porters always make it for their lunch.”

“I hope I’ll like it,” said Sue.

At last the caravan stopped for its midday rest, and Sue watched the porters unload a huge iron pot and a big wooden churn. They placed the pot of water and tea leaves over three big rocks and built a fire. Soon it was boiling and they strained it into the churn. A large piece of butter and a handful of salt were put in and it was all churned together. One of the men poured some into a bowl for Sue.

“Why, Mom,” said Sue, taking it to her mother to see, “it looks like coffee with a great deal of cream in it. Do you want some, too?”

“No, I don’t think I’ll try it today, Sue.”

“I guess it won’t kill me,” said Sue. “Gigi says that some Tibetans can drink fifty cups a day.” She tasted it carefully. “Ugh.”

“What’s the matter?” asked her mother. “What does it taste like, Sue?”

“I don’t know how to describe it, Mom. It’s sort of greasy and salty. I think I’ll try it again some other day,” and she poured the rest of her tea out when the Tibetans weren’t watching.

Every day of travel started at daybreak and ended at dusk. Sometimes the road led over high mountain passes and sometimes through grassy meadows filled with flowers. “Dad, this is beautiful country, isn’t it?” said Sue one day. “Just look over there at those deep blue lakes at the foot of the snow-covered mountains.”

“Yes, the colors are lovely,” said her father. “It is almost like riding through a book of lovely paintings, for around every curve there is a complete new picture.”

The Selbys were never sure just what accommodations they would find at the end of the day. They had stayed at inns the first five nights, inns very much like the ones they had found in China; but on the sixth day they were getting further into Tibet, and the last lingering traces of Chinese civilization seemed at last to disappear. The road climbed higher and higher into the mountains, and there was little vegetation. One evening they saw a lone building on a wide wind-swept plateau. It was a long low building of mud and not much higher than a man. All around the outside were rows and rows of round flat cakes, and try as she would, Sue could not figure out what they could be.

“Gigi, is that where we’re going to stay tonight?”

“Yes, that’s a Tibetan inn.”

“Well, what in the world are those rows and rows of funny round things all around the outside.”

“That’s what the people up here use for wood. You see there are no trees for many miles. Those round things are cakes of yak dung which the innkeeper has gathered carefully from the plains and then patted out thin. He stuck them up against the side of the building so they would dry faster. Shensi will have to use some of them to cook your supper tonight, and the heat from them will help keep us warm while we stay in the inn.”

“Well, I’ll bet one of my teachers back home would say that that was being ingenious. I can just see Shensi when he starts to build his fire,” and Sue laughed.

“I can, too,” said Gigi with a grin.

“Does it really make a pretty good fire?”

“Yes,” said Gigi, “it burns slowly and is quite hot.”

“I guess there’s always a reason why people do things the way they do,” said Sue.

“You’re right, little one. There usually is a reason,” said the Tibetan teacher.

The inn was one long room filled with smoke which would not go out the hole in the roof. It was not a very pleasant place, for smoke stung everyone’s eyes and tears rolled down their cheeks all evening.

“John, it isn’t very clean in here, is it?” said Mrs. Selby. “Do we all stay in this same room?”

Her husband grinned. “Sure, Jean, that’s all there is. I was just talking to the innkeeper, and he said he’d be very happy to clean out some of the straw and dirt down at one end for us.”

“Well, I guess that would help a little,” said his wife. “He couldn’t take a little of the smell out too, could he?”

“Why, Jean, don’t you like this smell? It is a brand new Tibetan one.”

“Look at those three huge baby yaks. Do you think they plan to sleep inside, too?”

“I guess so, Mom. The man said they couldn’t stand the cold winds until they were a little bigger, so he brought them inside.”

“Well, that will be nice,” said Mrs. Selby with a sarcastic note in her voice. “This is the first time in my life that I ever slept in the same room with twenty other people and three baby yaks. Why we’ll be packed in here just like sardines.”

“How do you suppose they ever stand the smoke all the time?” said Sue. “My eyes feel just awful.”

The innkeeper, a husky Tibetan with long matted hair, that hadn’t been combed for months, and a sheepskin gown, tried to make everyone as comfortable as possible and finally managed

to clean out a spot large enough for the Selbys to put down their bed rolls.

“Mom,” said Sue as she was dropping off to sleep, “we’ve had quite a bit of fun here, haven’t we, even though it’s a terrible old place.”

“Yes,” said her mother, “I had to laugh at Shensi. He looked so ridiculous handling this new fuel with a pair of chopsticks. I have a feeling I’m not going to sleep very well, for I think there are some other animals in here besides the baby yaks.”

“Don’t you think the innkeeper’s chubby little girl was cute?”

“Yes,” said her mother, “but I wager she hasn’t had a bath since she was born.”

None of the Selbys slept very comfortably that night, but they left in the morning with a happy feeling, for the innkeeper and his family had been so kind and friendly and had stood in front of their little building and waved and smiled at their departing guests as long as they could see them.

6

NEW ADVENTURES

DAY AFTER DAY they rode on. Some nights they would find an inn, and others there would only be the shelter of a cave with three rocks for a stove and the ashes from the fire left by a caravan which had gone before.

On the twentieth day Sue wakened in a bad humor. She ached in every bone of her body. "Ooooooh," she groaned, "I'm sore. I don't see how I can possibly ride again today. I wonder how my poor horse feels?"

She crawled out of bed and dressed slowly. "Perhaps I'd feel better if I could just get it out of my system." She started muttering different words to express her feelings, when suddenly she exclaimed, "Geemane, I know a lot of bad words—some Chinese, some Tibetan, and some English. Mom would be shocked if she knew I could swear in three languages. It's not such a bad idea, though. This way if you're careful and use the right language, you can always say just what you think and no one will understand you. I believe I do feel better, but I hope we won't ride so long and the road is better today."

But Sue was not to have her wish. The road was particularly bad that day, and Andru, the head porter, said to Sue as he helped her onto her pony, "Today the roads are very dangerous,

Su-aye. You must watch carefully those that are riding ahead of you. Be sure to get off when they get off, and lead your horse."

"All right, Andru," Sue sighed. "I'm stiff as a board today, but don't you worry about me. I'm getting to be a pretty good rider. I think somebody had better look after Shensi though. He's the one who'll need help with all his baggage, his precious wash pan, and clothes, all on that one poor horse. He's been having a terrible time."

"Yes, he has," said Andru, "but he will find it even harder today, for the roads are very narrow, and he'll have to be most careful. Su-aye, he will not trust any of us, or we could help him more than we do. It would be so much easier if he would only let us put some of his things on another animal."

"I know it," said Sue, "but you don't know how scared he is of Tibetans."

"Why should he be scared of us?" asked Andru. "We like him. He is so funny. We wouldn't think of hurting him."

"I know you wouldn't, but you know, Shensi has that idea, and it's hard to change his mind."

That afternoon the road was only a narrow ledge high above the winding river which looked like a band of white ribbon to the people riding on the trail. Parts of the road were just the tops of poles which had been stuck into the sloping dirt below or small narrow steps cut out of stone. It was a difficult piece of road, and they made little headway. They had to get on and off many times, and Sue finally said to her horse, "If you can get through all right without me riding, I don't see why you can't get through with me still on your back. I'm not very big and I'm sick of getting on and off. The next time they all get off, I think I'll just stay on and take a chance."

Sue picked an unlucky spot. Everyone else had dismounted and was leading his horse, but Sue didn't get off. Her horse started across this poor section of road, and in a moment his front feet slipped down into the middle of a V-shaped rock and his back feet were still up on the back ledge. He was almost standing on his head with Sue ready to slide down his neck. He couldn't move. The rock in front was steep and too smooth for his feet to get a hold. Sue's shoulder on one side was almost touching a wall of stone and on the other was nothing. If she



moved her head an inch, she could see straight down to the river below.

Sue swallowed hard. "What'll I do now?" she said to herself. "I'm really stuck. I'm afraid to even try to move. Why, oh, why did I ever pick this place? I hope my horse isn't as scared as I am." She leaned over and patted the neck of her pony. "We're going to be all right, I hope," she said under her breath. "Now don't worry. They'll come and help us. Now don't jump when I yell," and she called, "Dad! Andru! Gigi! Somebody help me. I'm stuck."

At the sound of Sue's voice they turned and looked back. All they could see was the tail of her horse and his hind legs on the ledge of rock. They guessed what had happened and ran back. Each one felt like giving her a piece of his mind, but that would have to wait, for Sue and her pony were in real danger. "Don't move, Sue. Keep as still as you can," said her father in a quiet voice, "and don't let the pony move."

"All right, Dad."

"Su-aye, can you lean forward and hand me your bridle without moving very much?" asked Andru.

"Yes, I think so. Here, Andru."

"That's fine," he said. "Now I can hold onto the horse. Don't get frightened. It will be all right."

"It won't be long now," said Gigi, "but the porters were a long way back with the *ula*. One of them finally saw me waving and is coming now to see what we want."

The man came up just then and grinned when he saw what had happened. He knew what to do. Bracing his feet, he grabbed the horse's tail and held him while Andru pulled the pony's head and front legs up high enough for him to get a foothold. Then the porter lifted the hind feet over the edge so the pony

could get up the other side. For a moment it looked as if the pony might come apart before it was over, and it wasn't much fun for him or Sue.

Andru led the pony a little way down the road to a safer spot where Sue could dismount. Though she felt shaken, she managed to grin. "Thanks, Dad, it was really all my fault," and turning to Gigi, Andru, and the *ula* man, she thanked them too. "I'll never forget that as long as I live. I think I'd better apologize to my horse too," and Sue patted the horse's head. "You'll forgive me, won't you?" she asked him, but the look in her horse's eye was doubtful.

The twenty-first, twenty-second, and twenty-third days of the trip were easier, for the roads were much better. But the twenty-fourth was a hard one, for they had to ride all day across a barren, wind-swept plateau. It was so cold Sue wondered if she was going to freeze to death. It felt colder than it had when they had been right in the snow on the mountains, and there was no water to drink. Sue was so thirsty by mid-afternoon, she rode up to Gigi to ask, "Will we ever come to some water? Between the wind and being so tired and dirty, I'm about to die," and Sue's voice caught in her throat.

"Now, Su-aye, don't you worry. You have taken things well indeed. Why don't you trade with your mother for a little while?"

"Oh, no, Gigi. She has one of her terrible headaches today, and I mustn't let them see that I'm tired."

"In just a little while, Su-aye, we will be across this plain and find a shelter from the wind in those hills. When we get there, I will give you something for your thirst, and it will be even better than water."

"All right, Gigi," said Sue in a forlorn voice.

“Su-aye, have you forgotten? We get into Batang in the morning,” said Gigi, for he could see by looking at Sue’s face, red from the wind, and from the tone of her voice that she needed something to cheer her up.

“Is it tomorrow really, Gigi? I had just about decided we would never get there.”

“Why, it isn’t very far from here,” said Gigi, “for when we reach those hills, we will be almost there. We camp near the river tonight and in the morning we start down the mountain trail into the Batang valley. We’ll be there by noon.”

“I’ll certainly be glad,” sighed Sue, and the time passed quickly as she and Gigi talked of Nogi and what she and Sue could do together.

When they reached the shelter of the hills, Gigi dismounted and went over to the side of the road, where he pulled a large turnip. He peeled it and handed it to Sue. “Here, eat this, Su-aye. It will quench your thirst.”

Sue bit into it. “It’s wonderful, Gigi. You saved my life. It’s the most delicious turnip I’ve ever eaten. It’s so sweet and full of water.”

“I told you it would be good,” Gigi said as he pulled one for every member of the party; and it refreshed them all.

“What kind of a turnip is this?” asked Dr. Selby. “It’s so thin and flat and yet it’s almost as big as a small dinner plate.”

“We call them mountain turnips,” answered Gigi, “and they always do refresh the traveler who goes along this road.” Then Gigi reached into his gown and took out a small package.

“What are you going to do, Gigi?” Sue asked when she watched him go back to the spot where he had pulled the turnips.

“I’m putting back a seed for every turnip we have taken so

that others who come along this way may always find some here. Travelers are welcome to all the turnips that they may need, but it is our custom to put back a seed for every turnip that has been taken."

"Do you mean to say, Gigi, that everyone always puts back a seed when they take a turnip?"

"Why surely, Su-aye. I think almost everyone does. If we didn't, there soon wouldn't be any left. Aren't you glad someone put seeds back so we could have the turnips today?"

"Oh, yes, certainly I am," said Sue. "I don't know what I would have done without it."

The next morning they started down the mountain trail into the valley, and it grew slowly warmer and warmer the nearer they came to the valley. It was a welcome relief from the cold of yesterday. "Oh, Andru, I'm so excited. We'll soon be there now, won't we?"

"It won't be long now, for look yonder. Can you see that small white thing way down there?"

Sue finally saw what Andru was talking about and said, "Yes, I see it. It looks like a little white tent. I wonder what it could be?"

"It is a tent. The tent of welcome. It means that many people from the village have come out to meet you. They have come out to have a look at the white faces of the strangers."

"My face really isn't very white right now," said Sue, "but what is a tent of welcome?"

Gigi answered her question. "A tent of welcome, Su-aye, is a place where the traveler may rest and eat, for we believe that he will be weary from his journey."

"What a nice idea," said Sue. "Will Nogi be there?"

"Yes," said Gigi, "she will be watching for you."

7

A WELCOME IN TIBET

IT WAS LONG before daylight when the A-ye reached out her hand into the darkness for her cane. "It is well," she said, "that once my eyes were blind for a time, for now I can get along well without any light."

When she was dressed, she found her way easily in the darkness and went down the hall. She rapped sharply on the first door and called, "Latsu, Latsu, do you hear me? It's almost morning. Hurry and get up, you lazy girl. There is much to do."

"*La-so*, A-ye, I will. Right away," answered the servant girl, "but it's still very dark."

"Forget the dark," said the A-ye. "We have much to do. Do you think we can get it all done with everyone lying in bed? Now hurry with breakfast. Do you hear me?"

"Yes, my lady, I'm almost ready now," but the old lady had gone on to arouse the rest. All the others were up before she paused at the last door. It was Nogi's room. On this door the old lady knocked gently. A sleepy voice answered, "Yes, Grandmother, is that you?"

"Yes, Nogi, my precious jewel. You must wake up. You know your father's coming home today, and there is much to be done."

“All right, Grandmother. Come in while I dress. It won’t take me long,” said Nogi. “I think I’ll wear my new everyday clothes,” and Nogi put on a long blue sleeveless robe which reached to her ankles over a dark red shirt which furnished it with a collar and long wide sleeves. She wrapped a red belt neatly around her hips and then put on her apron of striped wool. “It was hard for me to go to sleep last night, A-ye. I kept thinking and thinking about *Apa* coming home and of the little foreigner. Do you think we will be friends? Do you think we’ll like each other?”

“That I do not know, my dear,” her grandmother answered. “We can only wait and see. I think Latsu will have our tea ready by now, so let us go on if you are ready.”

“All right, Grandmother, I am ready,” and the two went slowly toward the kitchen, where the family gathered for their meals. Nogi looked up into her grandmother’s face and said, “A-ye, you still aren’t very happy about those foreigners coming up here, are you?”

“Remember, little one, that I am old, and the old cannot help but worry,” said the A-ye gravely. “It is hard to tell when strangers come whether they will bring joy or sorrow or whether they will be friends or enemies. But you must not worry, my Nogi. We must work now to make the welcome nice so Gezong will be pleased.”

At breakfast the A-ye issued her orders. “We want to give my son and his friends a very fine welcome party,” she told the group. “Most of you know already what you must do. See that you do it well. Gaden, my grandson, you can help Dendru load the tent, the churn, and the iron pot on the donkey.”

“All right, Grandmother,” said the boy.

“Oh, yes, Dendru, do not forget to have my horse saddled

and ready. The rest of you will walk.”

“Yes, my lady, *la-so, la-so*,” answered the servant. “Your horse will be waiting. Shall I start ahead with the donkey?”

“Of course you should. Be sure the tent is set up and the kettle filled with water. Don’t forget to gather enough wood. We will need it to make the tea.”

“*La-so*, is that all now, A-ye?” asked the servant as he bowed and started out of the door.

“No, stupid, you don’t even know where to go.”

“But, A-ye, I thought it would be the same place, about three miles out of town.”

“Not this time,” said the old lady. “We will go five. This is a special welcome. My son is coming home with new friends. Do you understand?”

“Yes, my lady. I will go now.”

“Don’t forget to come and get my chair when you get ready to leave.”

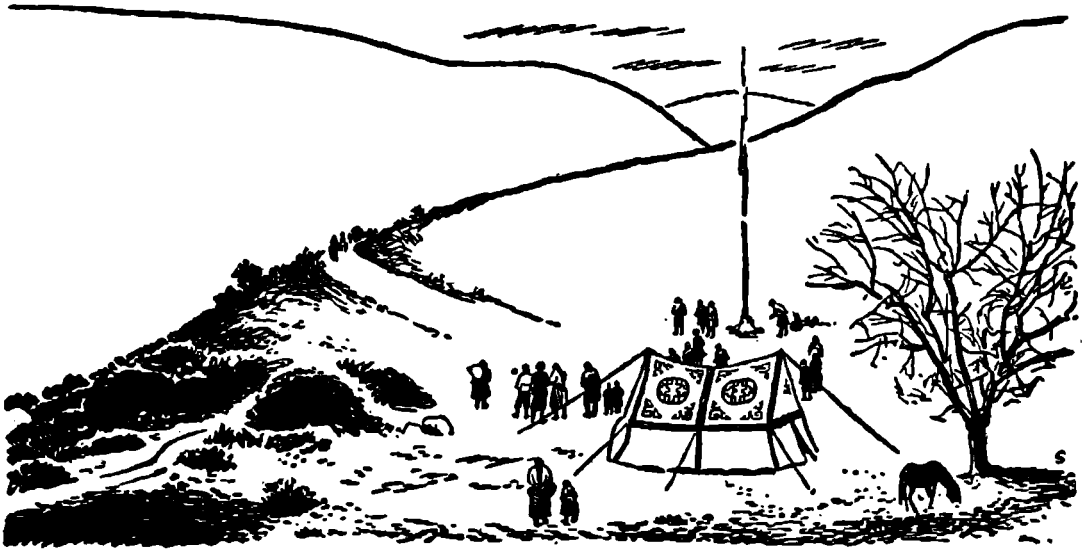
“*La-so, la-so*, my lady, I shall take it on my back, carefully.” He bowed and backed out of the room.

“Latsu,” the old lady said sharply, “how did your sweet cakes turn out yesterday?”

“Very well, my lady. They are all ready to go, and I have the kegs of buttermilk ready too,” answered the girl.

“That is well. See that it gets there safely, and, Nogi, my child, will you be sure to see about the butter? Take the freshest we have, for the foreigners probably will not like the taste of old butter as we do. You know how to do it, don’t you, dear? Pat it out and wrap it in cool green leaves and pack it in that round basket.”

