

To the Storm: The Odyssey of a Revolutionary Chinese Woman Study Guide

To the Storm: The Odyssey of a Revolutionary Chinese Woman by Yue Daiyun

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Plot Summary

To the Storm by Yue Daiyun and Carolyn Wakeman is the fascinating story of Yue Daiyun, a faculty member at Beijing University. Yue Daiyun was a revolutionary from her early school days. She had been a child during the anti-Japanese war and hated the Guomundang. Accepted as a student at Beida in 1948, she joined the Communist Party's underground Democratic youth League and became a Party member the following year and helped with the Liberation of Beijing.

While a student at Beida, she served as a delegate at the Prague 2nd World Student Congress in 1950 and worked in the countryside on land reform in 1951-52. Then she graduated from Beida and became a faculty member in the literature department. She married her husband, Lao Tang, the day after their graduation. He obtained a faculty position in the philosophy department. Both were loyal to Chairman Mao and the goals of the Revolution.

Their lives went smoothly for several years until 1958. Yue Daiyun taught Chinese literature and took part in many activities on campus. She read many Western books and supported the formation of a new literary magazine on campus. This eventually brought her into conflict with the authorities and the beginning of two decades of problems and persecution for her and her family. The Party had encouraged openness and criticism of its mistakes and deficiencies in the system. Yue Daiyun had taken part in the discussions, believing that she was helping to build a better China.

Summoned to a meeting at her department one day, she was denounced as a rightist. She did not understand what she did wrong, but she was quickly relieved of her teaching duties and sent to the countryside to work and live with the peasants for two years. This was the first of her suspensions from teaching.

Both Yue Daiyun and her husband, Lao Tang, were caught up in the persecution and violence of the Cultural Revolution. They had spent two years at a cadre school in Liyouhoz and when they returned to Beijing, Lao Tang was selected to work on a special task force called Liang Xaio. This brought Lao Tang and the group into close association with Jiang Qing and the Gang of Four. When the Gang of Four was arrested, Lao Tang suffered through a year long investigation before being cleared. Throughout this time their family suffered from the persecution of others. In the end, the authorities admitted that they were wrong in their case against her and reinstated her Party membership.

In this interesting autobiography, Yue Daiyun tells her story of the life she and her family lived during these somewhat violent and terror-filled years in China.



Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary and Analysis

Yue Daiyun talks of the birth of her son, Tang Shuang, Chinese legends, and traditions concerning childbirth. As the first male grandson, there is a great deal of excitement in the family. She, her husband and daughter, Tang Dan live with Lao Tang's family on the campus of Beijing University, which is called Beida.

On the day of her son's one month celebration, she overhears her husband telling the housekeeper not to let her see something. Lao Tang tells her she must attend a meeting to be criticized as a rightist. He has known for a month that this would happen and was disciplined for defending his wife. She does not believe however that she did anything wrong and that the problem will be resolved.

The previous spring, the Party encouraged criticism and openness to examine the deficiencies in the system and to improve it. She and some of the faculty and students decided to start a new literary magazine. Then in June, the Party reversed its position on openness. Those who were open under the old policy were now attacked and criticized. Each university department had to identify its rightists and her department had identified five people. At this time Yue Daiyun began her maternity leave.

Yue Daiyun walks to the meeting wondering what she could be accused of. She thinks of her childhood in Guizhou Province and how she came to study at Beida, choosing it over two other schools that had offered her financial assistance. She hated the Gumindang and became a member of the underground Communist Democratic Youth League. She helped proofread leaflets and prepare maps so the Communist's artillery would miss the diplomatic and historic sites in the city. After graduation, she was viewed as a model Party member.

She is apprehensive as she walks to the meeting.



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary and Analysis

At the classroom building, Yue Daigun sees posters attacking her and the literary magazine that she had her colleagues had proposed. She is being labeled a traitor. Eight or nine people speak out against her at the meeting. Her involvement in proposing the new literary magazine, Contemporary Heroes, seems to be the problem. People who she had caused problems for were now causing problems for her. Others were doing the politically expedient thing to secure or maintain their own positions.

Yue Daiyun sits there after the meeting wondering if some of the charges were true. She thinks about her wedding day and how she did not want expensive clothes or gifts. Lao Tang comes to walk her home. After lunch, she sits in her room thinking of the disgrace her parents will feel at her being denounced as a rightist. Her brother, a student in Beijing, told them the news the following week. A phone call later in the day tells her that she must appear at another meeting in two weeks at which her Party membership will be revoked. Lao Tang advises her to be obedient and admit to being a rightist. She remained silent at the meeting.

