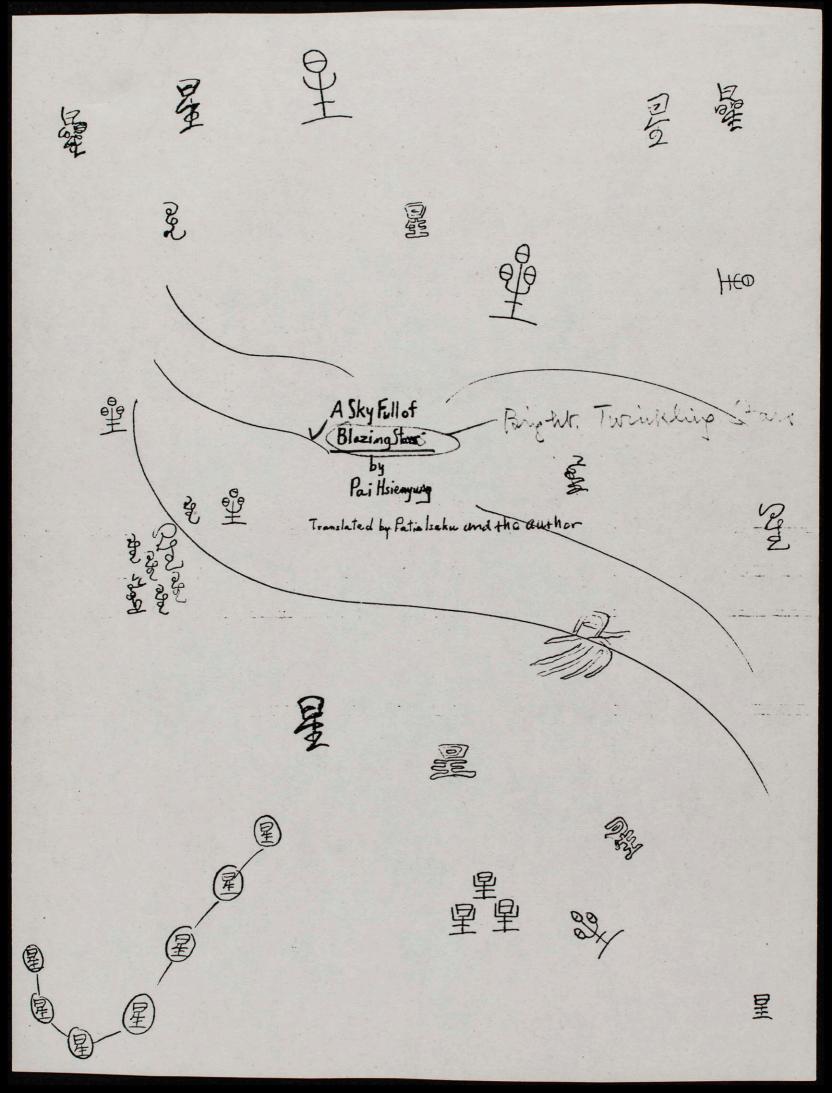
## A SKY FULL OF BLAZING STARS

p.1-14



It's always, like this every time, every time, always, he would wait in until all the blazing stars in the sky gradually darken and go down one by one, he leans back against the stone balustrade around the lotus pond in New Park and begins to recite those ancient tales of his.

Maybe it's one of those stifling hot days in July or

August; the ramblers in the park linger on and on, unwilling

to leave, then we start to circle hurriedly around and around

on the terrace surrounding the pond, treading on each other's

shadows. In the thick, torrid darkness, here a tuft of

white hair floats, there a ravaged bald head sways; a

stooped silhouette, anxiously, on the prowl, shuttles to and fro,

until the last pair of eyes filled with desire vanishes

into the murky grove; then, only then, do we start our

gathering. By that time our legs are so exhausted we can

hardly raise them.