“All right, A-ye, I will try to do it so it will please you,” answered Nogi.



“You are a sweet child,” said her grandmother. “Now we must all get off as soon as we can. Get busy, everybody,” and each one hurried to do the things that had to be done.

Not only Gigi’s family, but many many others went from the village, so it was a big crowd waiting for the Selby party at the welcome tent. Nogi stood by her grandmother’s chair and watched the road. “Grandmother, they are coming closer now, and they have gotten off their horses.” She knew her grandmother’s eyes did not see far and that she was anxious.

“Ugh,” grunted the old lady, “someone must have told them that they should walk to be polite.”

“Grandmother, maybe they want to please you,” said Nogi.

“Is everything ready, Latsu?” the old lady asked sharply.

“Yes, my lady, everything is ready.”

“Nogi, your father, does he look well?”

“Yes, Grandmother, he looks very well and he is walking with a tall white foreign man and the little foreign girl.”

“What do they look like, my little one?”

“The man is tall and dark, Grandmother, but he has no hair.

It is cut short like a priest's. He is wearing long tight pants and has a very funny hat on his head. He is even a little taller than *Apa*."

"*Tch, tch*, now what of the little one?"

"She wears very strange clothes, Grandmother. Can you believe it? She has on long pants almost like her father's."

"How terrible," said the old lady.

"But, Grandmother, she has a sweet face and nice white teeth. I can see them, for she is smiling. Her hair is brown, and she wears it in two little queues."

"Poor child. Her parents must have queer ideas. And the foreign woman?"

"I don't see her, Grandmother, but there is a chair coming. She must be riding in that."

"Well, when they are close enough, go, my child, and greet your father and welcome his white friends. I shall wait here."

Nogi waited another moment and then ran to her father. "Oh, *Apa*, it is so nice to have you back. Welcome home, and welcome to your friends."

"Thank you, Nogi," answered her father. "It is nice to be back," and his fingers gently touched her cheek. "Su-aye, this is my daughter, Nogi. Nogi, this is Su-aye. You have already heard of each other. I hope you will be good friends. Nogi, Su-aye can speak our language, so you can talk together."

"Oh, that's very nice." And then Nogi said shyly, "Su-aye, would you like something to eat?"

"Oh, yes, I would very much, Nogi," said Sue.

Gigi laughed. "You will soon learn, Nogi, that Su-aye always likes to eat. Did your grandmother come with you?"

"Oh, yes, Father. She is sitting in the welcome tent waiting for you," Nogi answered.

Gigi turned to Dr. Selby. "Doctor, will you please come with me. We will go and see my mother. Nogi, you and Su-aye go get Su-aye's mother and ask her to come to the tent for a little food."

"All right, *Apa*, we will," and Sue and Nogi went toward the spot where the chair-men had set down Mrs. Selby's chair. On the way they heard a boy say to his companion, "You know my *Ama* says that all white foreigners have tails. I wonder if the little one has a little tail?"

"I don't know," answered the other boy, "but I think she must. Look, you see the foreign man is wearing those long tight pants which my father told me they had to wear to hide their tails, and she wears them too. I'd like to see a tail, wouldn't you?"

Sue and Nogi looked at each other and waited politely until they were past the boys and then giggled. Laughing together lessened the constraint between them. "Please, you must pardon them, Su-aye," said Nogi. "They do not guess you understand our language."

"I don't mind, Nogi. Isn't it funny what queer ideas we all have of people we don't know? Say, Mom," she called to her mother, "this is Nogi. I think she is cute, and I was a little surprised even though Gigi had told me so much about her. What do you think of her, Mom?"

"Her eyes are lovely," said Mrs. Selby, as she smiled at Nogi, "but just look at all those little braids of hair. Tell her for me, Sue, that I'm glad to meet her."

Sue translated the words and added, "My mother finds it hard to speak a new language and has not yet learned yours." Then she translated Nogi's answer for her mother. "Mom, she says welcome and thank you. She is glad that you have come

and won't you please come over to the welcome tent and eat."

"Yes, I'd like to, Sue, if you'll hang on to Annie and her brood for a while."

"All right, Mom. Oh, Nogi, you must meet Annie," said Sue, wondering what she and Nogi could talk about now. She reached in and brought out the big black hen. Nogi was startled. "*Nga Nee Ma Nee*," she said. "You brought a chicken with you?"

"Oh, yes," said Sue. "I play with her. She is a very unusual chicken and practically one of the family."

"Then you, too, shall have a welcome cake, you very large chicken," said Nogi taking a sweet cake out of the pocket of her gown and crumbling it on the ground.

As Annie clucked and pecked at the crumbs, four little yellow chicks ran from the chair to join her. "Oh," said Nogi, "I guess you will need to have another one. I did not know you had brought all your children."

Annie and her children soon became the center of attention and made it easier for everyone. The Tibetans had tried to make it a lovely welcome party, but to Sue and her parents it was slightly confusing with so many strange faces, stranger foods and odors. It seemed to Sue, tired from her long trip, that she couldn't find another thing to talk about, for Nogi was very quiet and reserved. It was time to start back to town, and Sue wondered what she should do, whether she should just ride on, or what. Finally she asked Nogi, "How are you going back to town?"

"We will walk back, Su-aye, for we all waiked out but my grandmother."

"Isn't it a long way?"

"Yes, but we don't mind."

"How would you like to ride into town with me?"

“Why I would like to, Su-aye,” said Nogi doubtfully, “but maybe the pony would not like it.”

“I think it would be all right,” said Sue, “but I’ll ask Andru.” When Andru brought the pony, Sue said, “Do you think it would hurt the pony if Nogi rode into town with me? Neither of us are very big.”

“I don’t think it would hurt anything but his ears,” answered Andru.

“His ears?” said both Sue and Nogi with puzzled looks. “How could we do that?”

Andru laughed. “Well, you know when two little girls get together, there is too much talk.”

“Oh,” said Sue, “you’re teasing us.”

Andru helped the two girls climb onto the pony, and they started toward the village. “I guess Andru was right,” said Sue. “Look at the horse. He keeps sticking up his ears.”

“I don’t think he minds. He does not look angry.”

“Nogi, do you mind me asking you some questions? I seem to be full of them.”

“No, I don’t mind, Su-aye, and I shall try to answer them for you.”

“Why was it, Nogi, that at the welcome the people held out their hands and smiled at us?”

“That’s our custom, Su-aye,” said Nogi. “It is to tell you that we like you. If no one held out their hands, it would mean that you were not welcome. I am happy that they liked you, for I do.”

“Thank you, Nogi,” said Sue. “I’m glad too, but how do they know so soon that they are going to like us?”

“Well,” said Nogi, “it is like this. We don’t love people for their faces. It makes no difference to us if one is pretty or ugly,

for no one is to blame for how she looks, you know.”

“Well, I guess that’s right,” said Sue, “but wouldn’t you like a person just a little bit better if they were just perfectly beautiful?”

“I don’t think so,” said Nogi thoughtfully. “You see, if a girl is beautiful, she sometimes gets conceited, and she really has no right to be. It isn’t her fault that she is good-looking.”

“I see that, but—”

“Wait, Su-aye, and I shall try to explain. For instance, we think if a girl is very ugly, she has something to be thankful about.”

“Oh, Nogi, I can’t imagine anyone being thankful because she is ugly.”

“I didn’t say just that, Su-aye. You must listen more carefully. I said she could be thankful about something,” said Nogi, “and that is true, for she never has to look at herself.”

Sue grinned. “That’s right. I’d never thought of it just that way.”

“And we do not love people for their clothes,” went on Nogi, “for clothes will not hide what you really are. If you are selfish and mean, clothes will not change that, and if you have to wear rags or old clothes but have a good heart, people will love you anyway.”

“I guess that’s right,” said Sue, “but how do they tell whether or not a person has a good heart?”

“Well,” said Nogi, “we are taught that every baby is born with a brush in his right hand. You can’t see it or feel it, but it’s there just the same. So every time we’re bad or selfish or mean, out of the air comes a little pot of black paint and we have to dip the brush in it and paint a little black line across our heart.”

“Nogi,” said Sue, “suppose you’re sorry. Does that help any?”

“Yes, a little,” said Nogi, “but not very much. You have to put the black on anyway. You just have to try and not get too many black ones. When you’re good and kind and unselfish, a little pot of white paint comes. You dip your brush in it and draw a white line on your heart. We think that if we look carefully at a person we can see the colors on their hearts. That’s why they stared at you and your mother and father.”

“Oh, I see,” said Sue. “I hope they couldn’t see all the black stripes I’ve got. I’m afraid they wouldn’t like me.”

“Oh, but they do,” said Nogi happily. “That is why they smiled and held out their hands to you. They decided you had more white stripes than black ones.”

“I’m so happy, Nogi,” said Sue. “I’ve been wishing on a star at night that you and the rest of the people would like us.”

“We are glad,” said Nogi with a smile, “that you came to visit us.”

“Say, Nogi, I just thought of something. Didn’t your grandmother like me? She didn’t hold out her hands like the others did.”

Nogi hesitated. “No, she didn’t, but you must understand that she is old, and it is hard for her to like strange things or strange people, but she is really a very sweet person, Su-aye, and very kind.”

“I’m sure she is,” said Sue, “but I’m sorry she didn’t like me. Did she like my father and mother?”

“No, I don’t think so, but don’t worry, Su-aye, I know she will. She won’t be able to help herself, and my grandmother is very fair.”

“I hope she will like us someday.”

8

TROUBLE

GEZONG AND HIS MOTHER were alone. "My son," said the old A-ye, "there's trouble in the air. I can feel it coming."

"What do you mean, Mother?" Gezong answered.

"I cannot say, my son, but I know that there is trouble coming."

"Do you mean war?" asked Gezong. "We have had rumors of war for a long time now."

"That's true," said the old lady, nodding her head, "and they are coming faster now. The war is about here."

"I am worried about it too," said Gezong. "I have heard rumors of trouble even before I left Ta Chien Lu, and they have been growing stronger the six months I've been home."

"Yes, that's right," said his mother. "It seems as if those foreign friends of yours have been here much longer than six months."

"Mother," said Gezong, "you know they are fine people. Why don't you admit you like them?"

"Ugh," grumbled the old lady. "I guess they are all right. I have nothing against them except that they are foreigners. So far they have been all right, but just give them time."

"Oh, Mother," laughed Gigi, "it certainly takes you a long time to change your mind. How about the little white one?"

The old lady smiled. "I might say I even like the little one. She seems like a sweet child, and Nogi is happy with her."

"Yes, I think they are both very happy together. They are good friends," said Gezong, "though they come from two sides of the world."

"But, Gezong," said the old lady sharply, "that Chinese dog, the one that cooks for them, I like him not at all. I think he is a dangerous man."

Gezong laughed. "Mother, Shensi's all right, and he is a very loyal servant. He wouldn't hurt anything. He is too fat."

"You may laugh, my son, but let me tell you something," and the old lady whispered, "I think he is a spy."

"Oh, *Ama*, not Shensi. I can tell you he didn't even want to come. He only came because the Selby family needed him. He's scared to death of every Tibetan."

"Well, I can't believe that," snorted the A-ye. "He must have lost his fear of some of them. He is always coming over here to see Latsu, and I don't like it."

"You must be imagining things, Mother. He doesn't know but one word in Tibetan and that's *la-la*, so I can't see how he and Latsu could have much to talk about when all he can say is dummy. Don't be too upset. I don't think Latsu would enjoy being called dummy all the time."

"She is stupid," said his mother. "She wouldn't have enough sense to mind being called a *la-la*, but she's too good a girl to lose to a Chinaman. Mark my word, Gezong, if he comes here too often, I'll think up some way to scare him so he'll stay scared the rest of his life."

"Now, Mother, you be careful."

"Gezong, Gezong," it was Dendru, the servant, calling him from downstairs.

“What is it?” asked Gigi, opening the door.

“Well, Master, someone is here to tell you about a boy that is hurt and wants to know if you think your white friend can help him.”

“Tell him to wait a moment. I’ll come right down,” and Gezong turned back to his mother. “I guess I better go down and talk to him.”

“Why can’t the man go to Dr. Selby himself without bothering you?” asked his mother.

“I don’t know. I guess he thinks I know him better,” said Gezong. “Now Mother, don’t worry any more about Shensi. He’s all right, and don’t you do anything to him.”

“Well, I’ll see about that,” muttered the old lady, “but he’d better watch his step. I don’t like any Chinaman, and particularly round fat ones.”

“Oh, let’s forget about him, Mother. But we will keep our ears open for all reports about the war and the fighting. I’m going now.”

Downstairs Gigi found an old man waiting for him at the door. “What’s happened? What do you want?”

“Oh, Master,” the man spoke, and bowed low, “please help us if you will. My young nephew was coming along that strip of road north of here, you know, where the rock slips so badly.”

“Yes, I know,” answered Gigi.

“Well, a big rock rolled down on his head and broke it. We carried him into town last night. He cannot open his eyes or talk, but we know he isn’t dead, for he still breathes. We called the priest who wrote out some pills for him, but he can’t seem to swallow them. If he could only get them down, he might be all right, but we can’t get him to swallow anything.”

“I am sorry to hear about your nephew,” said Gigi, “but what do you want me to do?”

“Well, sir, we have heard of the white man who works with sick people, and we thought perhaps he might be able to help him. We know he is your friend, and I wonder if you would ask him to come and look at the boy. And, Master, we are very poor, but we could pay him a little.”

“The white doctor doesn’t care about the money part,” answered Gigi. “I know he will help if he can.”

“Do you think he would look at the boy?”

“I am sure he would,” said Gigi.

“Oh, thank you, Master, thank you. If you would only ask him.”

“Well, come with me and we will go and see the doctor.”

“*La-so, la-so*, he is too young to die, Master. He is only twenty.”

“You may have come too late,” said Gigi, as they both hurried toward Dr. Selby’s house. “Maybe the boy has died.”

“Oh, no, Master, I don’t think so. I just left him. He was still breathing then.”

Dr. Selby, with his shirt sleeves rolled up, was in the little room he had fixed up as a dispensary. He was dressing the hand of a little boy who had been burned. “Come in, Gigi,” he said, “I’ll be through here in a minute.” When he had finished, he said to the boy and his mother, “You may go home now, but be sure and come back to get it dressed again tomorrow.”

“*La-so*, yes, Master, we will come again tomorrow,” the woman answered, as she led her son away.

“Now, Gigi, what can I do for you?” said Dr. Selby.

“This old man’s nephew was hurt by a rock,” said Gigi, and went on to explain all he knew about the accident.

Dr. Selby listened quietly as he rolled down his sleeves. He reached for his hat. "I think we had better go and see him right away. Show us where he is," he said to the old man.

"*La-so, la-so*, Master, follow me," and the man led them to an old house on the other side of the village. The boy was lying on the floor in a dark corner. It was so dark that they could barely make out where he was, and even when their eyes were adjusted to the darkness it was hard to see much more.

Dr. Selby knelt by the boy and examined him, and when he stood up, he said, "I'm afraid it's too late, Gigi. He has been hurt very badly, and I don't believe there is anything I can do for him. He is just barely breathing."

"Oh, White Master," pleaded the old man, "don't say that. Please, please, help him. He is too young to die. We will pay you. We will even give you all we own if you will only save him."

"I would not ask for any money," said Dr. Selby. "I'd be happy if I could only do something for the boy, but I don't think it is possible."

"Oh, please," pleaded the old man with tears streaming down his face, "couldn't you do something?"

"I could try," said the doctor gently, "but I don't think it would do any good."

Just at that moment two priests with shaven heads, dressed in brick-red robes, came sullenly into the room. They eyed the white foreigner with resentment and would not speak. They crossed their legs and sat down on the floor beside the boy and began to pray in deep voices. One of them had a small drum with small weights attached to its sides. He held it and beat it by turning it in his hand. It was to frighten the evil spirits away from the boy.



The old man bowed to them and then knelt beside the boy and sobbed quietly, "Oh, my boy, my boy, how can I tell your mother? It will break her heart!"

Gigi nudged Dr. Selby and said softly, "Come out here a minute, will you please," and they both left the room.

"What's the matter, Gigi? Is something wrong? The priests seem rather angry."

"They are mad," said Gigi, "and you must be very careful

what you do, for they were called first and they resent your looking at the boy now. You must not touch him unless you can be very sure he will live, for they will tell his people that you took his soul, and his death would then be blamed on you."

"You mean to say, Gigi," said Dr. Selby, "that if I touched him and he died, it would be my fault?"

"Yes," said Gigi, "for we have a superstition that foreigners if they touch you may steal your soul, and remember, the priests can do you a great deal of harm."

"Yes, I can see that," said Dr. Selby. "The people are just now losing their fear and beginning to come to me, but so far all I have done have been just simple little things. This is the first big thing that's come my way. I wish I could do something to save that boy and help his uncle, poor old fellow, to feel better. I could try."

"It is not worth it, Dr. Selby, unless you are very sure he will live, for not only would the priests harm you by rumor, but they would try to get you driven out of the country."

"But I can't be sure about it, Gigi, till I see what I can do."

"If you take my advice," said his teacher, "you will not touch him. It is a dangerous risk. You have gotten such a nice start in the last few months, and I know how bitter your heart would feel if you had to leave it all now. My heart would be hurt for you."

"Gigi, I think I'll try and operate. The old fellow believed in me."

"Think it over very seriously first, my friend," said Gigi, "for it means much more than just the life of this poor boy."

"Yes, I realize that," said Dr. Selby slowly. "It might mean an abrupt ending to my dream of someday building a hospital

here. You are right, Gigi, my heart would be very bitter if I had to leave now. Perhaps—I better not—”

The old man came out of the room and fell on his knees at the doctor's feet. “Oh, please, White Uncle, don't leave him. You could make him live, I know you could. Oh, please, please.”

“Gigi, I've got to try to do something. I can't let that poor boy just lie there and die. Would you help me?”

For a long minute Gigi hesitated, and then said slowly, “Yes, if you are sure that it is what you want to do.”

“I'll have to do what I can to help him, Gigi. I'd never be happy if I didn't try. Come on. We have lots to do.”

9

THE OPERATION

NOGI WAS AWAKENED by the *tap-tap-tap* of her grandmother's cane going down the hall. "It must be late. I wonder what A-yee is doing up now? She went to bed a long time ago," said Nogi to herself. Getting out of bed, she dressed quickly and opened her door. "Oh, she has opened the door to the room of the Gods. She must be going in to pray. She must be worried. Maybe I can help her," and Nogi slipped quietly down the hall after her.

The old lady had pushed open the door and then she went in slowly and knelt to pray in front of the long golden altar which formed one end of the narrow room. Nogi, looking through the doorway, could see her grandmother in the dim light of the little butter lamps that always burned on the altar in front of the many golden gods. "May the Gods forgive me for coming at such an hour to disturb them," Nogi heard her grandmother's voice say, "but my heart is sick tonight, and I cannot sleep. My son is not home yet, and it grows late. Forgive him, please, for helping those foreign devils. He thinks they are his friends."