Three days later, the punishments were announced. It was spring of 1958 and the beginning of the Great Leap Forward. Yue Daiyun was dismissed from teaching and assigned to work in the countryside at a lower salary. She had to leave in two days and that meant leaving her children. Her father-in-law arranged for a seven-month postponement. Yue Daiyun also thinks of the effect on the future of her children of her being declared a rightist. They will have to write the information on every form they fill out. Lao Tang was also working in the countryside which he views as a learning experience.

After the seven month postponement, Yue Daiyun left for the countryside.



Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary and Analysis

Yue Daiyun journeys to Zhaitang where she would work on the commune. She is greeted by Deng Minghua of the Beida economics department and taken to the living quarters. Most of the women treat her coldly. The first night she thinks that she has a bleak future.

As a rightist, her tasks involved more hard labor. The peasants are more considerate of and helpful to her than the women are. An acquaintance from the Beida history department gave her some advice about adjusting to the commune. She decides to do what she has to do in order to return home as quickly as possible.

When the women finished their time in the country, Yue Daiyun was sent to live with a peasant family. She shared a room with an elderly couple. The lodgings were much more comfortable than at the commune and the couple treated her like a daughter. Her labor tasks were now lighter and she came to like life in the country away from the politics and competition at the university.

A second group of sent-down cadres arrived in March. With them was Lao Chen who was Party secretary of Yue Daiyun's department and an old friend. He told her that he felt she would be able to return to the department someday. She also learns that her friend, Lao Lu, had been sent to prison for theft.



Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary and Analysis

The harvest for 1959 was not good in Zhaitang. The peasants had to dig up the planted seedlings to comply with the new guidelines. Her associate, Lao Shi, a rightist was seriously injured in an accident and paralyzed for several weeks and Yue Daiyun helped care for him. Later in 1976, she learned that he died trying to escape to Burma.

For a while, Yue Daiyun tended pigs. She liked this because she could roam for hours in the hills singing songs. She remembers learning the song from Lao Hong, who had wanted to marry her, but she had already met Lao Tang. He had proposed to her before she left for Moscow and Prague.

China experienced a famine in 1959 caused by a drought across the country. The Party began to relax its policies. Lao Wei had his rightist cap removed and coached Yue Daiyun on what to write in a confession. Hers was not strong enough because she couldn't bring herself to lie about her motives. At the Spring Festival Eve in February 1960, the rightists were allowed to hold their own celebration. They sang songs of freedom for which the cadres criticized them. Both the cadres and the rightists were sent to Beijing for the Festival.

When Yue Daiyun arrived home, she found that Lao Tang was out and her baby did not know her. Her daughter was polite but distant. Yue Daiyun was not sure how to act around the visitors that called but noticed that no one from her department came to see her. Lao Tang worked long hours. She felt out of place and depressed during her three week holiday.

Yue Daiyun returned to Zhaitang with a new group of cadres. They all worked in the fields with the peasants. Her rightist cap was removed that summer along with many others. All they had to do was to promise to be loyal and obedient. Both she and Lao Shi are assigned to work at Beida.



Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary and Analysis

Yue Daiyun returned to Beijing in November. She felt that she learned a lot living with the peasants for those two years. Many students who had been declared to be rightists were being returned to the villages. Lao Tang met her at the university and took her home.

The next morning there is a meeting to determine her work assignment. Rightists are not given teaching assignments until they prove themselves. Yue Daiyun and Lao Shi will work writing commentaries on classical poems. Yue Daiyun is happy with her assignment. The students would use the commentaries in the revision of literary history.

Lao Tang's brother marry and the wife moves into the house with them. She is jealous of Yue Daiyun and her education. Life becomes more difficult, after the addition of their baby and a nurse. Yue Daiyun returns to teaching in fall 1962. She teaches composition in the politics department.

In 1963, Tang Yongtang is invited to sit in the reviewing stands with Chairman Mao. Lao Tang, Yue Daiyun and their children accompany him and his wife. Her sister-in-law says that Tang Yongtang was being spoken about for bringing a rightist to the ceremony. He was rebuked by a Party committee. When her father-in-law becomes ill in 1964, Yue Daiyun spends alternate nights at the hospital caring for him. He dies on May 1.

There are three groups at Beida. The first consist of people who were educated before the revolution. The second are educated after the revolution. The third are workers or peasants who had come to Beida for an education after the revolution and either become teachers or Party cadres. These three groups are in constant struggle with one another. There is a Central Committee investigation known as the Four Clean-Ups Campaign which indicated the struggle that would soon occur.



Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary and Analysis

The Four Clean-Ups Campaign gathers momentum in early 1965. Yue Daiyun however is relieved of teaching her composition class. She has assigned a high grade to an essay written by Wang Ming who wrote about government policy mistakes because of the impatience to achieve communism. Her colleagues maintain that the issue is class struggle and this would be the situation she would face in the coming years. She becomes caught in the middle of a power struggle with the education system. Yue Daiyun is again removed from teaching.

Yue Daiyun admits she was confused during the Four Clean-Ups Campaign, not knowing which policies are correct. In addition, the family has to adjust after Tang Yongtang's death. They have to let go of some of the household help which means that Yue Daiyun has to assume some of these responsibilities. Her parents move to Beijing at this time.

In September 1965 Yue Daiyun and a group from Beida go to Xiachongmen to work on the second land reform. She lives with a peasant family and works in the fields during the day. They investigate the functioning of the villages and installed new leaders. The group has to look for counter-revolutionary views and activities among the peasants.

There is also another problem during the cabbage harvest. The workers earn points for the number of cabbages they pick. This incentive system is viewed as a form of capitalist exploitation. Yue Daiyun's group revises the points system but the unhappy peasants stage a work slowdown. They have to allow the harvest to proceed with the old incentive system to finish it.

At Beida, the president, Lu Ping, is investigated for his views and practices. Lao Tang is caught up in this struggle and is being very careful. His chief adversary, Nie Yuanzi, gains national recognition.



Chapters 7-8

Chapters 7-8 Summary and Analysis

Back in Beijing, Yue Daiyun quickly learns of the political atmosphere at Beida. There are posters denouncing Lao Tang. He is under continual interrogation at Beida. A new investigative team has arrived at Beida. Nie Yuanzi is becoming a hero of the Cultural Revolution.

The students have taken to identifying enemies among the Beida staff and students and parading them with waste baskets on their heads and posters pasted to their backs. Yue Daiyun worries about her husband figuring that he is one of the ones being rounded up for parading. That night, he says nothing and just puts his jacket in the laundry basket. The students now demand that the work team leave the university if they do not side with the students. If they side with the students however, the result will be more violence and if they do not, they will be accused of opposing the masses. The opposition to the work team is being orchestrated by Lao Tang's adversaries Nie Yuanzi and Cao Yi'ou.

There is more violence after this June 18 parading incident. Lao Chen is the target of the students in Yue Daiyun's department. His actions are said to corrupt the younger generation. He commits suicide. This is the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

On July 22, there is a meeting at Beida that was attended by Jiang Qing, the wife of Chairman Mao. She calls for the overthrow of the Beida bourgeois academic clique. The work teams are soon recalled and the Beida Cultural Revolution Preparatory Committee, headed by Nie Yuanzi, is formed. Students begin wearing olive green jackets, pants and caps and calling themselves the Red Guards.

In Chapter Eight, the students adopt the slogan 'long live the red terror.' Their goal is to obliterate the four olds, which are old ideas, old habits, old customs, and old culture. The Red Guards are uncontrollable. The house of Lao Tang is a target. Their home is searched with some books being seized and Yue Daiyun's classical music records being broken. At this time, Yue Daiyun burns all of the poems that she has written over the years. Many people inform on others to protect themselves. Her sister-in-law is one of these and as a result, Lao Tang's mother loses her monthly stipend.

Tang Dan has to demonstrate her loyalty to the Cultural Revolution in order to keep her place in her class. She is humiliated by the way her father is treated. Yue Daiyun, concerned about the effect on her children sent them to live with her parents, in another section of Beijing. She is soon forced to bring them back home.

Lao Tang is performing physical labor on the Beida campus. There is an exchange of urban and rural students so there is a great deal of refuse to clean. Yue Daiyun is sent to do physical labor in other parts of Beijing. There are many suicides and murders

during this period. Yue Daiyun's mother dies at this time and she tells of the ordeal of arranging for the cremation.



Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary and Analysis

There is no trip to the hills for Yue Daiyun's family this autumn, as opposition to the tactics of Nie Yuanzi's committee began to form. Instead of being elected, her committee members are appointed by her. This opposition causes two factions to develop at Beida. There is also a movement to encourage independent thinking. Many begin to feel that Nie Yuanzi's purpose is to promote her own advancement. One of the opposition groups is called the Jinggang Mountain Corps.

Both Yue Daiyun's children are acquainted with the opposition Red Guard groups, even though they are too young to be active members, thirteen and nine. Both factions claim to be loyal to Chairman Mao. The two factions in Beijing become known as the Heaven factions, which supports Nie Yuanzi and the Earth faction, which opposed her.