We all call him the Guru. An Hsiung the Primitive says that among his people, the aborigines, at the season when the first spring rain comes all the youths run naked into the rain and perform the Spring Sacrifice Dance,

always Every time, there will be a white-haired, white-bearded elder who presides at the altar as the Chief Priest. Once we Dark-andthrew a dance-party at . / Handsome's house in Wan Hua and Ah Hsiung the Primitive got drunk, he tore off all his al dance for the clothes and started his tribe's Spring Sacrifice Dance. dark and wild, with muscles strapping The Primitive is a big, dark, wild lad, his whole body Julging Toprouting much body. through the air sprouting muscles. The leaped around and flew about with abandon, his large aborigine eyes rolling on his face like acting coach two balls of dark fire - our directing teacher, Old Man Mo, for the movies says Ah Hsiung is a born martial-arts-movie star all of us watched him, mesmerized, then, yowling and roaring we all threw our clothes off and joined in his Spring Sacrifice Dance with him. We danced and danced suddenly lark-and-Handsome sprang onto the table, waving his snakelike body like crazy; in a voice piercing as a young cockerel's (all belong to the cult of the he declared, "We are the Spring Sacrifice Sect!" Wen you is there anyone who Think about it who besides him has the qualifications

to be the Guru of our Sect? Sure, maturally, he belongs to our grandfathers' generation, yet there are plenty who roam among those night-sprites in the Park Who are far ahead

abruptly, raised a forbidding finger and waved it at us violently

followed Guru and called him Crimson Flame; the turned

"Che yen? "Crimson Flame? Did you say Crimson Flame? -

He died a long time ago!"

We all began to laugh; we thought he was drunk, and the had downed more than he could trold that That night, indeed, Guru was intoxicated. Alis hoard hair stuck out in all directions, quivering in the wind, his eyebrows close-knit, the three lines in his forehead turrows so deep on a tran ever, sunk even deeper Have you ever seen that? The lines erson's face? It's as though etched with could be so deep. As if they had been gashed by a sharpthe straight lines, across pointed knife, three of them right there on his broad, that high brow, one under the other, so deep they darkened

He was tall, broad-shouldered; once his carriage must have had an carriage,

been very impressive but now his back was bowed; he was

always wrapped in that old gray herringbone tweed overcoat

madeof of his; as he walked, his coat flapping in the wind gave you a sense of infinite desolation. But those strange eyes of his --- what did they resemble, after all? In the dark, two orbs of burning emerald, they sent forth a flame that Lamps refused to die, like eternal lights in an ancient tomb.

"What are you laughing at?" he shouted at us. "Do you think you're going to live for ever?" He walked over and poked Ah Hsiung the Primitive in the chest. "You think you've got a strong body, huh?" He chucked Dark-and-Handsome under the chim. "You think you've got a pretty face, do you? Think you'll all live till you're forty? Fifty? Some people live long, see, like him — "He pointed at all fortune-teller, the kind who toes it by graphology ist, who was

an old man dozing off at his table by the Park fence.

"He can live until his beard drags along the ground, until there's nothing left of his face but a few dark holes—

Chan yeu

he'll still be alive! But crimson Flame died early;

1930, 31, 32"— he laughed coldly, counting on his fingers

- "Three years, he only lived three years: T'ang Po-hu?

Every one of them rushed up to call him, but the moment the carrier of them rushed up to call him, but the moment the carrier of them yen.

Loyang Bridge' was done they announced 'Grimson Flame is finished! They wanted the Shun Pao to sign his death warrant: 'An Actor Whose Artistry Is Dead And Gone.'

They not only pushed him into the well, they dumped stones in only of him. Buried him alive! Didn't even give him only a chance at a last breath — "

\* the leading newspaper in Strangton in those days; whose its

As he was suppose there words
All at once his hands closed around his throat,

his eyes bulged, he uttered stifled sounds, his face
turning purple; he looked frightful, as if someone were
about to strangle him. We all broke out laughing,
we thought he was acting; Guru had a terrific talent all
right; no matter what role he played, he made it real.

Dark-and-Handsome said Guru could have become a famous
director, but he took to drinking all the time; and besides
the was headstrong full of fierce pride, he offended all the
big stars, so a first-rate film never came his way.