Nogi could stand it no longer. She went in to her grandmother's side and said in a whisper, "Oh, A-yee, don't say such things. The white ones are our friends." Then she bowed her

head to pray softly, "May the Gods bless us all and help us to be kind, that is all. Come, Grandmother, you're too tired to pray any more tonight. Let me help you back to your room."

"All right, my dear, I guess you're right. Your old grandmother is tired," and she leaned heavily on Nogi's shoulder as they left the room together. When they were outside, Nogi turned and closed the door softly behind them. They walked quietly back to her grandmother's room so they would not disturb those that were sleeping.

When her grandmother was in bed, Nogi sat down on the edge and said, "Grandmother, please don't worry so, but you shouldn't say such awful things. You know the foreign ones are Father's friends, and I am surprised at you for calling them foreign devils. Oh, A-yee, how could you? They have been nothing but kindness to us all."

"I know, I know," muttered her grandmother. "I am sorry that you heard me say it, but I am really very worried about your father. He has been gone practically all day, for that old man came this morning early about the hurt boy. He stays so late over at their house tonight."

"But, Grandmother, he told us when he was home that it would be quite late, for the white doctor told him there would be much to do. They want to help that poor boy that was hurt."

"I know that, my child."

"But, Grandmother, you've always thought we should be kind. Don't you want *Apa* to help the boy?"

"Yes, yes, of course I want my son to be kind, but it is too late to help the boy now. The priests have said that he was past help."

"I know, but, A-yee," said Nogi, "don't you remember how *Apa* told us that the foreign doctor worked right with the sick

and touched them where they were hurt? He can do more than just make pills.”

“Don’t you ever let me hear you say anything like that again,” said her grandmother sharply. “The priests always know best. They can do all that it is wise to do and they can chase the evil spirits away. Never forget that the priests are much wiser than the foreign man could ever be.”

“I’m sorry, A-yee, I’ll try to remember, but it is hard for me to understand. I am sure they are only trying to help the boy. Isn’t that all right?”

“My child,” said her grandmother, “you’re too young to know, but your father is being most unwise. If this boy dies, not only will the people despise the foreigner who caused his death by touching him, but they will hate your father who is helping him. That would bring sorrow and suffering to us all. It breaks my old heart to even think of it.”

“But, Grandmother, he isn’t going to die. He couldn’t. He will get well. I know he will. Please don’t cry,” begged Nogi.

“Silly child, I’m not crying,” said her grandmother wiping her eyes, “but it is impossible for the boy to live. Your father said himself that his head was cracked like the end of an egg and that he could see inside. The priests are resentful of this interference. The foreign doctor is on dangerous ground, for he has meddled in their business, and they do not like it at all.”

“But, A-yee, how could he refuse? The boy’s uncle begged him to look at the boy.”

“Yes, I know, but he is just a stupid old fellow,” answered her grandmother in disgust. “Imagine asking anyone else to look at the boy after the priests had been called. They will make it hard on the white foreigners when the boy dies, but it may be for the best.”

“What do you mean, Grandmother? I don’t understand.”

“Well, it may be that they would have to leave our country then, and it is always better not to have strangers in the land.”

“Oh, Grandmother,” cried Nogi.

“And, what is more,” went on the old lady in a more cheerful tone of voice, “we will be rid of that fat Chinaman. He is a terrible creature.”

“Grandmother, I don’t believe you have meant a word you’ve been saying. You sound as if you had no heart at all, and I know you have a big one. I can’t wait any longer. I want to know what they are doing. May I go to the foreign house, Grandmother, and see? I could come home with Father.”

“My little one, I do not like to have you go on the streets at night alone.”

“But it’s not very far, A-yee, and I’ll be careful.”

“All right, my child, go. I am anxious too. Be sure to take a torch.”

“Yes, Grandmother.” And Nogi went down the hall to the kitchen and she made a torch of pine faggots and held them to the live coals she found burning in the kitchen stove, blowing gently until they burst into flame. Carrying it she went quietly down the stairs and out into the street.

When she reached the Selby house she put out her torch and left it on the wall near the gate. “They must still be busy,” she said, and she could see two lights, one in the house upstairs, and one in the medicine room. She could see an outline of a face pressed against the window upstairs.

“That must be Su-aye,” said Nogi to herself. “I guess I’ll go up there.” Her heart almost stopped beating as she passed the old uncle sitting in a huddle just outside the door sobbing and crying. Was the boy dead? His uncle was crying so hard. No,

it couldn't be. He was going to get well. He must.

She went on up the stairs and knocked gently on the door. When no one answered, she lifted the latch and walked in. Sue had not heard the knock and did not know that Nogi was in the room until she felt an arm around her shoulder and heard a soft voice say, "Su-aye, how are you?"

"Oh, Nogi, I'm so glad you came. Annie and I are all alone. I'm so worried I feel sick. Dad and Mother and Gigi have been working so long."

"How is it going?" asked Nogi as she leaned over to pat the big fat hen in Sue's lap.

"I don't know. All I can do is sit here and watch the light down there. Gigi is holding it so Dad can see to work on the boy's head. Poor boy."

"Do you think it will take them much longer, Su-aye?"

"I don't know, Nogi. Dad didn't think it would take them this long." Sue choked, and her eyes filled with sudden tears. "Nogi, wouldn't it be terrible if Dad failed now and we had to leave Tibet?"

"Why, Su-aye, you mustn't even think of such a thing," answered Nogi. "Your father will be able to fix the boy's head. My father said your father was so very smart and clever. Su-aye, remember this—as long as what one is doing will put white stripes on his heart, whatever he does will come out for the best. Your father is putting a great white bar on his heart tonight by trying to help this boy. I am not worried. I am only anxious for the three who are working so hard. I'm sure they must all be very tired."

In the makeshift operating room they were almost through.

"Right now I'm too tired to care much what happens," said Dr. Selby, "and the cries of that poor old beggar outside have

nearly driven me mad. Just one more hemostat, Jean. It won't be long now. Watch his breathing and check his pulse while I'm finishing up here."

"All right, John, go ahead. You'd better tell Gigi to watch that light. It's flickering again."

"Gigi, can you make the light a little brighter? I can barely see," said Dr. Selby.

"It is not a good light, Doctor, and if we are not soon through, I am afraid it may go clear out. The alcohol in the lamp is no good."

"Nurse it along, Gigi. It's not much longer. It's got to last a few more minutes."

"John, how is his blood? Dark?"

"No, it seems all right."

"Well, dear, I want to tell you something. If the boy does die, remember you have done your best. I've never seen you do such a wonderful piece of work."

"I've tried," said Dr. Selby slowly.

"John, you've put up a real fight, with only a door for your operating table, with sheets for the walls and ceiling of your operating room. I don't know of anyone else in the world who would have even dared to do it. The handicaps were terrific."

"Hand me the bandage, dear. Without you and Gigi I couldn't have done a thing."

In a few minutes Dr. Selby finished bandaging the boy's head. "Well, we are through," he said softly. "We've done all we can. Now God takes over. I hope He's on our side. Gigi, go and tell that old fellow to stop crying and to be very quiet. The boy is asleep, and he must not wake him by making any noise."

"*La-so*, Dr. Selby."

"Wait a minute, Gigi, I want to tell you something. I've



learned tonight what a true friend will do. Don't think I do not know what you are risking to stand by me in this," said Dr. Selby.

"You are my friend," were Gigi's simple words.

"Thanks, Gigi. I couldn't have gotten along without you. You must go home now and get some rest."

The three walked outside into the cool night air and found Sue and Nogi walking up and down in the courtyard. "Oh, Dad," Sue spoke softly, "how is he?"

"He stood it pretty well, dear," answered Dr. Selby quietly.

“Hello, Nogi. I didn’t know you were here. Your father has helped so much tonight, and my heart is full of gratitude. Please see that he gets some rest.”

“I will,” said Nogi, and she and her father said good night and left.

“Dad, will he live?” asked Sue.

Her father’s face was grave. “I don’t know, Sue. We can’t tell yet. We’ll know better in the morning. Take your mother upstairs and put her to bed. She’s been a brick, and I know she’s worn out.”

“You’re right, John. I’m tired, but I could never go to sleep. I’ll just be waiting for morning, so call me if you want me.”

“All right, dear,” said her husband. “I’m staying right here. The boy might need me.”

10

CHANGE OF SKIES

THE NEXT three days were anxious ones for the Selby family. On the fourth day Dr. Selby said, "Jean, I'm worried. The boy took a turn for the worse last night."

"No, John, it can't be," said his wife. "He has been doing so well the last few days since the operation."

"I know. He stood the operation so well I thought he was going to be all right and have no complications, but—"

"He couldn't die now, John. You've worked too hard."

"We may have just had our hopes too high," said her husband in a discouraged tone of voice, "but we will keep on hoping."

The next few days were dark ones for the Selby family. The concern and worry over their patient had weighed heavily on each one. "Why don't you get outside this morning? Go for a walk or something, Sue," said her mother. "It would do you good. You have stayed in so close the last few days."

"I don't feel like it, Mom," said Sue listlessly. "I think I'll just play here with Annie. I wonder how the boy is today? I sure hope he's better."

"Su-aye, where are you?" called Nogi, running up the wide stairway of the Selby home.

"I'm in here, Nogi, playing with Annie. Come on in."

"I have something I want to tell you, Su-aye. I think it will make you happy."

"Hurry up and tell me then," said Sue. "I need something to cheer me up."

"You must promise first that you will listen and won't say a single word until I finish."

"I promise," said Sue, "but hurry up, Nogi. What in the world is it?"

"Well, it's like this. When I came through the streets on my way over here, the people were all gossiping in little groups, and these are bits of things I heard different ones saying. 'He is still alive.'—'You mean that boy with a broken head? *Nga Nee Ma Nee*, how could it be? I just can't believe it.'—'I saw him with my own eyes when they brought him to town, and he was as good as dead then.'—'The foreign man saved him.'—'Ah-da-da, it is a miracle.'—'Yes, and what's more the white man thinks he will live now, his uncle just told me.'—'Well, the white one must be very kind. I don't think we need to fear him. I for one shall go to him when I am sick.' "

"Oh, Nogi," and Sue's eyes were wide, "are you sure?"

"Yes, it is. I saw *Apa* downstairs as I came in, and he is so excited. He was on his way up here to tell you and your mother, for your father is very busy today. So he just told me to tell you."

"Nogi, I'm so happy, I don't know what to say," and Sue jumped up and grabbed Nogi's hands and they danced around and around, singing and laughing.

"What in the world are you girls doing?" asked Sue's mother in the doorway.

"Oh, Mom, Nogi says Gigi said to tell us the boy was going



to be all right. Dad was too busy to come. We're just so happy we had to do something."

"Oh, I'm happy, too," said Mrs. Selby with a sigh of relief.

"Mom, come and dance with us."

"No, I think I'll sit down and just watch you and Nogi."

"Let's sit down, too," said Nogi with a grin. "I'm getting dizzy in my head."

"All right," said Sue.

Nogi sat down quietly in her long dress, but Sue flung herself into a chair as she said, "Mom, I'm so happy all the way through. They think Dad really performed a miracle when he saved that boy. Think of it, Mom. The people won't be afraid of him any more."

"Happy is a very inadequate word for the way I feel," said her mother. "It's more than that, Sue. It was a long nightmare when your father and Gigi and I were working so hard on that

boy. Then all those hours and hours we've watched and worried and waited. Now I can really breathe again."

"It was too real to be a nightmare, Mother. I can still feel where I had that knot in my stomach when we didn't know what was going to happen," and Sue rubbed her stomach gingerly. "It was simply awful. I never want to feel like that again."

"Nor do I, my dear," said her mother. "It was enough to last me the rest of my life."

"Excuse us, Nogi. I always seem to forget that you can't understand everything we say," said Sue.

"Oh, I don't mind it at all," said Nogi with a smile. "Go ahead. I have fun trying to guess what your words might be. When you are through talking to your mother, I want to tell you something else, and then you can ask her if you can go."

"What is it, Nogi? Tell me now."

"Well, the girls in my gang are going for a picnic and a bath tomorrow. They want you to go," said Nogi.

"Are you sure they really want me or are they asking me because you like me, Nogi?" said Sue stiffly. "They haven't been very friendly lately."

"It's because their families were worried about what the priests might do. I'm sorry. They want you, and I am happy to think they wanted you to go along. It may mean that they will ask you to be a member."

"Do you mean it?" said Sue.

"Yes," said Nogi. "We call ourselves the *Bo-sta-bo-moo*."

"What does that mean?" asked Sue.

"Just a bunch of girls, but we have wonderful times together. We have house parties and picnics and dances."

"How perfectly wonderful," said Sue.

“You’ve met most of the girls. Do you remember Edren? She’s one of my cousins.”

“Oh, yes,” said Sue, “and I liked her.”

“Well, tomorrow,” said Nogi, “we’re going to go to the hot springs. They are about four miles out of town. It usually takes us all day to get a good bath and eat our lunch. Do you think your mother will let you go with us?”

“I don’t know,” said Sue, “but I’ll ask her. Mom, Nogi says the girls in her gang are going for a picnic-bath tomorrow and they want me to go along. I’ll tell you about the other things she said a little later. We’re supposed to take our lunch and go out to the hot springs about four miles out of town.”

“Isn’t that rather a long way to go for a bath, Sue? I didn’t know you liked bathing so well,” teased her mother.

“Now, Mom, this isn’t the regular kind, and they hadn’t planned to go until next week, but it seems their folks told them they ought to go right away or they wouldn’t get a chance to go.”

“Why is that?”

“Well, there are more rumors of fighting, and they are afraid it won’t be safe to go later on.”

“But, Sue, do you think it’s safe now?” asked her mother.

“Yes, Nogi said a man came to her father’s house last night. He was from a place about five days away and he told them all about the fighting they were having up there.”

“I don’t know what to say,” said Mrs. Selby. “I’ll have to think it over a little bit.”

Sue and Nogi chatted together a moment and then Sue said to her mother, “Nogi says that her grandmother is terribly upset, but she won’t tell them what’s the matter. Nogi says she thinks the old lady must have heard some bad news about the

war. She went around talking to herself, and all Nogi said she could hear were things about Chinese dogs and trouble and fighting.”

“The old lady certainly has no use for the Chinese,” said her mother. “She seems to hate the ground they walk on. She doesn’t even like poor old Shensi, and he’s certainly a harmless soul.”

“He’s swell,” said Sue. “What would we have done without him? It’s hard to understand why the A-yee doesn’t like him, for he wouldn’t hurt a flea.”

“Well, let’s get back to the subject of the bath a minute,” said her mother. “I’m not sure that I like the idea. Do you think it’s sanitary? I can’t quite imagine a community bath with a bunch of girls all jumping in and out of the water at the same time. I wonder what your father will say?”

“I don’t know, Mom,” said Sue, “but everyone of those girls are as nice as they can be and I think we’d have a lot of fun.”

“How long will you be gone?”

“I guess about all day. Nogi said we wouldn’t be back until the sun was on top of the mountain.”

“That’s about four-thirty, isn’t it?”

“Yes,” said Sue, “and, Mom, they don’t go very often. Only about three or four times a year, and that’s why they take so long, for they want to do a good job of it when they do go.”

“I should think it might almost be necessary,” said Mrs. Selby.

“Tell your mother,” said Nogi, “that we will take good care of you and to please let you go.”

Mrs. Selby smiled at Nogi. “Tell her I’m sure the girls would take good care of you but that I think I’d better ask your father before I say definitely that you can go. If he says you

can, we'll tell Gigi and he can let her know when he goes home tonight."

"Look, Mom, doesn't Annie look cute in this little bonnet?" Sue held up the big black hen with a white bonnet tied under her bill.

Mrs. Selby laughed. "That crazy chicken. I don't see why she lets you girls play with her like that. I never knew a chicken before that would let you put clothes and hats on it like Annie does."

"She likes it, Mom."

"Well, it seems as if she did," said her mother as she slipped into her white uniform. "I'm going down now to help your father and I'll ask him what he thinks about your going with Nogi and the girls tomorrow."

"Be sure to tell him so it will sound like a good idea," said Sue, "for I do want to go."

"All right, dear, I'll do my best."

11

A PICNIC-BATH

“SU-AYE, SU-AYE, are you ready?” Nogi’s voice came from the courtyard beneath Sue’s window.

Sue looked out. “Yes, Nogi, I’m ready. I’ll get my lunch and be right with you. Good-by, Mom. Good-by, Dad,” Sue called as she rushed down the stairs and outside. “Say, do you always go this early, Nogi? I’m certainly glad Annie happened to wake me when she did, or I wouldn’t have been ready.”

“Oh, yes, we have to start early because it takes quite a while to get out to the hot springs. We always try to have plenty of time to play and swim in the water,” answered Nogi.

“Gee, I think this is going to be fun,” said Sue.

“I’m glad your family decided to let you go. I was afraid they might not because of all this talk of fighting.”

“Yes, I wasn’t sure they would let me go, but Dad seemed glad to have me go with the girls. Where are the other girls?”

“Up at the bridge,” said Nogi. “It’s the easiest place for everyone to meet. You know them all, Sue.”

“Yes, I know who they are. Edren and Badren, your two cousins, are the ones I know best. I can hear them singing, can’t you? I guess they must be waiting for us. Let’s run, Nogi.”

"All right, let's do," and the two girls ran down the small path by the river toward the bridge.

"Here they come," the girls shouted when they saw them coming. "We thought you would never get here. You are both sleepyheads. Hurry up, or we won't have enough time to bathe and play."

"You shouldn't tease Su-aye," said Nogi.

"Oh, I don't mind teasing," said Sue.

"Now we are all here. Let's go," one of the girls said, and as she started across the bridge, she began to sing, and the others all joined in, even Sue, for it was an old favorite, and Nogi had taught her the words just the week before. When one song was finished, another was begun. Song after song carried them down the road. Sue was surprised at the number the girls could sing so perfectly. They knew every word.

"I'm hoarse," said one of the girls. "Let's play 'It' now for a while. Come on everybody now, get in a circle and let's see who's going to be it." Pointing to a different girl with each word, she said,

*Ah dat dat,
Yong yong yong,
Droma tze,
Da wa sha,
Ri sti dong,
Sa ma ya,
Sout."*

The girl who was "it" chased the others down the road until she finally caught someone, and that girl took up the chase.

"You know," said Sue, "we have a game very much like this in my home land. We say,

*“Eenie meenie minee mo
Catch a nigger by his toe
If he hollers, let him go,
Eenie meenie minee mo.”*

The girls all wanted to learn it and giggled and laughed as they tried to say the new words.

“There is where we go,” said Edren pointing with her finger to the right. “See that clump of trees way down there? Now we leave the main road and go down this little path.”

“Something’s the matter with me,” said Badren. “Everything seems funny today. I want to laugh at everything.”

“Well, you’re not the only one,” another answered. “I think we all must have the same disease. We’ve giggled and laughed all the way out.”

“Yes,” said Nogi, “I’ve laughed till my face aches,” and she put her hands up to her face.