Lao Tang is still being interrogated by his department. Yue Daiyun waits outside sitting on the stairs, in case he is detained. She finds out that she is pregnant and decides to have the baby given the situation, which is a decision that she later regrets. Lao Tang suffers a back injury and avoids being sent to the countryside.

There is intense study of the writings of Chairman Mao at this time. Yue Daiyun's group and other groups are taken to the places in Beijing to read the posters. Loud speakers blared until late at night. Yue Daiyun, like others, is frightened and hoped that she and her family will survive. Their house is located on campus right between the headquarters of the warring factions. Yue Daiyun decides to move her family to a safer location.



Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary and Analysis

Yue Daiyun's family moves to a house on the outskirts of the campus. They share the house with the family of another professor who had been declared a reactionary. The factionalism intensifies and there is fighting in the countryside near the end of 1968. Many students are doing whatever they want in different parts of the country. Chairman Mao keeps calling for unity and the reopening of the universities. Lao Tang and others sign a poster supporting Jinggang Mountain. The support of this group is considered essential to the reopening of the university.

Both factions say that they will work together but each expects the other to concede and so the situation continues to deteriorate. Lao Yuanping leads an attack on an Earth faction building with fire bombs in which twenty-one people are killed. Tang Dan, who is fifteen, says that she plans on joining the Jinggang Mountain group and fighting to the end with them.

Nie Yuanzi's group cuts the electricity to the Jinggang Mountain building, which the students restored. Nie Yuanzi is criticized by Chairman Mao for cutting the power. Chairman Mao brings in workers and soldiers to bring an end to factionalism. The students fight them and Chairman Mao meets with the various Red Guard leaders, criticizing them for the bloodshed and destruction. This helps to quiet the situation and the soldiers and workers are welcomed on campus.

Teams are put into every department as they begin to look forward to reopening Beida. They have to decide who can and cannot teach since so many people have been labeled as reactionary by the different factions. The process of struggle, criticism, and reform is implemented to bring the Cultural Revolution to an end. This is known as the Clean the Ranks movement. They are all ordered to move out of their homes and into the dormitories. Tang Dan and Tang Shuang stay at the home of their paternal grandmother during this period.

While living in the dormitories, they have to attend meetings and identify enemies. Many of those accused have been supporters of Lu Ping. Lao Tang is declared an enemy as one of the thirty-two people that have signed the poster.

After a month of daily struggle meetings, all but the enemies are allowed to return to their homes. They have to return for three meetings a day. Lao Tang is allowed to return home two weeks later.



Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary and Analysis

Chairman Mao decides that the intellectuals should be moved to a cadre school where they can be reeducated by workers, peasants, and soldiers. The Beida cadre school is established at Liyuzhou. Yue Daiyun is offered the chance to remain at Beida. When she hesitates to accept, her name is removed from the list. She wants to get away from the political tension. Tang Dan is also assigned to the countryside and went to Dedu county near the Soviet border. Tang Shuang goes with his parents to Jiangzi province.

The group spends the first month constructing their dwellings. Yue Daiyun sees Lao Tang and Tang Shaung only on holidays, even though they live less than half an hour apart. They have to make bricks to build better dwellings for winter. Yue Daiyun likes performing the menial tasks and being away from the politics of Beida. They all receive their regular pay, most of which is held in a bank.

Yue Daiyun sees her husband and son for the first time after two months. They walk to the town of Tianzimiao for their outing.

In the winter, Yue Daiyun works in the kitchen. She learns how to slaughter a pig for the Spring Festival eve but cannot eat any of it after remembering the slaughter.

In spring, they return to work in the rice paddies. Many of them catch snail fever, a parasitic disease. Despite the hardships, Yue Daiyun is content with life in the countryside.

In 1970, instruction is to begin at the Beida and there will be a branch school in Liyuzhou for workers, soldiers, and peasants.



Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary and Analysis

In 1970, students to Beida are admitted on the basis of recommendations and not entry exams. Many of the students will be soldiers, workers and peasants. In Liyuzhou, ten teachers from the departments of history, literature, philosophy, economics and international politics, are released from their labor. They will eat, work, live, study, and reform their thoughts together. This is known as the five-same-thing-teachers. Yue Daiyun and Lao Tang are both chosen.

They begin to construct facilities and to transform Liyuzhou. Families are allowed to live together. One hundred students arrive. The teachers are more enthusiastic than the students who are skeptical about education without books, libraries, or classrooms. This is an educational experiment. The instructions sent from Beida begin with criticizing the old system. Yue Daiyun is expected to explain how mistakes in the old system led her to become a rightist. They spend two months discussing the wrong approaches in literature.