"Like this! It was just like this!" Guru let go
of himself. "Little brothers, you don't know what it's
like to be buried alive, it's as if someone had you by the
throat and you couldn't utter a sound, but you could see
their faces, you could hear their voices, you could see them
shooting straight at you with the camera under the klieg
lights; and you? Your pulse beat slower and slower, and
one by one your nerves deadened, with your own eyes
you saw your limbs rot away piece by piece—

And that was why Soll gritted my teeth and told my White Horse Prince, Charmup 'Son, you must show them, for my sake!' Chiang Ch'ing was didn't let me down. a good boy; Treally can't blame him. The day Loyang Bridge Grand Theater me in Shanghai, the crowd premiered at the was so big it stopped the traffic on Rubbling Well Road. in his robe of sea-green silk and astride The minute he came galloping onto the screen on his white horse in his seagreen silk robe I heard myself cry out in my heart, Crimson Flames lives again: Crimson Flame lives again, To remake 'Loyang Bridge! I staked everything in a scene, I owned when I was directing him once I slapped him across his face and left five bloodred marks. But is there anyone who knows how I cherished him? Crimson lame's White Horse Prince they all called him. He was born to be a great star; there was a kind of angelic quality about him - little brothers, don't you think you're such charmers: not one of you has it!" He went round the circle pointing at us; when to the boy made a face and Dark-and-Handsome s turn Dark-and-Handsome sneered; we all roared. Dark-and-Handsome thought he was some hot shit

boots; he was only 5'5" where was he going to find an foreign dame american woman short enough to co-star with him?

"But why? Why?" Without warning, Guru caught

Ah Hsiung the Primitive by the arm. Ah Hsiung started;

laughing, he struggled to free himself, but Guru held him

fast, his head, hair white unruly, butted against Ah

Hsiung's face. "Why didn't he listen to me? 'Son,' I

said, 'you're a genius; don't, don'D ruin yourself.'

The first glance, I knew Dandelion was bad luck: That Junque

injured; and on top of that she became Heavenly Unity & Studios.

emeralds of eyes flashed so that sparks seemed to leap from them. Ah Hsiung freed himself; panting, he ran back to us. Guru leaned back against the stone balustrade, his head slightly bowed; a big lock of his white hair slipped forward and hung there. Behind him the enormous yellow moon was languidly sinking behind that row of coconut trees on the west side of the pond. In the pond the lotus flowers and lotus leaves breathed out waves of fragrance with increasing intensity. Dark-and-Handsome stood on tiptoe, stretched and yawned; we all began to drows.

Brok Style:

To we use asterisks to

There was a period, several months, when you couldn't

find a trace of Guru in the Park. Within our circle there

were all kinds of rumors; they all said Guru had gotten himsel

arrested and put in prison by the police from the Fourth

Precinct; and not only that, he was booked on a morals

charge — all this was spread around by one of the Sanshui

Street fancy boys The way that little fancy boy told it,

me that night, after he left the Park as he passed through

Westgate Square he can into Guru in the China Plaza arcade;

"That schoology was some gargeous? !" the little fairy smacked in his lips. Aguru looked absolutely oline drung; he could hardly walk. He was swaying from side to side, trying to catch up with that student and ask him if he wanted to be a movie star. At first the student tried to get way, and he kept turning around and laughing; at the corner, Guru caught up with him; he threw his arms around him and hugged him, mumbling "Loyang Bridge," mumbling (White Horse)

"Prince of the student cried out in panica a big crowd gathered plater the police came.

One night, we finally saw Guru appear in the Park again.

That was a most unusual summer night for two months there
hadn't been a single drop of rain in Taipei. The wind was
hot; the stone balustrade in the Park was hot; those lush,
fertile tropic trees hazy with sultry smoke; the lotus flowers
in the pond smelled so sweet the air tasted sticky. In the
dark, thickening sky the moon —— have you ever seen that?

Have you ever seen such a lewd, demonic moon before?

Like an immense ball of flesh, bloodshot, floating up there, flesh-red. In the Park human shadows flickered, circling around wildly like the images on a revolving lantern. Dark-and-Handsome was sitting on the stone balustrade, decked out in a tight-fitting scarlet T-shirt, Bermuda shorts Head in the air, legs swinging, he was showing off and sandals. like a little peacock with its tail spread for the first time. He'd just landed a role in "Dawn of Spring," director In front of the eaveras the first time in Old Man Mog this was his debut; he was so cocksure he'd) was so satisfied with himself he damin near forgotten who he was Bul Ah Hsiung the Primitive dian hand over the laurels he seemed to be trying to steal the Aceue, (show from Dark-and-Handsome. Snug in a bright purple Thai silk shirt that turned the upper part of his body into an inverted triangle, his white denim pants so tight they looked painted onto his bulging-sinewy legs, his steel belt-buckle as big as a goose egg, flashing like silver, his whole body burst with saturated maleness, tinged with the primitive wildness of the aborigines.