“How are your story holes, Su-aye?” Badren asked.

“My what?” asked Sue.

“Oh, they’re talking about the holes in your face when you smile,” Nogi told her.

“Oh,” Sue laughed. “I guess they’re all right. We call them dimples in my home country. Why do you call them story holes?”

“I’ll tell you,” said Edren. “We think that any girl with holes in her cheeks is lucky for she can tell all sorts of stories and no matter what she says, people will believe her for they like to see the holes in her cheeks.”

“I wish that were really true. It would be wonderful to have everyone always believe you. If it would only work on my mom. She seems to doubt some of my tales sometimes,” Sue said with a sigh.

The girls laughed. "Isn't it odd? Our mothers are like that, too. I guess they must all be the same."

At the hot springs the girls slipped quickly out of their clothes and running down plunged into the hot water.

"Come on, Su-aye. You will like it. Just be careful not to get too close to that end, for the water gets too hot up there. You have too many buttons. Hurry up," said Nogi.

Sue was amazed that the girls weren't at all shy or silly and seemed to take their bathing together as a perfectly normal natural occurrence. "All right, Nogi, I'm ready," and the two girls ran hand in hand into the water.

"Your skin is very white and very pretty, Su-aye."

"Thanks."

In and out of the hot water and then a swim in the cold river which ran close by, and the morning was gone. "I'm hungry," said a voice.

"So am I," said Della, who was the daughter of the town's wealthiest trader.

"Well, let's eat," and ten brown girls and one white one were soon sitting on the grass eating their lunches, wearing only their undershirts. "My, I must eat fast, for I'm all through and some of you aren't even half done," said Sue.

"No, you didn't," said Nogi. "You gave us all some of yours to taste. Ten tastes took quite a bit. Your food is so easy to eat."

"Now you must have some of ours and then you'll see why it takes so long for us to eat," said Edren. "Here's a piece of dried cheese. We think it is awfully good."

"I think I'd like to try it. Thank you," said Sue.

"Here, please taste some of my dried yak meat. My *Ama* said it was some of the best she has ever made," and Sue took

it with a polite smile, and wondered if she could really eat the long dry strip of red meat. She took a small nibble and thought as it crumbled to pieces in her mouth, "I feel as if I were chewing on a firecracker. It has a nice color, but not much taste."

"Have some of my bread, Su-aye," said Nogi. "The round sweet cakes you gave us were so good. I hope you'll like what we have."

Sue found she had to eat the hard cheese like an all-day sucker, but she knew she had never tasted anything quite like it before in her life. "Say, it takes a long time to eat this."

"Do you like it?" asked one of the girls.

"Well," said Sue, "I guess it has a nice taste when you can finally get it soft enough to chew it."

"Come on. If we want another swim, we'd better hurry." The girls rushed back into the water again, delaying just long enough to wrap their braids of hair around their heads. They darted in and out between the rocks and swam a while in the river. Then they climbed out on the biggest rock to lie in the sun. "It's almost time to go home," said Edren. "Come, let's get our butter on and finish our bath."

"Nogi, what does she mean?" asked Sue.

"Oh, I am sorry, Su-aye. It slipped my mind. I meant to remind you to bring some butter. We always put butter on after our bath."

"Why do you butter yourselves?" asked Sue with a puzzled frown as she watched the girls each take a piece of butter, rub it between their hands, and grease themselves from head to foot.

"*Nga Nee Ma Nee*," said Badren. "Su-aye isn't going to be able to finish her bath. Let's give her some of our butter."

"Oh, I don't mind missing it," said Sue hopefully.

“Sure, she can have some of mine,” said one.

“Here’s some,” said another. “I have much more than I need.”

“Give it to me,” said Nogi, “and I’ll help her put it on,” and she took all the different little chunks from the girls. “Now I’ll explain why we do this,” said Nogi, as she greased Sue. “It will make your bath last a long time, Su-aye. The butter makes you slick and the dirt just slides off.”

“Oh,” said Sue, “I see,” and she choked trying to keep from laughing, for she didn’t want to hurt their feelings since they had been so kind to her.

“I think I had better help you too,” and Edren joined Nogi rubbing the butter into Sue’s hair and over her, even down to her toes. “You’re sure going to have a nice long bath,” said Edren, “for you really have lots of butter.”

“Thanks so much for helping me,” said Sue. “You were all so kind to share your butter with me.” Then she sniffed. Something smelled very queer. What could it be? Soon she realized she was smelling herself. Some of the butter had been fresh, but some of it must have been very old and stale. “Mom will certainly love me the way I smell now,” was the thought Sue had.

“You’re very welcome. Come on, girls,” said Edren. “We’ll have to hurry home now or our families will start to worry.”

There was no dust on the little path, but on the main road it was thick. Sue noticed it sticking to her newly-greased legs and to her toes through her open sandals. The other girls had such confidence in the efficiency of their butter that they even dragged their toes in the dust!

“Mom, oh, Mom,” said Sue under her breath. “If you ever thought I was dirty before, you will have to change your mind.

I'll be something to see when I get home. I wonder if I'll ever be clean again."



Suddenly one of the girls grabbed her by the arm. "Ssssh. There's something moving in that bush over there."

The girls huddled close together holding tightly to each other. "Oh, *Ama*," said one of them quietly, "I hope it isn't a robber or a runaway soldier."

"My teeth won't keep still," breathed another.

"Look," said Della. "See, there's a foot sticking out. May the gods in heaven protect us. It is wearing the shoe of a China-

man!" Sue could feel the girls near her trembling and shaking.

"Something looks familiar about that shoe," said Sue to herself, and rushing over she grabbed into the bushes. As she pulled, a head came bobbing up. "Shensi!" she cried. "What in the world are you doing here?"

"Miss Su-aye," said Shensi in astonishment, "so velly glad to see it's you and not some *Manja*."

"No, I'm no *Manja*, but what are you doing here?"

"Me go home to China," said Shensi.

"Why? You can't go like this."

"Les me can. Go now," and Sue noticed that Shensi's face was pale with fright.

"What's the matter, Shensi? You know you can't walk all the way to China."

"Les, me can too," said Shensi with determination.

"Well, where are your things?"

"All me need me have light hele in little bundle."

"What's the matter with him?" asked Nogi, coming over to Sue's side.

"Oh, he says he's going home," Sue told her in Tibetan.

"Well, tell him he can't go that way. He would die on the road."

When Sue told him, Shensi answered, "Me no cale. Die on load plenty good. Bettel die that way than have *Manja* cut me up."

"Oh, Shensi, you can't go."

"Les, me go. No stay hele. *Manja* will kill me."

"Wherever did you get that idea, Shensi? No one has ever hurt you yet, have they? I'm not going to let you go."

"Oh, please, Miss Su-aye," begged Shensi. "Me got to go. Me can't go back."

“You can too,” said Sue. “At least you can come back and let Dad get you a horse. Then if you still think you have to go, you can. What scared you anyway?”

After much coaxing and pleading, Shensi told her, “Well, me go Gigi’s house this molning. The old lady tell me I bettel leave town light away because she know some *Manja* who wants to cut me in little pieces.” Shensi shuddered. “She show me two ears he had cut off flom Chinaman last week. My stomach she tuhn ovel. Me can’t go back.”

Sue told Nogi what had happened, and Nogi smiled. “That grandmother of mine. She is terrible. Tell him, Sue, that the reason she did it was just to scare him into leaving. She knows Latsu likes him a lot and she’s afraid she might lose her.”

After Sue had translated this bit of news, Shensi, still pale, with his eyes wide and staring, said, “Leally? No can believe.”

“Yes, it is true, Shensi. Now you’ve got to come back with us. You can’t leave Latsu like that,” and with eleven girls coaxing and pushing him, Shensi was finally escorted back to town.

12

A LIVING BUDDHA

SUE AND HER FATHER walked slowly down the road toward the monastery which stood on a hill about two miles west of the village. "Dad, do you think he will be willing to see you?" asked Sue.

"I don't know, Sue. He may and he may not. It is hard to tell. This business of trying to see a Living Buddha is one thing I don't know very much about."

"But, Dad, it is so important. I hope he will talk to you and that he likes you."

"I hope so, too," said her father, "but the first thing I have to worry about will be whether or not I can even persuade the man at the gate to let me inside the place."

"Oh, I know you can get inside, Dad, and if you can only get to see the Living Buddha, I know you can talk to him all right."

"I don't know, Sue," said her father in a doubtful tone. "I'm wondering now how I ever let Gigi and those three men talk me into doing such a thing. If the fighting hadn't been getting so serious, I wouldn't have. It is too much responsibility and it rather frightens me."

"Dad, you're being funny. You always talk about things scaring you, and I don't believe you've ever been afraid of anything."

“Sure, I have,” said her father. “You just don’t know. You better turn around now and go home.”

“Can’t I go just a little farther, Dad?”

“If I had my way, you could go all the way. I’d like to have you with me for company, but, see, the gate is just a little way up there now, and you mustn’t get too close. Don’t you remember Gigi telling us that nothing but men and male animals were ever allowed within the gates?”

“Yes,” said Sue, “and I think it’s a crazy idea. I don’t understand it. Imagine no chickens but roosters! Annie wouldn’t approve of that. And no goats but the ones and no girls or women. Don’t you suppose it gets a little dull for all those men sometimes?”

“I imagine it does,” said her father, “for there would be many dull moments for me without you and your mother around.”

“How many men live in this huge old lamasery, Dad? Do you know?”

“I think there are about two thousand lamas and two hundred boys who are studying to be lamas. I don’t think you’d better go any farther now, Sue.”

“All right, Dad. Good luck. Be sure and tell the Buddha when you see him what Gigi and those other men said about trusting you so much.”

“Well, we’ll see,” said her father. “Good-by, and go right back home now and tell your mother I got as far as the gate all right,” and Dr. Selby smiled.

“All right, Dad, good-by,” and Sue turned and started running back down the hill.

The doctor walked to the gate and was just ready to pound on it with his fist to announce himself. Before he could touch

it, it opened a tiny crack and a voice said sharply, "What do you want?"

Dr. Selby was startled and had difficulty in finding his voice for a moment. Someone must have been watching him all the time. "A pleasant day to you," he said finally. "I am Dr. Selby, and I want very much to see the High Lama."

The eyes and voice of the man were hostile, and he said impatiently, "We know who you are, but what is your purpose in coming here?"

"I was asked to come by some of the people to talk to the High One about the war situation. It is growing very serious."

"Is that any of your business?" the voice growled.

"That is the reason I came," said Dr. Selby politely. "I want to ask the Holy One for wisdom and guidance."

"That was a diplomatic answer," said the man in a surprised tone of voice. "It was not the stupid and boasting one I expected a foreign devil to make. Come in and wait. I shall go see if it might be possible for you to see the Holy One."

"Well, the man is certainly frank," thought Dr. Selby as he entered the gate and found himself in the courtyard, still a good half block away from the main building. He smiled when he saw the hundreds of roosters wandering around. Sue would have enjoyed seeing them. Here and there were red-gowned priests sitting cross-legged on the ground with their slick-shaven heads shining in the sun. Most of them were saying their prayers and counting their beads. They sat with their eyes closed, but the doctor caught some of them peering at him from half-closed eyes. It gave him an uncanny feeling, for no one spoke and he had to wait a long time before the gatekeeper returned. "You may go as far as the building," the man told him. "The priest at the door says he will have to talk with you before it is

possible for him to decide whether or not you can see the Holy One."

"Thank you," said Dr. Selby. "I hope it will be possible," and he walked to the door. The priest there questioned him in even more detail, but finally consented to let Dr. Selby inside. "Wait here," he said, "and I shall go and see if it can be arranged."

It was dark inside the thick mud walls, and it took the doctor's eyes a long time to adjust themselves. Finally he could make out long dark corridors with endless doors opening into them and stairways going up into the darkness. Just then his ears were suddenly filled with a sound which seemed to come from the door on his right. It was not closed so he looked in. He saw rows and rows of priests facing an enormous golden altar chanting in unison. Each chant seemed to start out softly, build up into a crescendo, and die away again. Over and over the waves of sound came in perfect rhythm, and it was almost as if it came from one throat.

"Gad, this is thrilling," said Dr. Selby to himself. "It is the most unusual thing I've ever heard. It must have taken months and months to get such perfect unison with all those hundreds of voices."

A hand touched him on the shoulder. Dr. Selby had forgotten for a moment that he was waiting for a message. "Sir," said a voice.

"What—what is it?" asked the doctor. "Oh, yes, will it be possible for me to see the High One?"

"I don't know, but you may follow me and talk to the one who can grant you the permission."

It was harder to see a reincarnated Buddha than it would be to talk with a king, Dr. Selby thought as he followed the man

down one of the long dark hallways and up some steps and then through other hallways to a small bare room. "You may wait here," the man told the doctor, and disappeared.

Dr. Selby nodded. "Thank you," and then said to himself, "I guess I'd better. I'm lost. I'd never be able to find my way out of here. I wonder where all this rigmarole will lead." Again he had to wait a long time, and as he paced back and forth he thought, "Maybe nothing is going to happen. Perhaps I'll be the forgotten man."

Just as he had given up hope, another priest appeared quietly in the doorway. He was a small man and seemed very old from the way he moved and the short white hair on his head, but his face was smooth and un wrinkled. "Dr. Selby?" he said. "You are to be honored today. The High One has consented to see you. Come with me."

Down another long hallway and up more steps to a curtained doorway where the priest bowed low and said, "You are to enter here," and then he vanished. The doctor hesitated a moment and then lifted the heavy curtains and walked in. In front of him was an enormous golden image of Buddha surrounded by smaller images with rows and rows of little butter lamps burning in front of them. Dr. Selby stood quietly looking at them. The atmosphere was still, and he felt reverent. It was the only attitude one could have in such a place.

A voice spoke softly, "How do you like my room of worship?" It came from behind the doctor and it was so soft that it seemed as if it came from one of the gods. The doctor turned. He could not believe his own eyes. Sitting on a low couch cross-legged was another Buddha with the very same features, eyes, and long ear lobes of the golden one at which he had just been looking, but this one was alive instead of being made of gold.



He wore a red robe like the other priests, the only difference being a golden vest. Dr. Selby could understand now why this man was known as the Living Buddha.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "I did not see you when I came in."

"I know that, and I did not mean that you should. I wanted to see you first," said the Holy One. "You had a feeling of reverence after you entered here, didn't you?"

"Yes," said Dr. Selby. "I felt that I was in a holy place."

“I could see that. You wanted to see me? Sit down here,” and the Living Buddha motioned to the end of the low couch on which he himself was sitting.

“Thank you, I will,” said Dr. Selby and seated himself. “It is about the war I have come.”

“Yes? I know there is trouble, and it is becoming more intense and spreading to many sections.”

“Well,” continued the doctor, “Gigi Gezong and three head men from this district came to see me last night and asked me to take the responsibility of being the middleman between the Chinese and the Tibetans.”

“I see,” the High Lama nodded.

“They felt that the war might be prevented from getting any worse and that it would cause terrible suffering to everyone if the crops were burned now just when they are almost ripe for harvesting.”

“To kill is sin, and war is stupid. It always causes terrible suffering and is usually most unnecessary,” said the Buddha.

“They thought,” continued Dr. Selby, “that since the Tibetans had been more successful than the Chinese in the skirmishes and the fighting so far that they might be willing to listen to terms for peace. Many wounded ones have been coming into town the last few days from other sections.”

The High Lama nodded his head but made no comment. He sat silent gazing out of the window, and Dr. Selby wondered if he heard what he had been saying, for his face showed no expression, but he continued, “and, Your Honor, they wanted me to ask you for your approval of their plan and of myself as the middleman.”

After a long time the lama asked, “Do you speak Chinese as well as you do our language?”

"I can speak it, sir, though not too well," answered the doctor with oriental humility.

"They must trust you," put in the lama.

"I think they do," said the doctor, "and I hope to prove worthy of it."

"We have had a great deal of trouble with the ones who usually act as our interpreters," said the lama. "They are half-castes, half Chinese and half Tibetan, and have no loyalty to either country. They have caused us a great deal of trouble."

"Sir, do you approve the idea of trying to get the leaders of both sides together and working out some terms?"

"What about the Tigi?" asked the lama. "He is the governor of this part and in charge of our soldiers."

"They thought perhaps if the leaders could meet in conference and work out some terms, they could then be taken to the Tigi for his approval. Your sanction, sir, would carry a great deal of weight with him."

There was a long silence as the priest again gazed out of the window. Suddenly a rooster crowed in the courtyard below. When the High Lama turned back again to the doctor, he was smiling. "I hear your daughter has a very wonderful chicken." The subject of the war had been dismissed. It was a long jump from war to chickens, and the priest seemed much more interested than he had been during the other part of their discussion. Dr. Selby was puzzled. He wondered if the man had been displeased, but he answered, "Yes, Your Honor, my daughter does have a big black hen. It is her pet."

"I would like to see her some time. I have heard that she sleeps on her back."

Dr. Selby smiled. It was funny for a Living Buddha to be talking about a pet hen. "Yes, she is a very peculiar chicken.

My daughter has played with her since she was quite small and held her on her back so long she is used to it and even likes to sleep that way.”

“I wonder if some time your daughter would give me one of her pet’s sons. I would like very much to have a big rooster here with all the others.”

“I’m sure she would be glad to give you one, Your Honor.”

“Well, then, shall we leave it like this,” said the lama, “that someday soon, quite soon, you and your daughter will meet me down by the river on this side in that lovely grove of trees. You know where I mean?”

“Yes, I know,” answered the doctor.

“Your daughter could bring the hen there, for you know I couldn’t ask your child or the hen to come here as it is against our rules.”

“Yes, I understand that,” said the doctor, “and I know that Sue and her pet chicken would both be honored to meet you any time. Whenever it suits your convenience, sir, just let us know, and we will arrange it.”

The lama clapped his hands softly, and in a moment the old priest appeared. “The doctor is ready to go now. Show him the way.”

“*La-so, la-so,*” the old man bowed low.

“I am glad you came, Dr. Selby. I had heard of you and how you saved the boy with a broken head.”

“I am glad he lived,” said the doctor.

“Yes, it is well he lived,” said the Living Buddha. “I hear you have a new name now.”

“What do you mean, Your Honor?”

“I hear the old man named you the ‘White Uncle.’ It is a nice name,” the High Lama mused.

“Yes, I like it very much,” said the doctor.

“Remember, tell your daughter that I would like to have a rooster some time.”

“I will, and thank you, Your Honor, for seeing me,” and Dr. Selby followed the old man, who took him all the way to the outside gate.

Dr. Selby was sure of only one thing, and that was that the Living Buddha wanted one of Annie’s sons to come and live in the courtyard of the lamasery with the other roosters.