In October, they all participate in the harvest. In winter, they begin to have the students write three kinds of composition, which are argumentation, narration, and literary creation. They produce their own texts and decide to write a play with a plot in keeping with their theme. The play becomes popular at Beida.

Yue Daiyun and others lead a group to Jinggang Mountain which figures significantly in Mao's struggle for Liberation, but they are involved in a truck accident. They prepare a memorial to the two people who are killed. When Mao calls for rigorous physical training, they begin long marches. They march to the coal mine where Mao organizes the workers and then to Jinggang Mountain. Yue Daiyun notices hostility from the peasants along the march route. The group spends a week in Amyuan.

After their return to Liyuzhou, Lao Tang's mother is ill and he and Tang Shuang returned to Beijing. Two weeks later, in March 1971, all of them are to return to Beijing.



Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary and Analysis

Yue Daiyun is dismayed at the physical condition of the Beida campus that had been vacant for two years. In Beijing, she sees Tang Dan for the first time in two years. She is on leave from the military farm at Heilongjiang and is hoping to return to Beijing. Yue Daiyun and others are doubtful about the current policy but cannot voice their opinions. The new policy is to encourage students to think for themselves.

Both Yue Daiyun and Lao Tang return to teaching. The new policy is to do away with the three separations since the reformers felt that the university is separated from the worlds of practice, politics, and manual labor. Now workers, peasants, and soldiers must be the center of literary works. This is a difficult assignment for Yue Daiyun in her course in the struggle between bourgeois and proletarian literary theory. She does not render her own personal opinions but bases her comments on official policy.

There are rumors about Lin Biao attempting to have Chairman Mao killed. When Lin Biao's plane is out of Chinese airspace, Zhou Enlai orders that it is shot down. Yue Daiyun, Lao Tang and others are disillusioned by the situation and the Party but cannot openly talk about the situation. The emphasis of education shifts from criticism of the old education system to criticism of Lin Biao.

Yue Daiyun has various assignments at this time. She digs bomb shelters and helps train journalism students. She spends six months in Shijiazhuang on this project.

In 1973, the policy of admission based on test scores is reinstated. This policy is opposed by prospective student Zhang Tiesheng. When Yue Daiyun returns to Beida, there is another political campaign in progress and she finds herself criticized. The campaign is abruptly halted after a month amid speculation that the Gang of Four failed in their battle against Deng Xiaoping.

At this time, Yue Daiyun is sent to spend a month with the army unit. In May 1974, she is sent to train another group of journalism students.



Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary and Analysis

Lao Tang is selected to be one of six scholars on the task force known as Liang Xiao. The purpose is to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius. Yue Daiyun thinks that this would benefit her family. These scholars are lodged in the lakeside house with private rooms. He and the group also travel with Jiang Qing in her private train cars. Lao Tang gains national recognition as a scholar as the task force's work is widely distributed and acknowledged by the Central Committee. Since Lao Tang is not sure if the publications are being used against Deng Xiaoping who at one time wanted to leave Liang Xiao.

Lao Tang is a delegate to the Fourth National People's Congress in January 1975. At this time Mao wants Jiang Qing about the Gang of Four. She eventually moves out of his compound at Zhongnanhai and lives in the state guest house. Both Lao Tang and Yue Daiyun worry about the affiliation with Jiang Qing. They also worry about Tang Dan on the military farm.

In Spring 1975, Yue Daiyun is sent to the countryside for six months to help with the wheat harvest. She is assigned to the Heavenly River Prison Farm. The students do not like the policy and want to devote all of their time to academic studies. They feel that the first generation of the Cultural Revolution has not received much of an education.

During the time, the power struggle between Jiang Qing and Den Xiaoping continues. Liang Xiao has become a propaganda tool of the Gang of Four and there is no way Lao Tang could withdraw. Yue Daiyun, at this time, teaches a course on Chinese Literature to foreign students which removes her from the everyday politics of her department.

Premier Zhou Enlai dies in January and Yue Daiyun escorts her father to pay his respects. Her seventy-five year old father is very critical of Jiang Qing. She wants her husband to withdraw from Liang Xiao but it is too dangerous for him to do so. Huge crowds begin appearing in Tienanmen Square to oppose the Gang of Four. Lao Tang warns his family to stay away from Tienanmen Square but on April 14, Yue Daiyun goes out of curiosity. She stays an hour.

The next day violence breaks out in Tienanmen Square.



Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary and Analysis

In 1976, there is an earthquake. The Lao Tang family is unharmed. A week later, Jiang Qing, Chi Qun, and Xie Jingyi appear on campus to ensure the commitment of Liang Xiaio. Their pictures are taken and publicized. Lao Tang obtains frequent doctor's excuses to avoid having to report for work with Liang Xiaio.

Jiang Qing begins an investigation into the events at Tienanmen. Lao Li, a friend of Lao Tang, is critical of Jiang Qing and is betrayed by one of his students. He and Lao Tang vow that they will not betray one another. The charges are dropped.

Chairman Mao dies on September 4. Soon the Gang of Four is arrested. Lao Li tells Lao Tang that Liang Xiaio will be investigated but it will be temporary. The next morning, Lao Tang is ordered to report to Liang Xiaio headquarters. In the following weeks, Yue Daiyun leaves the house only to read the posters.

In November, a criticism meeting is held at the Capital Arena. Lao Tang is on the stage with the others for the hour-long meeting. After that, the Liang Xiaio members are allowed to return home on alternative weekends. When he does not appear one weekend, Yue Daiyun goes to the Liang Xiaio headquarters and finds out that his visit has been canceled and he is undergoing further interrogation.



Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary and Analysis

In the summer of 1977, it is announced that there would be entrance exams for the universities. Yue Daiyun hopes that her children will have a chance to attend the university and can overcome the political past of their parents. Both Tang Dan and Tang Shuang score high enough to qualify for the key point universities. Yue Daiyun tries to secure assurances that Lao Tang's situation will not be held against them. Neither Tang Dan nor Tang Shuang are accepted for university study.

Lao Tang is released near the end of 1977. The group is eventually cleared of the charges of being part of any conspiracy. However, Lao Tang's name is on a list of six Laing Xaio members who are being held responsible for the group's actions. At this time, Tang Shuang applies for the army but is not accepted. Yue Daiyun succeeds finally in obtaining a medical certificate for Tang Dan's transfer to Beijing. She returns to Beijing in July.

Both children again take the admissions tests in 1975. Again, they are not accepted for a key points university. This time, she asks Lao Li for his assistance. Tang Shuang is accepted by the Science and Technology University, a key points university in Anhui province. Tang Dan is not accepted and obtains a job in the Beida library.

There are protests by young people about the admissions practices and the universities are told to expand their facilities. The Liang Xaio list of six names has been dropped. Tang Dan is accepted to the newly expanded Beida affiliate school. Yue Daiyun wants her to study biology but she selects library science and computers. Lao Tang resumes his teaching duties.

Yue Daiyun is told that the rightist case against her was in error. She can also have her Party membership reinstated, which she decides to do.



Characters

Yue Daiyun

Yue Daiyun is the man character of the book. She was born on January 31, 1931 in Guiyang, Guizhou in China. In 1941, her family moved to Huaxi, near Guiyang. She entered Beijing University, known as Beida, in 1948 and became involved in the underground Communist Party Democratic Youth League. She joined the Communist Party in July of the following year. Yue Daiyu took part in demonstrations and in summer 1950 served as a delegate to the 2nd World Student Congress in Prague. In 1951-52, she worked with a land reform team. She graduated from Beida that summer and joined the faculty teaching Chinese literature. In September, she married Tang Yijie, called Lao Tang and the following July, their daughter Tang Dan was born. A son, Tang Shuang, was born in December 1957. Yue Daiyun was involved in different literary activities at Beida and often came into conflict with the authorities. Several times in her career, the first being in February 1958, she was declared a rightist. Her teaching duties were suspended and her Party membership was revoked. She was then sentenced to work in the countryside or to labor. When she was considered rehabilitated, she would receive academic or literary duties. Yue Daiyun was targeted several times for her activities. In October 1969, she was sent to a cadre school at Liyuzhou, Jiangxi, which eventually became a branch of Beida. She returned to Beida in May 1971. The Party finally admitted they were wrong in her treatment and reinstated her Party membership. In the 1980s, she came to the United States to study at Harvard University, being cleared of all charges of having been a rightist.