When he sat next to Dark-and-Handsome, for sure they were the most eye-catching pair in the Park; but that gang of

Sanshui Street fancy boys simply refused to be daunted; forming groups of threes and fives, their arms around each others' shoulders, their wooden clogs clicking, they marched to and fro on the terrace as if they were demonstrating, humming amorous melodies. When a fat, bald-headed foreigner made his way over, in a loud Hawaiian shirt furtively, searchingly, approached, Trazenly hailed him with a the fancy boys devil-may-care chorused "Hel-lo!" A Just When the excitement in the Park was at its height, out of nowhere emerged Guru; his appearance was so sudden everybody was astounded, awestruck all at once they fell silent and quietly watched Guru's huge silhouette move up to the terrace; he wore a bright brand new pale blue flue and shings sharkskin suit he was unusually well-groomed it made his shock of white hair all the more striking, but he carried with such effort, as if he limped from a wound.

He'd probably gone through a lot in prison, you know; the police could be very cruel sometimes, especially to people inside on morals charges. Once a little Sanshui Street fairy hooked a wrong customer and got arrested;

the police really fixed his wagon but bad; when he got out he was so scared he lost his voice; when he saw people, the only thing he could do was open his mouth and go ah, ah. People said he'd been beat up with a rubber hose. Guru dragged his feet along heavily, with great dignity, step by step; eventually he made the stone balustrade at the end of the terrace. Alone, he stood there by himself against the balustrade, his white, unruly head uplifted, his tall, lanky silhouette jagged, imposing erect, ignoring the whispers and snickers buzzing around him. In a moment excitement returned to the terrace. The night was deepening; steps grew more urgent, one by one their shadows searching, exploring, yearning. Guru stood there alone. Not until that flesh-ball of a red moon went languidly down did he leave the Park. When he left he took a Sanshui Street fancy boy along with him. The boy was called Little Jade; he was a pretty-faced little thing, but he was a cripple, so not many people paid attention to him.

around the boy's shoulder, the two of them, one tall, one small, supporting each other with their incompleteness, they limped together into the dark grove of Green Corals.

EDITOR'S COMMENT:

(TITLE)

"Blazing Stars" is of course not a correct translation, A Its image is "hot",

"fiery", etc. (as in the phrase: to go out "in a blaze of glory"; there is even

"Blazing Stars" is of course not a correct translation, A Its image is "hot",
"fiery", etc. (as in the phrase: to go out "in a blaze of glory"; there is even
a striptease artist whose stage name is "Blaze Starr"!) I suppose it is purposely employed here to echo the hot, sultry, sex-laden atmosphere down below
(p.1 "stifling hot days", "torrid darkness"; p.2 "balls of dark fire; p.3"Crimson
Flame"; p.4 "burning emerald; p.10 "hot", "sultry"; p.11 "bloodshot"", "flesh-red".)

But I have a different reading of the symbolism: Each time the Guru tells his story he does not begin until "...the stars...dareken and fade out one by one". This seems to me poses an effective contrast between what's going on in Heaven and on earth; past glory & idealism vs the destitution and Walpurgis Night of the present; or (as Ouyang Tzu puts it) the spirit and the flesh—the latter explicitly symbolized by the "lewd, demonic moon" that is "like an immense ball of flesh" (pp.10-11). If this is true, then I think we should translate to "Bright, Twinkling Stars". This is not only literally, correct, but also reflects the hard, clean, gemlike quality of the stars, as against all the murky softness represented below. Further—if it is not stretching the imagination too much—"A Sky full of Bright, Twinkling Stars" inevitably reminds people of the nursery song "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star", suggesting innocence as against the corruption in the world of the "night-sprites" roaming New Park. Innocence in corruption, and vice versa, is a theme found in such stories as Henry James' "Turn of the Screw" and in Gatsby.

P. 1 ... gradually darken and go down one by one (Changed to <u>fade out</u>. Seems not only better wording, but also, by using a cinematography term, prefigures the background of the **chi** main character in this story.

D 3

"Crimson Flame, the Mute Lead"--First of all, you know I'm always leery of translating the meaning of a person's name, because we cannot do it uniformly with all names; also, while sometimes helpful (as in feminine first-names) it often leads to confusion and over-exaggeration. I think this is a case in point, especially when the name is repeated several times later. True, the transliteration "Chu Yen" loses something, but I consider that one of the minor hazards in translation. One way is to explicate it with a footnote, which I'd object, with the Chinese movie stars especially, the names often involve a pun--perhaps can further be interpreted as the property of the signifying the ephmeral quality of youthful beauty. If that's the case, even translating it "Crimson Flame" would be inadequate and we'd need a double footnote!