13

THE CONFERENCE

"A LOT OF EXCITING things have happened to me in my life," said Sue, **"but the most exciting one for me was getting to meet the Living Buddha yesterday down by the river. When his messenger came and asked me to bring Annie and to come with Dad to the lama's favorite spot down by the river was a thrill of a lifetime. He was so nice to me, Mom, and so interested in Annie that I almost forgot he was a Living Buddha and such an important person. I'll never forget it as long as I live."**

"Well, I should think not," said her mother. **"It is something of which you may well be proud. I imagine you are the only American girl who ever had the honor of being invited to have a cup of tea with a Living Buddha."**

"It'll be something to tell my grandchildren, won't it?" said Sue.

"It certainly will be," said her father, **"and how does Annie feel about her meeting with the Living Buddha?"**

"She is very proud of herself, thank you," answered Sue with a little curtsey. **"Don't you think she behaved well, Dad, really? She tried to do her best."**

"Yes, she did," said her father. **"Do you think Annie approves of the idea of one of her sons becoming a priest?"**

"I am sure she knows she is a very superior hen," said Mrs.

Selby. "She is probably the only hen in the world to have met a Living Buddha formally, let alone being so favored as to have him ask for one of her sons."

"She's feeling pretty proud about it, Mom," said Sue, "for she's been strutting around ever since the Living Buddha talked to her. It's going to be hard to pick out which son to give him. He wants me to teach the one he is to get some tricks, so I guess it will depend on which one of the three learns the fastest."

"I'm sure that no other family in the world has ever had as many unusual things happen to them in such a short period of time," said Mrs. Selby at the breakfast table.

"I think you're right, dear," said her husband. "We have had our share of them the last few days."

"And the days certainly are busy ones," said his wife.

"Surprisingly so," said Dr. Selby. "I never dreamed the Living Buddha was even very interested in the plans for peace, let alone showing all this quick action. He has simply kept every one of us on the jump. He has sent so many messages to me, and he has kept the Tibetan head men busy, and now he has even arranged it so the conference could be held today."

"Dad, you sound as if you should say, *Ah-da-da!* The Tibetans all do when they are surprised and can't believe something could possibly be true."

"*Ah-da-da!*" said her father, "that's just how I do feel. When the Living Buddha makes up his mind, he makes things hum. I can't imagine how he was able to get everything arranged for the conference so fast."

"I would say that he had done his part well," said Mrs. Selby.

"He certainly has," said Dr. Selby, "and I only hope that the conference will be a success now and some sort of an agreement will come out of it."

"I've always loved excitement, John," said his wife, "but if many more things happen, I'm afraid I'll have to admit I've had as much as I need for a while."

"We have had our share of excitement," said Dr. Selby.

"The very idea of those important men and their armed soldiers around sends a little shiver up my spine," said Mrs. Selby, "but there's lots to do, so I must get busy. I want to talk to Shensi about the cookies and cakes so that everything will be ready when you want to serve the men tea this afternoon."

"Say, by the way, how is Shensi feeling now?" said Dr. Selby. "I've been so busy I haven't even had a chance to talk with him very much since the girls brought him home?"

"Oh, he's fine, Dad," put in Sue. "As soon as he was convinced that Latsu really loved him, he's been quite happy. I think he and Latsu may get married."

"But, Sue, she can't speak a word of Chinese. How would they ever get along?"

"I don't know, Dad, but they seem to be perfectly satisfied. Nogi talked to her grandmother, and even the old lady hasn't treated him so mean lately. She seems to be a little ashamed of how she has been treating him."

"Well, I'm glad he's happier. I better hurry or my patients will wonder what's happened," said Dr. Selby.

It was a busy morning. Sue helped Shensi for a while icing the cakes and the cookies. Then her mother called her to study her lessons. Afterwards she helped Andru see that everything was ready in her father's study. At noon her father called her and said, "Sue, have Shensi fix some lunch for your mother and me. We won't have much time to stop today."

"Sure, Dad," and she had taken their lunch to the dispensary. Everyone had been so busy that no one stopped very long

to eat, and Sue had her lunch standing by the kitchen sink. "Well, Shensi, I guess everything is about done and we can rest for a while, for Gigi said the men couldn't possibly get here before the sun was on the mountaintop, and that means it will be about four o'clock."

"Les," said Shensi, "me plenty tiled. Me lest too befole me have to selve tea to impoltant men."

"I guess I'll go look for Annie," said Sue, "and see how she's feeling. I haven't had a chance to see her this morning. Annie, Annie," she called, and started hunting for her hen. She wasn't outdoors, and Sue came back in the house. "I wonder where she could be? Oh, I bet I know," said Sue to herself. "Her favorite napping place. Under Dad's desk. I'll go see if she's there."

Sure enough, perched on the footrest was Annie, sound asleep. "How are you, Annie?" said Sue as she crawled under the desk to pet her. "Have you decided which one of your boys you're going to give to the Living Buddha?"

Annie opened her sleepy eyes and said, "*Cluck*," as much as to say, "Oh, let's not talk now. I want to rest a little longer."

"All right, Annie, you can rest a little longer," said Sue, "but you have to get out of here before four o'clock."

"*Ghrrh, ghrrh, ghrrh*," was Annie's reply, as Sue stroked the feathers on her neck.

"Dad is having an important conference, you know. I certainly hope it will be a success, and—"

"Please take this chair on the other side of the desk, General, and I want to thank you for telling your men to stack their guns in the middle of the yard and to stay on the right side," Sue heard her father's voice say in Chinese.

"I think it will be satisfactory," said the general, "if the Tibetans can be trusted."

"I'm sure they can be and will be happy to do the same thing," answered the doctor. "I'm glad that you could come so early. I did not expect you for quite a while."

"Yes, we traveled fast," said the general. "I hope the Tibetan leader will come soon."

"It looks as though you may have your wish, General," said the doctor, "for I see them coming now. Excuse me for a moment and I'll go meet them."

"Certainly, certainly," said the Chinaman. "I'll sit here and rest," and he stretched his long legs under the desk.

Sue was petrified. The men were already here. She must have fallen asleep under the desk when she was talking to Annie. She shook her head and stretched her eyes wide. No, it wasn't a dream. Those long legs under one side of the desk were real.

"This way, Lo Zong," she heard her father speaking in Tibetan.

"*La-so*," the man's voice answered. "Yes, sir, I am coming."

Dr. Selby introduced the two men. The legs moved again, as the general stood up, and the two men acknowledged the introduction and bowed politely. Dr. Selby was kept busy, for both of them had to talk to him first so that he could translate for them.

Shensi, who had kept a close eye to see when the men were ready for their tea, brought it in and served them. He had outdone himself, and the little cookies and cakes were novel and seemed to be enjoyed by both the Chinese and the Tibetan.

"These cakes are most unusual," said the general, and his long slender fingers reached for another.

"Your foreign food tastes strange, but I like it," said Lo Zong. "I've never eaten anything that tasted anything like this."

"I'm glad you like it. Shensi is a very good cook," said Dr.

Selby, "and though I'm sorry to suggest it, I think we must get down to our business. General Lu, would you like to speak first?"

"Yes," answered the general, "but I did not realize the time had gone so swiftly. Please tell the Tibetan that we are willing to listen to reasonable terms, but that the Tibetan soldiers must be stopped from making any more attacks on the Chinese. You understand, Doctor, it is to give us a chance to save our 'face,' and you need not trouble to tell this last to our Tibetan friend."

"I understand that," said the doctor, and after he had translated the first part into Tibetan, Lo Zong nodded his head to show the Chinaman he understood.

"I see," said the Tibetan. "They want a chance to save their pride."

Dr. Selby smiled. "Shall I tell him that?"

"No, no need to tell him that. Just tell him that we are glad to hear that they are willing to negotiate with us. And that his demand is not unreasonable, but it is going to be hard to grant it, for the Tibetan army have been quite successful in their last few skirmishes with the Chinese and won't want to stop now."

"I can understand," said the general, "but who has charge of the Tibetan troops?"

"Tell him the Tigi has charge of our troops," said Lo Zong, "and that there is only one thing we can do and that is to draw up a plan, list his demands and our demands, see that they are fair, and send it to the Tigi to let him know how we feel about the situation and how it can be solved by peaceful terms. Our people do not want war, but the Tigi will have to be convinced firmly, for he is the military governor and does not feel as we do, especially when he and his men have been winning."

"I agree with him," said General Lu. "Let us make out a plan



now and list the various demands. Let us try and see if we can come to a clear understanding. If the terms are just and fair, perhaps the Tigi will be more willing to listen.”

Dr. Selby wrote out the terms of an agreement. The men listed their demands and argued certain points.

Annie was growing restless, for Sue had been holding her too tight. She began to wiggle and move in Sue’s arms, putting her head first on one side and then on the other and looking as if she were trying to figure out what was wrong. Sue put her lips close to Annie’s ears and breathed, “Keep still, Annie. It just can’t last much longer. I’ve been in a knot so long I’m about to die myself, but we mustn’t get Dad into trouble. He’d be so mortified in front of those men if we both crawled out now.

Why, oh, why did we have to fall asleep under here and why did they have to come so early?"

At last the general remarked, "I think that what we have now worked out is very satisfactory."

"Yes, it is," said the Tibetan. "I think it is fair and reasonable. Now I have just one more suggestion to make. I think that Dr. Selby should be the one to present this to the Tigi."

"That is what I have been thinking too," said the general. "Will you do this for us, Dr. Selby?"

"No," answered the doctor. "I do not think I am the one to do it. I have tried to help in this conference because I am interested in building a better feeling between the two countries, but this other is too much responsibility. There is so much chance of failure if the right one does not go on this mission. The Tigi does not know me and might not even be willing to see me. I think one of you should go."

That could not be. It would not be considered fair, for it had to be a neutral party and it would be best if the person could speak both languages. "You can speak both languages so well, and what is more, Doctor, you have the sanction of the Living Buddha as a middleman and interpreter. That fact alone will carry a great deal of weight with the Tigi, and you are trusted by the local people. Your reputation for kindness and fairness has traveled far. I'm sure he must at least know of you. Please consider doing it," pleaded Lo Zong.

"Yes," said the general, "you are the only one I would sanction with entire satisfaction. I only know two people in this part of the country. Please think it over seriously and grant us this favor. We already owe you a great deal for helping us work out the peace terms, but if you do this, we will be indebted to you forever."

Finally the doctor accepted the responsibility, for they would not let him refuse. "I will try to do it, gentlemen, but I am not very happy about taking such a responsibility and I want you to understand how I feel, and I only hope I can do it as you want me to."

"Thank you, sir," said the general. "We shall not forget. We must not let one word of our plan leak out, for it would be most disastrous. Parts of a plan are dangerous for they can be so easily misunderstood, and it might start an uprising since the people would not be able to see it as a whole. Let us take an oath not to discuss this with anyone."

"Yes, that is most important," said Lo Zong. "It must be kept a secret until the Tigi has decided, or there will be no chance of peace. Let us swear the oath of absolute secrecy so we may feel sure that not one word will be discussed outside this room until after the Tigi is given every chance to decide on the matter."

"We behead those who are traitors in our country," said General Lu.

"Heavens," said Sue. "Oh, Annie, I guess we'd better swear with them, and don't you dare let anybody know you've been in on this conference today." So Sue and Annie joined the three men silently when they took the oath.

"Please tell the Chinese general for me," said Lo Zong, "we do much worse to those who forget an oath than merely cutting off their heads. That is too quick. It does not give them time to think much. We tie them to a post so that everyone who has been betrayed may come and cut off a small piece. That way the man has a long time to think of his sins before he dies."

The general smiled. "I see. That is a good idea."

"Dr. Selby, now I will tell you just where the Tigi is located. It is a secret, but I know where he is. This is not even for the

general's knowledge," and Lo Zong gave the doctor careful directions as to the exact location of where the Tigi could be found and the pass word. "Your trip up there would take about five days. His plans are not to make a move for about ten days, but you had better plan on leaving as soon as possible, for he might change his mind and make a move sooner if he thought his men were ready. Good luck to you, White Uncle, and I thank you from my heart for going. We will not forget."

"I hope I can succeed in carrying out the mission, but I cannot help but worry, for it is so important to build for peace."

The men pushed back their chairs and stood up. General Lu bowed to Lo Zong and Dr. Selby. "Good-by," he said, "and thank you both. I am deeply grateful."

"Good-by," said Dr. Selby. "Remember, I will try, but do not blame me too much if the mission is not successful."

"Of course I will not blame you, but if anyone can do it, you can," and the general departed with his men.

Lo Zong lingered for a moment longer. "I just want to tell you again, White Uncle, how much it means to me that you will do this. We trust you and even though the Tigi does not listen, I will feel as if we have done our best. May the Gods protect you and give you wisdom. War now would mean starvation and suffering to every man, woman, and child in the country. It would be terrible."

"Yes, I know that," said Dr. Selby, "and I shall try to leave in a day or two at the most. It will take a little time to get ready."

"Good luck, my friend," said Lo Zong. "It seems strange that I should feel as if I can call you friend, for I usually do not like the foreign devils and resent them," he smiled. "But Gigi was right. You are different."

“Thank you, Lo Zong,” said the doctor. “Good-by,” and the men went out together.

“Glory be, we can move now,” said Sue.

“*Ghrrh, ghrrh, cluck,*” said Annie, as if to say, “Well, it’s about time.”

“If it had lasted one more second, I would have died, and I’m not sure I can move,” said Sue, as she tried to stretch her legs. “It sure hurts. I had to keep trying to draw up smaller and tighter to keep out of the general’s way. He had the longest legs I’ve ever seen. Honestly, if he had stretched another half-inch it would have all been over. Ouch! Gee! I don’t think I’ll ever be the same again,” and Sue and Annie, looking very bedraggled and worse for the wear, crawled out from beneath the desk.

“Oh, Annie, isn’t it wonderful? They certainly trust Dad. I’m so proud of him. They told him all those important secrets and plans. He knows more than anyone else in the country now except the leaders. Annie, don’t ever breathe a single word of this. Remember, we took the oath. Even if we hadn’t, the very idea of being tied to a post and everyone cutting off a piece would keep me still a hundred years. Just to think about it makes my stomach feel like it did once when I was kicked in it.”

14

THE ACCIDENT

DR. SELBY'S PLANS to go to the Tigi were never carried out. The morning before he expected to leave, Sue was sitting on a bench in the courtyard studying. She was waiting to recite to her mother when she could spare a minute between patients. Shensi startled her when he ran across the courtyard toward the treating room and called, "Missee Selby, Missee Selby."

"Yes, Shensi, what is it?" Mrs. Selby asked without looking up, for she was just finishing putting a bandage on a patient's sore arm out in the dispensary.

"Come quick, Missee. Dr. Selby hult bad."

At the sight of Shensi's frightened face, she cried, "What, Shensi? What do you mean?"

"He fall from loof."

"Oh, gracious," cried Mrs. Selby as she ran ahead of Shensi back toward the house. "He was here just a moment ago, for we were working on that girl together."

"He bleeding plenty bad. He go up top side loof," panted Shensi as he tried to follow her, his hands twisting at his white apron. "He bling down one big hatchet. He fall on hatchet and cut leg."



Sue let out a little cry and followed her mother and Shensi back into the house. They found her father lying on the stone floor at the foot of the notched log which served as a stairway to the roof.

“Oh, John, whatever in the world happened?” cried his wife.

“I missed the top step on this doggoned notched log. I think I’ve cut an artery, Jean.”

“Well, let’s see,” said his wife. “What in the world were you doing up on the roof?”

“Well, I went up there to get some of my things in the store-room. I didn’t pay much attention how I was carrying them. When I started down, my foot slipped on the second step and I fell on this hatchet.”

Mrs. Selby had ripped away a part of his trouser leg. “Oh, John, you’ve got a nasty gash. It’s deep, and right in the fleshy

part of your leg. I'll have to tie off the artery as soon as I can. You're losing a lot of blood. We've got to stop this bleeding right now."

"Sue," said her mother, "listen to me. Run out to the dispensary and bring me the black medicine bag and hurry. Shensi, get me some hot water as quick as you can."

"Can do light away," said Shensi. "Have some in klitchen. Can bling chop chop."

"I think we'd better stay right here, John, until I get this bleeding stopped before we try to move you," said Mrs. Selby.

"Yes, that's the best way," said her husband. "Jean, I'm glad you are a trained nurse. I know you can fix it up all right."

"Well, I can try," said his wife as she worked swiftly trying to get her things ready.

"Here is the bag, Mom," panted Sue as she came running up the steps. "Oh, Dad," and Sue's face showed how upset she felt at the sight of the blood coming from the deep gash in her father's leg.

"Don't look so worried, Sue. It's not much. Your mother will have me fixed up here before we know it," said her father.

"I hope so, John," said Mrs. Selby. "I'll work just as fast as I can."

"Can't I do something, Dad?" asked Sue.

"Yes, you can, dear. I think a pillow under my head would help a lot."

Sue ran for a pillow and knelt to put it under her father's head. "Let me hold your hand, Dad."

"That's a good idea," said her father. "I think that might help. I don't think your mother's going to treat me very nicely."

"All right, John, are you ready? I'm going to tie off the artery now."

“Go ahead, I’m all right,” said her husband. “Sue’s going to hold my hand.”

Sue could feel her father wince, though he made no sound as her mother worked and then took some stitches. “I’m just about through, John. Don’t you think we can move you to your bed now?”

“Sure. I’m glad you don’t have to do this to me every day, dear. It isn’t much fun,” said Dr. Selby.

“I know doctors are the worst patients in the world,” said his wife, “so I’m going to have to be very strict with you, John. Please don’t even try to move. You’ve lost a great deal of blood and you know very well what it means to cut the largest artery in your leg.”

“Oh, Mother, I don’t think it will bother me long.”

“Now, John, be sensible, please. I’ve had a hard enough time stopping the blood as it is, and you know it’s doubly hard if it gets broken open again, for I am only a registered nurse and not a genius. With another hemorrhage you could bleed to death.”

“I know, I know, but I don’t think we need to worry about that,” said Dr. Selby. “I’m pretty tough.”

“Sue, go tell Andru and Shensi I need them both to help me get your father to his bed.”

After Dr. Selby was finally settled, he said, “I guess I lost more blood than I realized at first. I feel as weak as a kitten.”

“Dad, what were you doing up on the roof, anyway?” asked Sue.

“Great Scots!” said her father with a start.

“No, John, don’t get excited. You must lie perfectly still. What’s the matter anyway?” asked his wife.

“But, holy catfish, Jean, I almost forgot until Sue reminded me about being up on the roof that I have to leave on a trip in

the morning. I was up there to get my things together.”

“Well, you’re not leaving on any trip in the morning,” said his wife.

“But, Jean, I’ve got to go. It’s important. They are depending on me. I could fix it if it breaks loose and I don’t think it will. If it did I think I could stand it for I’m pretty strong.”

“I don’t know what trip you are talking about,” said his wife, “but, John, don’t be silly. You’re not going to be able to move for at least four or five days yet. It would be perfectly ridiculous to get up and ride a horse now for that would certainly break the stitches loose, and it would be worse next time. It’s too far toward the back. You couldn’t even reach it.”