Tang Yijie

Tang Yijie, known as Lao Tang, is the husband of Yue Daiyun. They married in 1952 and lived with his family on the campus of Beida or Beijing University. His father was a vice-president at the university. Lao Tang had always had a comfortable life coming from an affluent family. He was also a member of the faculty at Beida and taught philosophy. He was sentenced to reeducation in the countryside with his wife. Unlike Yue Daiyun, he viewed it as a learning experience. As a student, he was also active in the Youth League and was criticized for his relationship with Yue Daiyun. He had a distinguished career at Beida being one of the few scholars chosen to work on academic development that would lead to the rank of professor in a few years. Lao Tang supported Lu Ping, the university president during the Four Clean-Ups Campaign and in 1966 was denounced in posters at Beida for his participation in the International Hotel Conference. He was paraded on campus and called a black gang member. Only a serious back injury prevented him from being sent to the countryside. When Mao called for unity and the reopening of the university, Lao Tang and thirty-one others signed a poster hoping this would help in the opening of Beida again. He was sent to the cadre school at Liyouhoz in Jiangxi Province as part of the reeducation project in November 1969. He, Yue Daiyun and Tang Shuang remained at Liyouhoz until March 1971. Both he and his wife



returned to teaching at Beida. In 1973, he was selected as one of six scholars to serve on the Liang Xiaio task force. He was eventually cleared of charges for their association with Jiang Qing. In January 1975, he was a delegate to the Fourth National People's Congress.

Tang Dan

Tang Dan is the daughter of Yue Daiyun and Lao Tang. She was born in July 1953. AT sixteen, she was sent to work in the countryside at Dedu county near the Soviet border. She spent eight years at the military farm before returning to Beijing. She is eventually accepted into the expanded Beida and studies library science and computers in 1979. She married and attended graduate school in New York.

Tang Yangtong

Tang Yangtong is the father of Lao Tang, Yue Daiyun's husband. He had been president at Beida from 1949 to 1962 and then became a vice-president, the position he held until his death in May 1964. He had received his Masters Degree at Harvard University and had lectured at Berkeley in 1947-48.

Tang Shuang

Tang Shuang is the son of Yue Daiyun and Lao Tang. He was born on December 24, 1957. When his parents were assigned to the cadre school at Liyouhoz, he accompanied them there for two years. He was eventually accepted to study at the science and Technology University in Auhui province in 1979. He married and attended graduate school in New York.

Chi Qun

Chi Qun was an important figure in education. He was the head of the Qinghue revolutionary committee and responsible for educational reforms. His purpose was to implement a new educational policy based on Mao's instructions.

Lin Biao

Lin Biao had been one of Mao's comrades during the struggle for Liberation. In September 1971, he masterminded a plot to kill Chairman Mao. During his escape from China, Zhou Enlai had his plane shot down over Mongolia.



Jiang Qing

Jiang Qing was the wife of Mao Zedong. She had taken part in a demonstration at Beida in which she verbally attacked the wife of Mao's second son and supported Nie Yuanzi. She had private railcars in which Lao tang traveled as a member of Liang Xiaio. She was arrested with the Gang of Four.

Lao Li

Lao Li was a friend of Lao tang. He was from Fukien province and had served in the Red Army. He was a faculty member at Renda and critical of Jiang Qing. He assisted Tang Shaung in securing a position at a university.

Nie Yanzi

Nie Yanzi was a member of the philosophy department at Beida and a leader of the Cultural Revolution. She was an adversary of Lao Tag during the investigation at Beida.



Objects/Places

Beijing

Beijing is a major city in and the capital of China.

Beijing University

Beijing University, known as Beida, is located in Beijing and the most prestigious school in the country.

Guizhou Province

Guizhou Province is located in central China, southwest of Beijing where Yue Daiyun was born and raised.

Zhaitang

Zhaitang is a farming community located approximately thirty miles northwest of Beijing where Yue Daiyun was sent to work in the countryside.

Xiaohongmen

Xiaohongmen is a town there hours south of Beijing where Yue Daiyun worked on the second land reform in September 1965.

Liyuzhou

Liyuzhou is located in Jiangxi Province, which is south of Beijing.

Nanchang

Nanchang is a city in South China located south of Liyuzhou.

Anyuan

Anyuan is the coal mine in South China where Mao first organized the coal miners in 1922.



Sanwan

Sanwan is the town in South China where Mao formed the troops that would become the Red Army in 1927.

Jinggang Mountain

Jinggang Mountain is the area in South China where Mao based his revolutionary struggle.



Themes

Politics and Persecution

The dominant theme of the book is the politics and persecution of the time. Yue Daiyun considered herself a good Communist. She was obedient to the Party and tried to do the politically correct thing. She believed in the Revolution and was willing to do whatever she had to for a better China. As such, Yue Daiyun and others were never prepared for what happened. Following the Party's encouraging openness and criticism, she was bitterly denounced by her students and fellow workers and labeled a rightist. She was separated from her family for two years and returned to Beida at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. She and Lao Tang were caught in between the warring factions on the campus. He was denounced and paraded around campus. Their Beida group was sent to establish a cadre school in Liyouhoz where they would work, live and teach peasants, students and workers. Their daughter was sent to a military farm near the Soviet border. When they returned to Beijing two years later, Lao Tang was selected to work on a prestigious task force called Liang Qing. Both Yue Daiyun and Lao Tang hoped their family's problems were over but Laing Xaio worked in close association with Jiang Qing and the gang of Four. When the Gang of Four was arrested, Lao Tang suffered a year of intense investigation and persecution until he was cleared. Neither Yue Daiyun nor Lao Tang ever did anything but try to conform to the Party policy, However, they along with their family suffered through two decades of persecution and being social outcasts.