Incidentally, wherever necessary, without hurting the ex texture of the writing, I've interspersed a word or two here and there to make the background of the story more intelligible. For instance, on this page:

- ...the <u>biggest</u> star <u>under contract with</u> the <u>Star Motion Picture Corporation in Shanghai</u>
- ... some of the old movie directors' homes
- ...a star of the first magnitude
- ... in the role of ... in the film classic

P. 7

- P. 7, line 3 I added the word: <u>our</u> 'Loyang Bridge' (preferably in italics) to distinguish it from the first mention of 'Loyang Bridge' on p. 5. Otherwise, the reader will find it confusing--\*\*thexweendx%\*\*\*\* in spite of the word "remake" which appears 6 lines later.
- P. 7. Line 11-12 My phrase Mwas there ever a one who knew..." may sound a little odd, in which case change back to "anyone".
- P. 7, last line "hot shit", too strong. Original is: \$ \$\hat{2}\$.
- P. 8 I'm uncomfortable with <u>Dandelion</u>, but can't think of a better way out. Couldn't we at least say <u>Dandelion Chen</u>, to personify it?

#######

Dear Patia:

I suppose Kenneth Pai will forward this for your reference along with the revised translation. I'm sorry—I don't know what moved me to write such a long memo to a comparatively short story; I hope it doesn't present any problems.

Earlier, I heard from Kenneth that you had been ill. I trust you are completely recovered now, and getting more and more acclimatized to your human and physical environment in Taipei.

I'm telling Kenneth that I'll make an effort and get the two remaining stories--"Bygone Days" and "State Funeral"--wrapped up in Feb.

With wrmest regards, and take care of yourself!

Jeorg 2/ 1-26-80 高先生、

Dear George:

I got the revised translation of the "Bright, Twinkling Stars," bless their hearts and yours! this Saturday, and hasten to return it to you and Kenneth. Your long and gorgeous memo not only didn't "present any problems," it made me very happy. "The two remaining stories" — it seems hard to believe there are only two left. I can wait to see them, with difficulty! (I can hardly wait to see them.)

Thank God and everybody, I am indeed getting more and more acclimatized to my human and physical environment in Taipei, though I'm not completely recovered from illness and a battle fatigue of longer standing and greater grounds than I realized. But this is a fascinating place! Everybody's fascinating, including us furriners.

Really, "Bright, Twinkling Stars" is so beautiful now, thanks to you. "Prince Charming" it is! I can't begin to tell you how moved I was. God bless you! and thank you. It is wonderful. Kenneth says you've promised to write an editor's note, and that delights me, too. The whole English version is full of your divine sparks and rare understanding. HAPPY CHINESE NEW YEAR! to you and your family.

With warmest regards, and take care of yourself!

Patra 2/11/80

一月廿二等季"隔天禮夢藏之好是之"堪已建變。 好的附上"思露斑"的改器。飞篇也很短,至且 屏潭演鬼来很顺,没有多大的超。星光我看了 篇首始声风, 未免吃馨(盆篇昭子我是心曲溪 之前,至未翻阅过),且以前我零任表示过,业接 運用是图偶光,很难评奶, dualour 更平然况 她就里只好,不但Indiana那也好人会抗议,一 假美网旗中也到莫名其物。但供收的图党 是一个图象,而且已经老女保好 level g poech 也沒有什么别好方法可以使电更为逼真。因此 我没有另用,尽过满有奶节吃老一芝生用好。 此外有心处地方,粉燥过火,即邢波 verbal werkill,我也没在把包改过来,希望有实界的 平凡R Judiana 18 Ilving Lo 再别好了方是流 某。此境地和 Reo hee 及 I'll by John fallway- ft TO (ER 4-24=) 都要到D·C·韦·左了AAS闽军, 重要跳战攻裂。我想你已与老意,不会事间全 吧?很多般,只剩最少一篇,短额办一定可以 323! (For Ran 电影像 向此为历建度出场, 我是你此战手中也有两届,我过我没说多多的个作私战难十分!)的军事回去!