“But, Jean, what am I going to do? I promised those men at the conference I would go. Can’t we do something? I’ve simply got to go.”

“No you don’t have to go, John. Sue and I can’t get along without you. I’m sorry it had to happen and that you can’t take this trip, but no matter how important it is you aren’t getting up. I’m in charge of the case, and you’re my patient and please don’t get so excited. I’m sure it will all be all right.”

“But, Jean, I don’t know what to do and something’s got to be done.”

“Well, could you talk it over with Gigi? He might be able to help.”

“No, it can’t help much. The way it is no one can help me very much. You’re sure, Jean, that we can’t do something?”

“John,” said his wife patiently, “you know as well as I do that if you had a patient who was cut as deeply as you are, you wouldn’t even consider letting him move out of bed.”

“Well,” said Dr. Selby in a discouraged tone of voice, “I guess you’re right. Maybe I better talk to Gigi. We might be

able at least to get a message to Lo Zong. That would help a little."

"Do you want me to go after Gigi for you, Dad?" asked Sue.

"It's getting pretty dark, dear. Maybe your mother can send Andru."

"Yes, I will send Andru for him right away, but this is where a telephone would come in handy," said Mrs. Selby. "It's hard yet for me to realize that there isn't one in this whole country."

Gigi came right over. "I'm so sorry you were hurt, White Uncle. I hope that you will soon be all right. Is there anything I can do?" he said with deep concern in his voice.

"Oh, I'll be all right, Gigi, but the trouble is that I have to stay quiet for a few days and that is what is worrying me. I promised General Lu and Lo Zong that I would take a little trip and attend to some business for them. Now I can't go and it is hard to know what to do. Do you happen to know where Lo Zong is now?"

"Yes," said Gigi slowly as he tried to remember. "He isn't very far from here. He left town in a hurry that night after the conference, but I saw him just before he went away, and he told me where he was going to be."

"Will you get a message to him right away?" said Dr. Selby. "Tell him that I've been hurt and won't be able to take the little trip as we planned."

"*La-so*, I will do it right away, so please worry no more about it. Just take care of yourself and feel better."

"See, John, there's no need for you to be so upset and worried. It will all work out all right," said Mrs. Selby soothingly.

"Well, I've done the only thing I can think to do," answered her husband. "I wonder what they will do now."

"Please, John, remember you're a sick man. You have to be

quiet,” and Mrs. Selby motioned for Sue and Gigi to leave the room. “Now try and rest for a while, dear, and if you can’t, I’ll have to give you something to make you sleep.”

“It’s too bad about your father,” said Gigi. “I’m sorry he was hurt,” but Gigi saw that Sue was almost in tears and he put his arm around her shoulder. “You must not worry, little one. Your mother will take good care of him, and he will be much better in the morning.”

“Oh, I know Mom will take good care of Dad, but, Gigi, he’s so worried about this trip and if he worries, it won’t help him.”

“Now, now, Su-aye, don’t you get upset. I’ll get word to Lo Zong right away, and it will be all right,” said Gigi. “Good night, and don’t you worry.”

“Good night, Gigi. Thank you for coming,” and as Sue went slowly back up the stairs, she said, “I wonder what they can do now?”

15

CHANGE IN PLANS

“DAD, A MESSENGER just came from Lo Zong, the Tibetan leader. Do you feel able to see him?” asked Sue as she came into her father’s room and leaned over his bed.

“Where is he, Sue?”

“He’s waiting downstairs. I told him I’d see if you could see him.”

“Yes, bring him up. I’m anxious to know what Lo Zong has decided to do.”

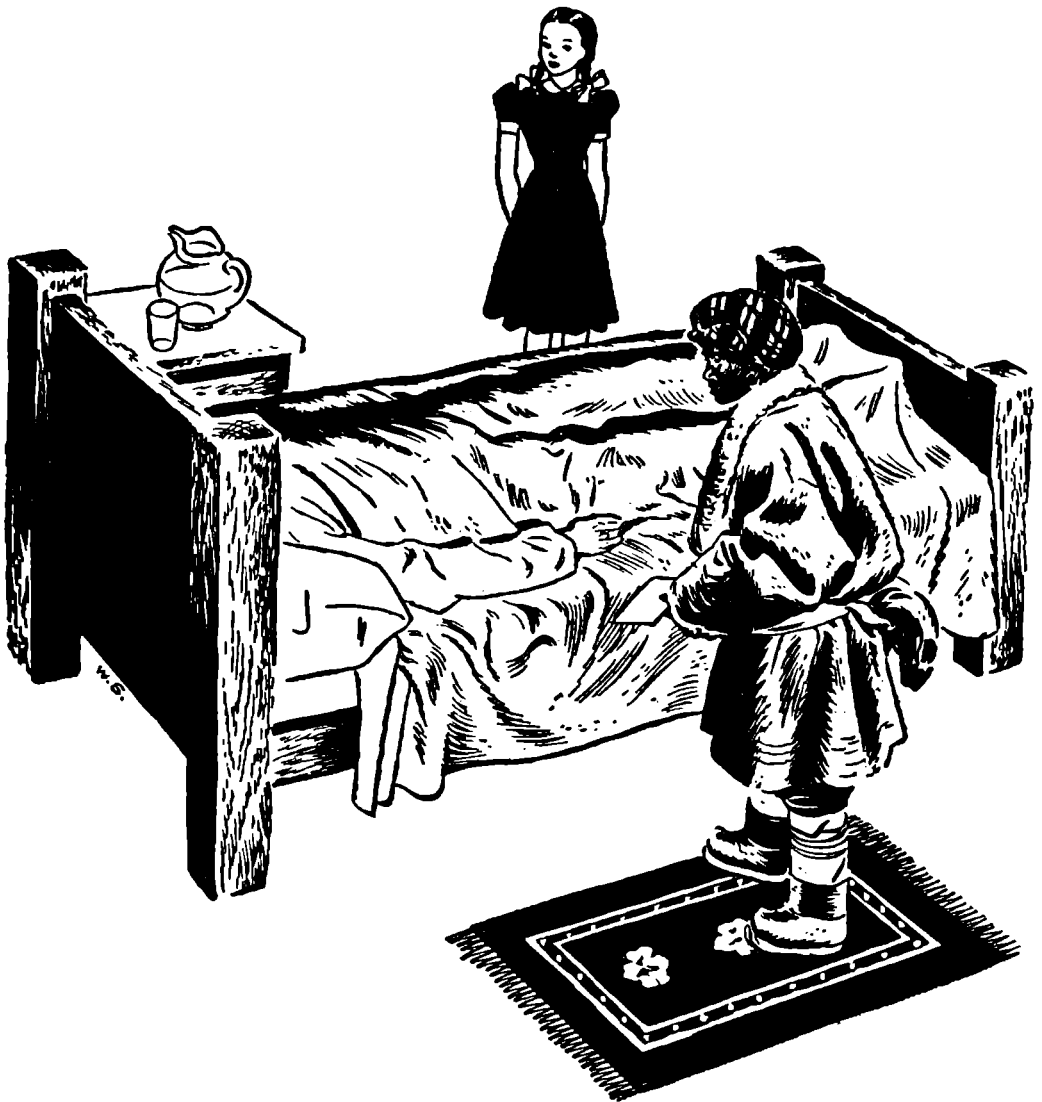
“All right, Dad, I’ll go get him.”

When Sue brought the messenger in to see her father, he bowed and said, **“I am sorry to hear that the master was hurt. I hope that he may be feeling better soon.”**

“Thank you,” said Dr. Selby. **“I’m sure I will be. What is the message you bring from Lo Zong?”**

“I am the one Gezong sent to Lo Zong yesterday after he heard of your trouble. Lo Zong sent me back with this message for you. He said that he felt sorry in his heart that you had been hurt and could not go on this trip. He said he had been so happy that you were going. He did not say just what trip it was, Master.”

“That’s all right,” said Dr. Selby. **“I know, so go on.”**



“He said to tell you that he had had word from the Chinese General Lu that the Chinese were so satisfied with the terms that had been drawn up that he had asked their general who was in the north to meet you at the Tigi’s. He thought it might be possible that the treaty could be signed then. So Lo Zong said he had to get hold of an interpreter and had found one named Ho. He was the only one available at this time, and he is to go in your place to see the Tigi.”

"Oh," groaned Dr. Selby. "Did he say anything else?"

"No, but here is a letter he sent you."

"Thank you," said the doctor. "You may go now."

"*La-so*, may you rest well," and the man backed from the room bowing.

"Sue," said her father, "get Gigi over here as quick as you can. I have to see him right away. You don't mind being an errand boy for me today, do you?"

"Of course not, Dad. I'll go get him right now, and we'll be right back."

"Hurry, dear," said her father as Sue ran out of his room.

When Gigi came, Dr. Selby said, "I just had a message and a letter from Lo Zong. My heart is full of trouble, for it seems that he is sending interpreter Ho in my place to the Tigi."

"The Gods will be angry," said Gigi. "I can think of no one who would be less desirable. He is not to be trusted."

"I was sure that he was the Ho I have heard so much about," said the doctor. "His reputation is certainly none too good."

"You are right, White Uncle," said Gigi. "Lo Zong does not live here so he does not know this man's reputation. He knows only that the man speaks both languages well. That Ho has no scruples whatsoever."

"If nothing had been done, it would have been better than to get Ho mixed up in it," said Dr. Selby.

"I think you are right," said Gigi, "for he is a man that we would say has many faces but no heart. He cares for no one but himself, and he can show a different face to each one he meets. He finds it too hard to speak the truth."

"I had hoped," said the doctor, "that perhaps they could just send some trusted man with the papers I have and hope that the Tigi would read them and weigh the problem himself."

But it seems now that General Lu has asked their other Chinese general to go to the Tigi to hear the terms and, if possible, to sign the treaty right away. That is why Lo Zong had to send some one who could speak both languages. I have the only copy of the terms that were agreed upon, and I am to give it to Ho to take to the Tigi. He is coming by for it tomorrow morning before he leaves."

"A seal on the papers would mean nothing to that man," said Gigi. "He would break it without a qualm and willingly betray either country for money, as he cares for neither one. There is only one thing that means anything to him and that is money."

"My heart is sick about it, Gigi, but I guess there's nothing I can do but give him the papers in the morning."

"No, nothing can be done now," said Gigi sadly shaking his head. "Be sure the papers are sealed well anyway."

"Perhaps this means the end of our dreams for a possible peace," said Dr. Selby. "Never before has there been such a wonderful opportunity for the countries to build a permanent foundation for peace. China was more willing than she has ever been to listen to the Tibetans because she is so concerned with her other war. She needs her men and would be only too glad to withdraw them from Tibet if she felt sure the Tibetans would not plan a rebellion."

"My heart is troubled too," said Gigi, "but you have done your part and can do no more. You must not worry any more. We shall hope for the best," and Gigi left.

Sue had listened quietly as her father and Gigi talked, and she was worried too. Ho was an awful looking man. She remembered seeing him when Nogi had pointed him out to her one day on the street. He was a half-caste, half Chinese and half Tibetan. He was wearing Chinese clothes that day, and his hair

was in a Chinese queue. He had a stringy little mustache. On his head he had worn a small dark skullcap. His mouth looked like a big sneer, and his eyes had seemed sly.

“Now, Dad, please don’t look so upset. Mom will think I haven’t been taking good care of you while she’s been busy with her other patients.”

“Sue,” said her father, “go look in the safe in the other room and bring me the large envelope that’s in there with a lot of papers stuck in it. It’s right toward the front. Do you see it?”

“Yes, Dad, here it is.”

“Now get me my seal and the wax. I guess I’ll have to do as Lo Zong asks and have it ready though it makes me feel like a traitor.”

“Why, Dad?” asked Sue.

“Oh, several reasons,” answered her father. “Sue, be sure that the safe is locked.”

“All right, Dad, I will.”

16

SUE WINS A POINT

SUE LAY VERY STILL. She wanted to be sure that her father and mother were both sound asleep. She waited what seemed to her an interminable length of time. Then she slipped out of bed. She was all dressed, but she had carefully put her pajama top on over her clothes. This she jerked off, picked up her riding boots, and went quietly into the hall and downstairs. On the bottom step she stopped to pull on her boots. Lighting her candle, she went into the small storeroom behind the stairway. Here she found her saddlebags, which she had already packed, and flung them over her shoulder. She opened the heavy front door carefully so that it wouldn't creak. Then she put out her candle and hid it under the step.

Sue crossed the courtyard and found the gate was locked, so she climbed over the fence and was soon out in the cobblestone street. Turning, she looked up at the bedroom windows and threw a kiss toward them. "Good-by, Mom, good-by, Dad, please don't worry too much about me. I'll be all right."

It didn't take her long to reach Gigi's house, for she climbed the hill and walked swiftly down the narrow streets. She pounded on the big door until someone finally said, "Yes, what is it?"

"It's Su-aye. Please open the door. I want to see Gigi."

"*La-so, la-so*, just a minute. I'm coming," and Sue recognized the servant Dendru's voice. "Come in, come in, please," he said to Sue when he pulled the big door open.

"Thank you," she said. "I'm sorry to bother you."

Gigi was already coming down the stairs himself, for the noise had awakened him. "What's the matter, Su-aye? Has something happened to your father? Is his leg worse?"

"No, Gigi, he's all right, and I'm sorry to wake you up, but I just had to see you. Did I wake any of the others?"

"No, I don't think so," said Gigi. "Their rooms are farther back."

"I want to talk to you alone," said Sue seriously, "on an awfully important matter."

Gigi was puzzled, but he led the way into a little room and said, "We can talk in here, Su-aye. What is it? Are you going somewhere? What is the meaning of your riding clothes and your saddlebags?"

"Yes," said Sue, "I am going somewhere and I want you to go with me."

"What?" said Gigi. "I don't understand."

"It's like this, Gigi. I know something very important and I need your help."

"But, little one," said Gigi shaking his head, "what is this all about? Let's start at the beginning. I'm a little confused."

"Gigi, I want you to take me to the Tigi. I want to start right now."

"Oh, come now, Su-aye, are you dreaming? Why should you want to see the Tigi?"

"Because I have something very important to tell him."

"Oh, I'm beginning to understand," said Gigi with a smile.

“You are worried about your father’s business and you think that you can help.”

“Oh, but Gigi, I can. That is what I have to tell you. You remember the day they held the conference with Dad at our house?”

“Yes,” Gigi nodded his head.

“Well, you know Annie often goes to sleep under Dad’s desk.”

“I have seen her there myself,” said Gigi.

“Well, I crawled in under the desk to pet her, and we both went to sleep. You know yourself the men weren’t supposed to come until late that afternoon, but they both came early. When I woke up, they were there already, so I couldn’t get out. I heard everything they said.”

“Oh, Su-aye,” said Gigi with concern, “that might have been most dangerous had you been caught.”

“I know it, Gigi, but I didn’t mean to do it. Then they took an oath of silence, and I took it, too. But after I heard Lo Zong say what the Tibetans did to traitors, I never would have mentioned the fact that I had been there to anyone, let alone tell anything I had heard. But, Gigi, Dad is hurt and can’t go, and now that awful Ho is going. I couldn’t stand the idea of him taking Dad’s place. While I was worrying about it I had an idea. I thought perhaps if you and Nogi would go with me, we might be able to see the Tigi before Ho does. Mom and Dad wouldn’t worry about me if they knew you were taking care of me. And just to have Nogi go along would sure be a big help.”

“Su-aye, I think it is fine that you want to help, but what good would it do? In the first place we would probably never get to see the Tigi, for he is a very important man, and in the second place his location is a secret.”

“Gigi, I know where he is. Lo Zong told Dad.”

“Ho is the official messenger now, Su-aye, and he’ll have all the information and your father’s papers. We wouldn’t have a chance.”

“Please, Gigi, we could try. If we go tonight, we might beat Ho there.”

“Even if we did, little one, we couldn’t do anything.”

“Oh, please, Gigi.”

“But, my child, Ho will travel light and he will travel fast. It would be hard for the three of us to travel as fast as he can.”

“We’d get a long start ahead of him if we would leave right now. I know Dad is convinced it should not be turned over to Ho and is awfully upset about it.”

“Oh,” said Gigi, “does your father want you to go?”

“No-o-o,” answered Sue slowly. “He doesn’t know I’m even thinking about going. I slipped out of the house, for I was afraid my family wouldn’t understand.”

“If that’s the case, Su-aye, of course we won’t go. Your family would be too worried.”

“Oh, they wouldn’t be if you took me. If we leave now, we will be a long way down the road before they know I’m gone. Besides, Mom is so worried about Dad and the other patients she won’t have time to worry much about me.”

“Su-aye, that is not the way a mother’s heart works. No matter how many people she is worried about, she would still have time to worry about her little one.”

“Oh, I know, Gigi, but just think what Ho will do. He will have so much power in his hands and he could have them so angry at each other by his false translation of their words they would be ready to start another war.”

“Well,” said Gigi, “I, too, am worried about what Ho will

do. I would be willing to do anything to keep him from undoing your father's good work as I know he will, but I don't see what we could do."

"Oh, Gigi, we could do something, I'm sure. Please, please."

"Su-aye, you know I would do anything you want me to do to help you, but I don't think going to the Tigi is very wise."

"Well, then, Gigi, I guess I'll try to go alone."

"Now, Su-aye, you know you can't do that. I would not let you do it. Can't we put it off until morning and—"

"No, Gigi, we can't do that. Ho will leave in the morning, and we've got to get started before he does."

"Well," said Gigi, "I guess we better get started then, if we're going to try to get there first."

"Oh, Gigi, I thank you with my whole heart."

"Now, remember, Su-aye, it is against my better judgment."

"You won't be sorry, Gigi."

Gigi paused. "No, maybe not, but it will be a very dangerous trip, I can tell you that now. I can't see that it will do any good. You go and wake Nogi, Su-aye, and tell her to pack her saddlebags for a trip. I'll tell Dendru to saddle the three fastest ponies."

"All right, Gigi, I'll go get Nogi."

"It won't take me long," said Gigi. "I want to go talk to my wife a few minutes and then we can start. Little one, you have won your point this time. May we have as much success in our race against Ho."

"Let's hurry, Gigi. Don't forget to ask your wife to have Latsu go over in the morning and tell my mother that we are going to see the Tigi and not worry."

"All right, Su-aye," said Gigi with a smile, "I will tell her, but I expect your mother will still worry some."

“Nogi, Nogi, wake up. It’s Su-aye,” said Sue, sitting on the edge of Nogi’s bed and shaking her. “Wake up and dress. Your father and you and I are going on an exciting trip. Gigi said to tell you to pack your saddlebags.”

“*Ah-da-da!* It can’t be true,” said Nogi, but she was out of bed and dressing.

“Tell me what you want, and I’ll pack your things for you,” said Sue.

It didn’t take long, and in a short time Gigi, Nogi, and Sue were mounting their horses with the help of a bewildered Dendru. Then the three rode out into the moonlight.



17

A RACE WITH HO

ON THE THIRD DAY of the trip Sue and Nogi were sore and stiff from riding and so sleepy it was difficult for them to keep their eyes open. Gigi had to watch them constantly for fear they might fall off their horses. They had only stopped for a few hours now and then when they could stand it no longer. Then they would fall into an exhausted sleep with their saddles for a pillow and their saddle blankets for their cover. Riding at night was dangerous, for the horses stumbled and fell a great deal and found it hard to stay on the trail. The strain of the trip was beginning to tell on each of them as their dispositions showed an edge of irritability and crossness.

“Gigi, do you think we can possibly get to the Tigi before Ho does?”

“I don’t know, little one. It is hard to tell. We may still be ahead for we have traveled night and day.”

“I don’t know all the reasons you and Father want to beat Ho, Su-aye,” said Nogi, “but I certainly hope we win our race. He has no heart or even a place where it should be. I have seen him torture a little dog for fun. He is a Chinese dog with yellow eyes.” This coming from Nogi was strong disapproval, and though she did not understand the whole situation, she was more than willing to do her part.

“If you can only stay in your saddles as well as you have so far, little ones, we may get there first,” said Gigi. “I want to win as much as you do. If we could only do something to discredit him with the Tigi. That would help. Su-aye, you have made me feel that we are right in trying to do something, but I do not know what we can do even if we get there first.”

“No, Gigi, I don’t think we need to discredit him so much as to be able to prove to the Tigi that we are sincere and want to see things done right.”

The next afternoon as they were riding along, Nogi said, “Father, I’m so thirsty. Can’t we stop soon for some butter tea?”

“No, not for a while, Nogi. We may have to stop at the river to wait for the yaks so we can cross. If we do, we will have some tea then. I talked to a man this morning coming this way and he said the river was very high.”

“What are the yaks for, Gigi?” asked Sue. “We won’t have to wait too long, will we?”

“I hope not, little one, but when a river is high and running too fast, it is dangerous to cross. Yaks are strong, so we drive them into the river to break the current. Then we can ride our horses across just below where the strength has been broken. It will not be pleasant, and you must be careful to hold on to your horse very tightly or you could be washed off.”

At the river’s edge they stopped and ate as they watched the angry river, swollen and heavy from the rains. They needed the yaks, for it was impossible to cross, and Gigi had sent a man for the herd. “Oh, Gigi, it looks awful. Do you think we can make it across?” asked Sue doubtfully.

“I think so,” said Gigi, “if we are careful.”

“Why doesn’t the man come back,” said Sue. “He has been gone ages.”

“Yes, Father, he is a very slow man,” said Nogi.

“You must be patient, my little ones,” said Gigi. “It might be that they are using them to cross the river at another point.”

“You don’t suppose Ho is going across now, do you?” asked Sue with concern.

“I doubt it,” said Gigi, “for we have traveled much faster than I thought we possibly could. Both of you have endured hardships without number. *Ah-da-da!* I have been surprised. I did not dream that you could do it.”

“Do you think Ho might have passed us?” asked Nogi.

“I doubt it, little one, and we may have a fairly good chance to keep ahead if the yaks aren’t delayed too long.” Even Gigi was growing impatient at the delay, and the minutes dragged.

“Oh, oh,” moaned Sue, “we’ve been here hours and hours. Why don’t they hurry?”

The girls began to pace up and down for they could not sit still any longer.

“I do not understand what could be keeping them,” said Gigi, as he joined them in their pacing.

“There they come,” called Sue, as she was the first to see the herd of huge shaggy creatures come ambling around a corner toward them with their long hair dripping with water.

“Can we go right away?” Gigi asked the man who was driving them.

“*La-so, la-so*, we can start right away,” and the man smiled for he saw that Gigi had put some extra money into his hand. “Back into the water you beasts,” he yelled. “Hurry up, we must break the current again,” and the yaks went patiently back into the river.

Sue, Nogi, and Gigi started across to the other side just below them. They were soaked as the horses went under the water and began swimming with only their noses sticking above the surface, and they had to cling with all their might to stay on their backs.

“Gigi,” said Sue in a weak voice, “my hands are so cold. I don’t think I can hang on much longer.”

“Don’t let loose, Su-aye. Not even for a second. The river is too strong,” answered Gigi.

The other side seemed to become farther and farther away, but at last their horses’ feet touched the bank. “Can’t we go right on now?” asked Sue. “I don’t think it would hurt us to ride wet, do you?”

“No, Su-aye,” said Gigi sternly, “both of you girls change your clothes right now. You must not become ill on this trip. Hurry.”

“Everything happens to slow us down,” complained Sue.

“Yes, but remember,” said Gigi, “if we are slowed down, Ho will be slowed down, too.”

“That’s something to be thankful for,” said Nogi. “It has been a trip with too many delays. I hope the Gods will give Ho even more of them.”

Gigi smiled. “It has been a very long hard trip, my little ones, and we have had lots of delays and many many difficulties. The rains and the floods have made it harder and riding at night has been most difficult on us and on the horses. I think it may be easier from now on. As I remember we need to cross the river but once more, and there is a rope bridge there. At least we will not be wet.”

The next afternoon they reached the rope bridge, and here they were delayed again, for a group of people had arrived

just ahead of them and only one could cross at a time. There was a heavy rope stretched high across the river, and around it was a slide with two loops of rope dangling. The loops were slipped under a horse and one fastened back of his front legs and the other just in front of his back legs. Then the rider climbed into the saddle between the loops and pulled them both across with his hands. Neither the horse nor his rider seemed to enjoy it very much.

Sue and Nogi, as anxious as they were to get across, did not wait their turn with much enthusiasm, but Nogi was silent, knowing it had to be. "Do we have to go across here, Gigi? I don't think I can. I'm weak in the knees," said Sue.

"*Nga Nee Ma Nee*," said Nogi, "after what you have been through, it should not bother you. Remember, we are running a race."

"Su-aye, you and Nogi will not be able to pull yourselves across, so I will take you and your pony first," and Gigi climbed into the saddle. "Now, Su-aye, get up here in front of me. You wait here, Nogi, and I'll be back for you."

Gigi took the red scarf he had been wearing around his head and tied Sue securely to him. In the middle of the stream the slide stuck. Gigi worked and worked to get it free. Sue looked down at the foaming white water below and she felt dizzy. Gigi was praying as he worked to free the slide. "I think I'd better say a little prayer too," said Sue. At last their feet touched solid ground again. "Thanks, Gigi, I'm glad we're across. Do you mind going back again?"

"Oh, no," said Gigi, "it does not bother me too much, though I can't say I like to get stuck out over the water."

"Please be careful," said Sue. "I hope you and Nogi won't get stuck."



A few hours later Gigi could see that the girls were desperately tired. "Take heart," he said. "We are almost there. See the city over yonder? That is where the Tigi is. We will soon be there, and it is still early in the day."

"I'm so tired, I could die," said Sue, "and I hope Ho is still behind us."

"I hope he is, too," said Gigi.

As they drew nearer the village, Sue asked, "Gigi, what are all those people over on that flat meadow?"

"Why it must be the army," said Gigi, when they were close enough to see. "They are marching."

"Gigi, do all the soldiers have long hair? This is the first time I've ever seen any Tibetan soldiers in uniform."

"Oh, yes, Su-aye, a Tibetan would never consent to have his hair cut off."

"They look funny," said Sue, "with those caps on, and they don't even have their hair braided, do they?"

"No," said Gigi, "a braid would not fit under a cap. It would make it bulge in the back."

"I wish Dad could see them. They look fierce enough, but it seems odd to think of soldiers with long hair. But," Sue added, "we haven't got time to look at them now. We must hurry on to town. Let's go to the gates of the palace at once, Gigi."

"That will do no good, Su-aye, for the Tigi must be very busy and may not be willing to see anyone."

"Let me try anyway, Gigi. It won't hurt," and they hurried toward the gates.

"No it will do no harm to try," said Gigi, "but do not be too disappointed."

Sue walked up to the gate and knocked. The gatekeeper opened a small window and peered out. For a moment he was surprised at finding a foreign girl. Then he said, "Yes, what can I do for you?"

"Please, sir, I have an important message for the Tigi. Would it be possible for me to see him?"

"No, it cannot be. He is too busy."

"But it's very important," begged Sue.

"I'm sure it must be," the man said patiently, "but you can-

not see him. He told me he did not want to see anyone or have anyone bother him. He is much too busy for interruptions. Now run along. Don't bother me any more."

"When could I see him then?" asked Sue.

"I don't know, I'm sure. Perhaps next week, if you come back, I might ask him to see you and hear your important message," and the man's voice was sarcastic.

"But that would be too late," moaned Sue. "Isn't he seeing anyone?" she asked as the man started to close the window.

"I do not see how that can be any of the little foreign one's business," the man growled.

"But is he seeing anyone today?" persisted Sue.

"Only one man that I know about."

"Who?" asked Sue, giving the impatient man her sweetest smile.

"Ho," he said, and slammed the little door.

"Well, that's something, Gigi. We know that there will be a conference today and that they haven't had it yet."

"How can that help?" asked Gigi. "I must say, little one, you have much determination. I learn of it every day."

"Well, we can still hope that something will happen. Let's go and wander around the streets. Perhaps the Tigi will be going to see his troops with the flying hair and we could speak to him."

"Oh, no, little one," said Gigi. "We would not dare do such a thing. They might think we were traitors or people who wished the Tigi harm and his guards would shoot us."

18

A SURPRISE MEETING

THAT AFTERNOON the three walked to the edge of the small town and sat down on some stones, and no one said a word. A couple of women, apparently from out of town, were talking excitedly as they came near them. One of them said, "She will be coming soon now. She walks this way almost every day. I want you to see her. She is so very beautiful."

"I am anxious to see her. I have heard of her so much. Everyone seems to think she is very fine."

"Yes," said the first, "she is very gracious, and the Tigi adores his wife. Look, there she comes now with some of the other ladies and her two little Pekingese dogs."

"Oh," said the second, "she really is lovely. Her skin is so smooth and just look at her beautiful jewels, those little strings of tiny pearls, that gold charm box and all those rings and bracelets. *Ah-da-da!* I have never seen anything like it."

Sue heard their conversation with little interest until she suddenly realized they were speaking of the Tigi's wife. Excited, she got up and motioned with her head to Gigi and Nogi to follow her. She walked down the road past the women and standing in the middle of the path waited for the Tigi's wife. "My lady, may I speak?" she asked.

The Tigi's wife was extremely startled for a moment to see

a foreign child standing in front of her, and more so that she had spoken so beautifully in her own language. "Yes," she replied, rather doubtfully. "What could you want?"

"I ask a favor, beautiful lady."

"What are you doing here?"

"I have come a long way over many mountain passes and strong rivers because I want to see the Tigi. I have a very important message for him."

"How unbelievable for you, a child, to be carrying important news. I'm afraid you won't be able to see him for a few days, little foreign one," she replied. "He is very, very busy and has a great many important things on his mind."

"Oh, but, my lady, I just have to see him. It means so much."

"You are a very strange child," remarked the Tigi's wife. "I would be glad to help you if I could, but I'm sure he can't see you for at least a few days." At the look of disappointment in Sue's face she said, "but I'll tell you what I will do. I'll try to arrange it so you could talk to him maybe tomorrow or the next day."

"Thank you, my lady, but I am afraid it might be too late."

"By what do they call you?" asked the lady.

"I am Su-aye. My father is of the name of Selby, and I come from Batang."

"From Batang? That is nice. You have just come from there?"

"Yes, my lady, we arrived this morning."

"Perhaps then you can give me news of that lovely village. I have a soft spot in my heart for it. Once when I was a small girl I went there on a visit to see my cousins, and I had a time that was very fine and have never forgotten it. Perhaps you know my relatives. My cousin's name is Della of the House

of Aben.”

“Oh, yes, I know her, and we should be glad to tell you about her,” said Sue. “This is Gezong. He is my father’s teacher, and Nogi is his daughter. They live in the house next door to her home. They can tell you much more than I can.”

“That is nice. It is pleasing for me to hear this. Why don’t the three of you come to the palace in a little while and have some tea with me. Then we could have a lovely visit.”

“Oh, we’d like to very much,” said Sue.

“All right, I will expect you then very soon. I will tell the gateman you are my guests, and he will let you in. Come, ladies, let’s start back now,” and she called good-by.

“Good-by,” called Sue. “We’ll see you soon. Very soon,” she added under her breath, loud enough only for Nogi and Gigi to hear. “Oh, Gigi. Oh, Nogi. We are getting much closer and every little bit can help.”

“Yes,” said Gigi, “it looks as if the Gods in heaven were on your side, Su-aye.”

“No, not my side, *our* side, Gigi.”

A little later when Sue, Nogi, and Gigi knocked at the palace gate the gateman opened the door and greeted Sue as they walked into the open courtyard. “So you do come in after all?” he chuckled. “Well done, little one.”

“Yes, Mr. Gatekeeper, isn’t it nice?” and Sue gave him a smile. “I think this is my lucky day, I mean I hope it is.”

A woman was waiting in the courtyard for them and came to greet them. “My lady asks that the two girls will come up to the roof. It is much lovelier up there, and she thought it might be nice to have your tea outside. There are only to be women there this morning, sir,” said the woman turning to Gigi. “Will you please wait down here?”

“Certainly, I shall be glad to wait here in the sunshine,” answered Gigi.

“Please follow me,” said the woman as she led the way up the first flight of stairs to the first floor where most of the rooms and important offices of the Tigi and his men were located. She took the girls to the stairway that led from this floor to the flat mud roof above and said, “Please go on up. The lady is up there and will be waiting for you,” and the woman made a little bow and started to leave.

“Do you mind if I ask you a question?” asked Sue.

“No,” said the woman a bit puzzled. “I will try to answer.”

“In which room does the Tigi hold his important conferences?”

“That door at the end of the hall is the entrance. The lady will be waiting for you. I will leave now,” and the woman vanished.

“Shall we go on up?” asked Sue.

“Yes, I guess so,” said Nogi.

It was lovely on the roof, for there was a view of snow-capped mountains in every direction. The Tigi’s wife had had a low table and some rugs spread out. The table was set with dishes piled high with unusual cakes and candies. The cups were a brick-red china with silver tops and saucers. It was not long before the ladies were chatting with Sue and Nogi as if they had known them for quite a while.

“It is so nice,” said the Tigi’s wife, “to hear about the different changes that have come in Batang and about my relatives there. It would please me if you would call me Norbo-sterring, for that is my name.”

“Oh,” said Sue, “how lovely. It means precious jewel, doesn’t it?”

“Yes, it does,” smiled the Tigi’s wife.

There was a terrific uproar and commotion downstairs, and Sue wandered to the edge of the roof while the others were busy and looked down to see what it could be. “Oh, it’s a Chinese official,” said Sue to herself. “He must be the general from the north. They are certainly giving him a welcome. That must be the Tigi. It couldn’t be anyone else.”

A rather large man with a round face, wearing a short Chinese jacket, long tight trousers, English laced shoes, and puttees, came out of the palace and went toward the Chinese war lord. He also wore one long gold earring set with turquoise in his left ear and his long hair was fixed in a most unusual manner high on his head. It had been parted in the center all the way back and braided down over each ear. Then it was pulled abruptly to the top of his head and tied in a big knot. His clothes were indeed a strange mixture of the East and West and gave a startling effect. He had a regal bearing and was well poised and gracious as he greeted his guest. The stately Chinese war lord bowed and followed the Tigi back into the palace and up the steps.

Just then the gates opened again to let another visitor enter. It was Ho! Sue recognized him at once. He was overbearing in his attitude toward the servants who helped him dismount. “He knows he’s going to be the interpreter for the most important conference they’ve ever held. He acts as if he owned the world. I’ve got to think of something.” Sue walked slowly over to one side of the roof and picked up a rope that was lying there. “My lady, would you like to learn a game that we like very much in my America?”

“Why, yes, it might be fun,” said the Tigi’s wife. “Is it hard to learn?”

“No, it is easy. I’ll show you. Nogi, come here and help me, please.” Then Sue whispered as she drew Nogi aside for an instant. “Don’t say a word. Just do exactly as I say.” Aloud she said, “Turn the rope as we have done it before.”

Nogi nodded.

“I think this would be the best place, don’t you, Nogi?”

Nogi nodded again as they turned the rope together.

“Now see how it is to be turned?” asked Sue of the ladies. “Which one of you will take my place and turn it for me. I will show you how to jump it.”

“I should be glad to turn it for you,” said one lady.

“Now, watch me while I jump it for you. It is really lots of fun,” and Sue with her short skirts flying jumped rope as if it were the most glorious fun in all the world. Nogi wondered how Sue could jump so high and so long, for she was stiff from the long hard trip. “Now, one of you ladies come and try,” said Sue, and, laughing, the different ones tried it. It wasn’t long before Nogi saw a man come running up the stairs and start toward them with an angry shout. Then he stopped short, bowed, and went back down without a word. “That was peculiar,” thought Nogi. “I wonder what he wanted. I guess he was afraid to say what he started to say when he saw the Tigi’s wife.”

However, in a moment another head appeared. “May the Gods be kind,” said Nogi. “The Tigi himself is coming up here.”

“Norbo,” he said sternly, “what in the name of heaven is going on up here? I’m having a very important conference downstairs, and you stand right over our heads making noise after noise. It will have to be stopped.”

Before his wife could answer, Sue ran up to him and said,

"I am sorry, my lord, for it is really all my fault. I was just showing your lovely lady how to play a game we play in my home country, America."

The Tigi gulped at the sight of the foreign girl, her face flushed from jumping, who spoke his own language. "Where did you come from? Who are you anyway? I did not know there were any little foreign ones in our country."

"Please, sir, I am Su-aye. I am Dr. Selby's daughter, and I come from Batang to bring you an important message."

"You bring an important message for me? All right, I'll see you another day, but remember, no more noise," and the Tigi started back down the stairs.

"Please, sir, I must see you right now."

"In a little while, maybe," the Tigi said, "I am busy now, little one."

Sue followed him down the stairs. "Please, please, listen to me. I—I have some papers for you."

"Go on back to your play and leave me alone. I promise you I'll talk to you in a little while."

They were almost back to the study now, and it would be too late. "Please, sir."

"Go on, go on," the governor said impatiently, motioning her away with his hand. "Can't you understand that I have many things on my mind?"

"Don't think I'm trying to be impudent, sir. I'm not. If you will only listen, I can give you a word that will prove that I do know what I'm talking about."

"Tsdén," the Tigi called loudly. "Do come and take this child away. I think she must be a *la-la*."

"*La-so, la-so*, I'm coming," said the man running toward them.

Sue came up close to the Tigi and whispered the word Lo Zong, the Tibetan leader, had given her father to use as a pass word to the Tigi. "What? What was that you said? Say it again in my ear so I may be sure," and the Tigi leaned down.

"Shall I take her now, sir?" asked Tsden.

"No, no, go away," said the Tigi sharply.

"*La-so, la-so,*" said the man backing away bewildered, wondering if the master had become a *la-la*, too.

Sue stood on tiptoe and whispered the word again into the Tigi's ear.

"It is the *word*," he said, astonished. "How did you learn it?"

"And I know much more, if you will only let me come into the conference. I will tell you then."

"You want to go to the office and tell what you know in front of those important men? I don't understand. Do you have no fear?"

"Yes, sir—no, sir, but please let me go in with you," pleaded Sue.

"It would be breaking all precedent, but I cannot keep them waiting any longer. Come in, but be quiet. When we are finished we may let you talk," and the Tigi entered the room with Sue following at his heels.

The mouth of the dignified severe-looking Chinese war lord dropped open at the strange apparition of the white girl. It was incredible. A girl, a foreign girl at that, in a military conference. "Maybe I am seeing visions," he thought, and he rubbed his forehead with his long fingers, but could not utter a word.

Ho's eyes were crafty. What did this mean? Could this be Dr. Selby's daughter? It must be, but why was she here?

The Tibetan priest who was the Tigi's personal advisor was

perturbed and decided that perhaps it would be wise to say a few prayers, and he started to mumble softly.

The Tigi walked with full dignity back to his chair behind the desk and faced the men. It was a trying situation to uphold his position and yet allow this child to come into the conference.

“We will go on with our important work,” his voice was stern. “I am sorry that time has been wasted.” And Sue was left standing just inside the door. “Ho, will you proceed with your report. I believe you had just said that the Chinese gentleman was interested in peace, but only at a certain price. You said that he was demanding a certain sum of money to take his troops from my country.”

“Yes, sir, that is what he just finished telling me, and I told it to you in your own language,” and Ho stood up.

“Will you please ask him again just what the sum was that he required?”

Ho turned to the Chinese. “Sir, the Tigi wishes to know how much you will pay him if he does not fight. He says you know that his army has been winning and that it should be a very large sum to make him withdraw his troops.”

“I beg your pardon,” said the Chinese war lord. “I did not come here to be insulted. I came here because General Lu sent me a definite understanding that a peace plan had been worked out between himself and a Tibetan representative. I came because I thought we could discuss the terms and sign a treaty right away. I did not know that he expected to be paid any money. My country needs me, and I would like to be able to leave in a short time. I cannot understand this change in attitude.”

“Oh, you know how these Tibetan barbarians are,” said Ho patronizingly. “They never know what they want.”

“What is the sum the Chinese general is asking?” interrupted the Tigi.

“He says, your honor, he wouldn’t consider a cent less than ten thousand rupees.”

The Tigi’s face was livid. “If I could only speak his language just long enough to tell him what my thoughts about him are, he would learn a few things. I understood they were the ones who wanted to consider some sort of an agreement to settle our difficulties amicably. I did not know that money had been mentioned. Tell him for me that I have never been much interested in this idea of a peaceful settlement. My men have been winning, and I can easily force the last Chinese dog with yellow eyes out of my country in little time. Tell him to please leave before I lose my temper and have him cut into bits. Where are the papers on which the agreement was written? I’ll show him what I think of his ideas for peace on a mercenary basis.”

“I have them right here,” said Ho tapping his pocket.

“Give them to me,” demanded the Tigi.

“I will for five hundred rupees,” said Ho silkily, “and then you can tear them right up and have a fine revenge on the Chinese gentleman. It would cause him to lose face. It would insult him. It would serve him right, but you know I have to make a little money. I can’t do all this hard work of interpreting so many words for nothing.”

“All right, all right, I’ll pay, but give it to me now. You interpreters certainly have us at your mercy.”

The sly smile on Ho’s face as he reached for the papers was too much for Sue. She stepped up quickly and snatched the envelope from Ho’s hands. Ho snarled. “You little foreign devil. What business is this of yours?” and tried to take the papers back.

"Oh, please, sir," Sue begged the Tigi, "don't let him take it back, and I'll show you that he has been lying to you."

"Leave her alone, Ho," the Tigi commanded. "It will be better for you, foreign one, if you can now prove your words."

"I can," said Sue seriously. "My father was the one that General Lu and Lo Zong asked to come here. He is the one who helped them draw up the plan for peace."

"It must have been a very fine one," said the Tigi sarcastically, "to demand so much money from the one who is winning."

"That is not true, sir. There was no mention of money in the whole agreement."

Ho jumped up. "Your Honor, you would not be so foolish as to listen to the words of a stupid child, would you? People would think you had lost your wisdom."

"Sit down, Ho. I have reason to think she may know something."

"What is all this foolishness?" said the Chinese. "I think I shall leave. I cannot understand why they listen to the talk of a mere girl. It is certainly most unheard-of behavior," and the Chinese war lord rose from his chair.

"Please, sir," said Sue quickly in her best Chinese, "we do not mean to offend and we apologize for these unusual happenings. If you will only wait for a moment I will prove to both you and the Tigi that this gentleman is trying to deceive you."

More from the surprise of hearing her well-spoken Chinese than at what her words meant, the man dropped back again into his chair.

Ho had not known Sue could speak Chinese. He was caught now, for she had heard his false interpretations. She knew now how he was attempting to extort money from both sides. He ran

toward the door but the priest had been watching him. He reached for Ho and caught the end of his queue. The whole room was caught in a whirl as Ho and the priest went round and round.



“Tsdén, Tsdén, quick.”

“Yes, sir,” the man who was acting as guard came through the door.

“Hold this man and do not let him get away. I want him to stay right here and hear what is said.” Then the Tigi said

gruffly to Sue, "Now, will you continue?"

"Yes, sir, if you will open this envelope I took from Ho."

The Tigi opened it. It was full of blank papers. "Five hundred rupees for this, you—you—you" The Tigi could find no words.

"Now here is the real agreement my father drew up for General Lu and Lo Zong," and Sue handed him a second envelope. The Tigi opened this. He said, glancing at it, "This is the official one, all right."

"Read it, sir, and I shall try to explain a few things to the Chinese gentleman."

"You little foreign devil. I might have known better than to have anything to do with foreigners. They cannot be trusted," muttered Ho under his breath.

"That will be enough from you. Do not speak again," the Tigi sharply reprimanded Ho. "You have little to say about trust."

Sue tried hard to explain the whole situation to the Chinese. He was not at all pleased at first, but Sue told him her whole story and finally managed to soothe him until he grudgingly said that he would stay and discuss the agreement for peace. "A strange experience," the war lord muttered. "The strangest I have ever had. A girl in a war conference! And she has all her information because she went to sleep with a chicken," and he almost smiled.

Sue took up the task of interpreter, and both the men realized how Ho had tried to trick them, that not one word of his interpretation had been true. He would have taken the money for himself. "We have a very good way to take care of traitors," growled the Tigi, and Sue shuddered as she remembered what Lo Zong had said.

The men were satisfied with the agreement and signed a temporary treaty until the final copy could be made for each of them. The priest witnessed their seals.

“You may go now,” the Tigi turned to Sue and dismissed her. “Be sure to come back tomorrow morning. I want to know just how you happened to have these papers and to discuss a few other little matters with you.”

“Yes, sir, I’ll be back,” and Sue went out, both troubled and relieved.

19

NGA NEE MA NEE!

GIGI AND NOGI went through the gate and to the very door of the Tigi's office with Sue. Here Gigi said, "We can go no farther, little one. We will wait for you out in the courtyard. Our good thoughts go with you."

"Oh, Gigi, why do you suppose he wants to see me? Do you think he is mad about me taking the papers? I'm scared, Gigi."

"I think it will be all right, Su-aye. Don't worry."

"All right," said Sue. "Well, here goes," she swallowed hard, straightened her skirt, and then knocked on the door.

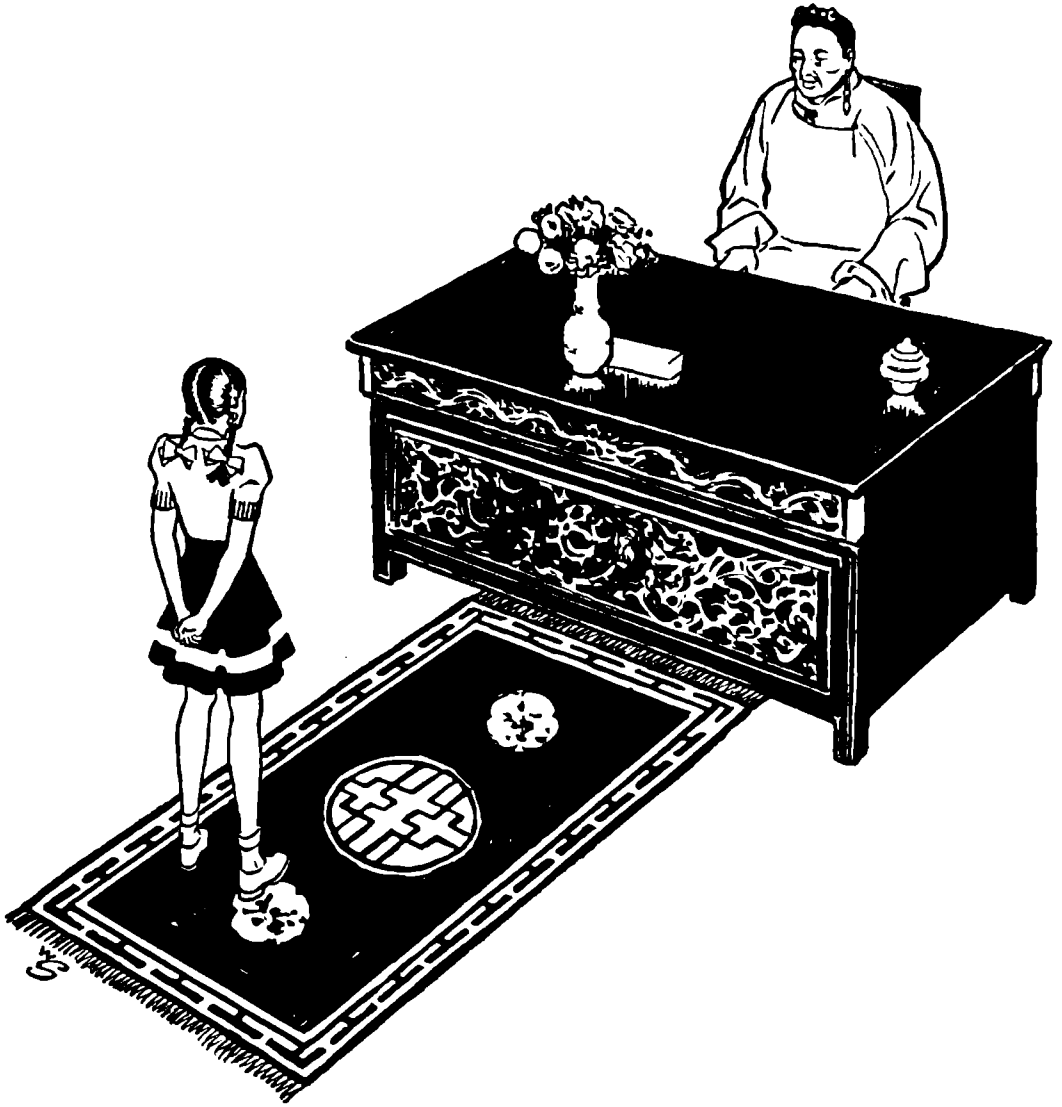
"Come in," said the deep voice of the Tigi.

"Yes, sir," and Sue pushed open the door. The Tigi was seated behind his desk and did not look up for a moment. Sue waited, her hands clasped tightly behind her back, wondering what was going to happen. Her knees were weak. Finally the Tigi looked up and smiled at Sue. It was about the grandest thing she had ever seen. She managed a weak smile in response.

"Good morning, my child," said the Tigi. "How do you feel today?"

"I'm—I'm—I—a—I'm fine, th-thank you, s-s-sir," Sue stuttered.

"Oh, come now, you aren't afraid of me, are you?"



“Well, I—a, I—a w-was at f-f-first, but I-I don’t think I-I will be p-pretty soon. I-I-a just can’t seem to talk very well, s-sir.”

“Sit down, little one. I’m really not as much like an Evil Spirit as I seemed to be yesterday. I’m really very harmless as far as little girls are concerned. I had a little daughter of my own once, but I lost her.”

“I’m sorry, sir.”

“It was a long time ago,” said the Tigi, “but that reminds

me why I asked you to come here this morning.”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, first I want to ask you to forgive me for seeming so severe and harsh yesterday afternoon, but you know you were here on official business, and I could not treat you any differently than I did the others.”

“Oh, oh, thank you, sir. I’m glad that was the reason. I understand.”

“Am I forgiven?”

“Why, of course, sir,” answered Sue with a smile.

“Now, the second thing is that I want to express my personal gratitude for what you did. It means much more than I could ever tell you, but just know that you and your father have done something fine and brave and that the people of Tibet have much for which to thank you. The few of us who know about the whole thing will always be grateful in our hearts.”

“Dad did most of it, sir. I just helped out a little when he got hurt, and I couldn’t have done a thing if Gigi and Nogi hadn’t helped me.”

“Who are they? Oh, I know. They are your friends from Batang. You are a nice child to give credit to others. Now, third, I have a little gift for you. It belonged to my little girl. You have proved yourself both brave and honest, so I want you to have this little turquoise ring. It may serve to remind you of our friendship.”

“I don’t need anything, sir,” said Sue quietly, “to remind me of that. I won’t ever forget it.”

The governor smiled and went on, “We believe here in my country that every person old or young should always wear a piece of turquoise. It is a charm and will bring the person happiness. We believe that it takes on the color of the wearer’s

heart. The stone that belongs to one who is kind and good will turn to a true pale blue, but the one that belongs to a bitter selfish person will grow dark and green. This may seem strange to you, little one, but it is really true. I want you to have this, for I'm sure your heart is kind. The stone should grow more beautiful the longer you wear it, my child."

Sue slipped the ring on her finger, and though she could find no words, her eyes said all that was needed.

"And, fourth," the Tigi went on, "I wanted to tell you that I have arranged for a company of men to escort you safely back home to Batang. I'm also sending along a few yaks carrying some gifts for your father and mother. The gifts are very inadequate, though, and can never express even a small part of how we feel. Oh, yes," he added, "and I have some things for your friends, Gezong and Nogi."

"How can I ever thank you, sir. You and your wife have been so kind to me. I'm happier than I've ever been in my life. Everything's so wonderful. *Nga Nee Ma Nee!* Sir, I can't seem to find any words that will say just what I would like to say."

"I understand," said the governor smiling. "I have felt the same way many times myself," and the Tigi rose and came around his desk. "Shall we shake each other's hands as I have heard it is your custom to do in Emerika?"

"Oh, yes, sir," and Sue held out her hand. The Tigi pumped it up and down with enthusiasm, not just sure how it should be done.

"Good-by, little one. Please think sometimes of your Tibetan friends when you go back to your home land, will you?"

"Good-by, sir. I shall think of them often, and I promise I shall never forget."

THE A-YEE PLANS A PARTY

THE A-YEE was in a hurry! She went down the hall with her cane beating sharp notes on the floor. When she heard the voices and laughter of the servants as they lingered over an early breakfast she walked even faster and her shoulders stiffened.

She pushed the door open into the kitchen suddenly, and yelled, "Aren't you lazy stupid ones through eating yet? Half the day is almost gone and here you sit as if there was nothing to do. Let me tell you there is more than enough to be done today," and her voice rose high with impatience.

The servants gulped the last of their hot butter tea and stood up and each murmured, "*La-so, la-so*, my lady, we are finished now."

She gave them their orders in sharp tones, gesturing with her hands and waving her cane. "Now go on, all of you, and get busy. Don't you let me catch any of you shirking. If you do not do your work well today, may the Gods have mercy on you, for I certainly won't have.

"Dendru, when you open the guest room be sure it is cleaned more than well. Leave not one speck of dust, or I'll feed you to the vultures."

"*La-so*, yes, my lady." Dendru bowed as he followed the others out of the room.

"And you, Latsu," the old lady said turning to the servant girl, "Listen carefully. I want you to cook the best dinner you have ever cooked in your life. Try to cut your noodles fine as thread. We will feast tonight."

"Yes, my lady," the girl answered.

"Remember," the old lady added sharply, "you are not to spare anything. Use the best of everything we have."

"*La-so, la-so*, my lady," answered the bewildered Latsu shaking her head. *Ah-da-da!* What was the matter with the old lady this morning? She certainly wasn't herself.

"Well, now I think everything has been attended to," sighed the old lady to herself, as she sat down heavily on her high-backed wooden chair. "That is, all except to hear how my grandson Gaden came out with the message I sent him to give."

"A-ye, A-ye." That was Gaden back already. She could hear him running up the steps two at a time.

"Yes, my son," answered his grandmother. "What is it?" Her eyes twinkled at the sound of the excitement in his voice.

"A-ye, I—I—gave the white ones your message," he puffed.

"Well, are they coming to my party?"

"Yes, they are, Grandmother, but they were most surprised about your inviting them here."

"I thought they might be a little," the old lady said with a chuckle. "But tell me, how was the white doctor's leg this morning?"

"He said he was feeling much better, A-ye, and that it was most kind of you to make the arrangements for the men to carry him over here. He said he thanked you with his heart

and that he was sorry to cause you so much care and trouble," Gaden answered.

"Oh, that was nothing," said the old lady with a wave of her hand. "I just didn't want them to refuse my invitation."

"And, Grandmother," Gaden went on, "neither one of them could believe it. They had a hard time understanding what you wanted. They kept asking me over and over if I was sure I had your message right. They thought I had made a mistake."

"Did you finally convince them?" asked his grandmother.

"Yes, A-ye, I t-h-i-n-k I did. After I told them that you had sent a messenger yesterday to father telling him to come right here to the house with the girls because the welcome party was to be here, they finally decided it must be true!" He added, "I told them I was surprised myself."

"That's funny, everybody being so surprised. Really! No reason at all to be." The old lady laughed as she gazed out of the window. "Of course, I want them to come. They were first my son's friends and now they are mine too."

"Grandmother," said Gaden with a stutter, "Did—did—you say the foreign ones were your—friends?"

"Why, certainly," his grandmother answered with a royal fling of her head. "Why not? They are very fine people. Gaden, if you are not careful your eyes are going to come right out of your head."

"Yes, Grandmother," answered the puzzled Gaden. "Do you mean you really like the foreign ones?"

"Certainly I do," said the old lady sternly. "And don't you ever let me catch you again calling them foreigners, or you'll be sorry. They are strangers no longer."

"Oh, sure. Oh, all right, Grandmother," said Gaden. "But I wish I'd wake up. I know I must be dreaming."

“Oh, no you’re not dreaming,” said the old lady. “You’re wide awake. And let me tell you something else. I love that little white one almost as much as I do my Nogi! She has a brave heart and has done a great deal for our people already. She has a charm all her own.”

Here the A-ye added with a nod of approval, “In fact she is very much like myself! So I know she will always find excitement wherever she is. Yes, our Su-aye has proved herself. And she will find more exciting adventures waiting for her here in our country of the Blue Mountains.”