Fear

Fear is another dominant theme of the book. Yue Daiyun and her family spent two decades living in constant fear and persecution due to the politics of the situation in Beijing. This is why Yue Daiyun was always happy in the countryside even though she was separated from her family. The years of the Cultural Revolution were periods of violence. The militant students basically controlled the situation. They would search people's homes and destroy their property. The faculty members had to sit through hours of criticism and political meetings at which they were denounced by others. The denounced individual would have a waste basket placed over his head and a poster pasted to his back and would be paraded around the area for others to insult. Many were beaten and people from the two warring factions were killed. It was a period of intense fear for everyone and ended when the Beida group was sent to a cadre school in Liyouhuz. When they returned, Lao Tang was appointed to the prestigious Liang Xaio task force. He was gaining national recognition for his work but the task force was associated with Jiang Qing and the Gang of Four. As the political situation changed, Lao Tang was trapped on the task force and couldn't withdraw. The arrest of the Gang of Four led to a year long investigation during which Yue Daiyun worried about her husband, wondering if he was being beaten or under arrest. The family lived with this kind of fear for the better part of two decades.



Sacrifice and Obedience

Sacrifice and obedience are also themes of the book. Yue Daiyun always tried to be obedient to the Party and to the goals of the Revolution. The system did not encourage independent thinking. Independent thinkers were accused of individualism and of being rightists. Yue Daiyun always tried to follow the Party policy. When the Party encouraged openness and criticism, she took part in discussion groups only to find herself labeled as a rightist and sent to the countryside for two years of rehabilitation. She believed the hard labor was good for her and that she was contributing to the Revolution. She could not believe that Chairman Mao or the Party could be wrong, even through the terror of the Cultural Revolution when she watched her husband humiliated and persecuted. When they spent two years at the cadre school in Liyuzhou, she believed that their sacrifice was for the betterment of China. She thought the contact with the peasants, soldiers and workers was good and that they could learn from each other. She and others could never express their own views and opinions openly for fear of being denounced. She and others tried to conform to the current policies whether they agreed with them or not. They were basically obedient out of fear and just tried to survive the times as best they could.



Style

Perspective

To the Storm is the autobiography of Yue Daiyun written by her and Carolyn Wakeman. It is her story of what happened in China during those tumultuous years. The events are told from the perspective of Yue Daiyun. *To the Storm* is the story of what happened when she became a student and then a faculty member at Beida. Yue Daiyun lived through all of the events that are discussed in the book. She experienced the criticism meetings and being labeled a rightist and sent to the countryside for two years of rehabilitation. Yue Daiyun watched her husband persecuted during the Cultural Revolution and humiliated by the criticism meetings and being paraded around campus. She experienced two years of hardship at Liyouhoz and then watched her husband again persecuted in Beijing for his work with Liang Xiaio.

Yue Daiyun lived through the two decades of persecution and fear experienced by intellectuals in Beijing. She watched the effect on her children who were discriminated against because of the pasts of their parents. She is well qualified to write a book of this kind because it is her story of what happened during those turbulent years in China. Nobody is more qualified to tell this story than Yue Daiyun. She was a faculty member in the Chinese literature department at Beijing University where her husband was a faculty member in the philosophy department. She wanted people to know what those years were like for her and other intellectuals.

Tone

To the Storm is written in the first-person point of view with the narrator being Yue Daiyun with the help of Carolyn Wakeman. Yue Daiyun is telling her own story so the first-person point of view is very appropriate for the book. All of the limitations of the use of the first person are operative. The reader is limited to events that take place in the presence of the narrator and learns information as the narrator learns it. The reader does not know of events that occur outside the presence of the narrator, such as what happened during Lao Tang's criticism meetings or his time spent as captive at Liang Xiaio headquarters. They know only of events that occur in Yue Daiyun's presence. In spite of this limitation, the first-person narrative works well for the book because it allows Yue Daiyun to tell her story in her own way expressing her own feelings and beliefs. She explains how she didn't understand the charges against her when she was labeled a rightist. She does not think she did anything wrong and just tried to follow Party policy. As policies change, she explains her confusion in trying to understand what the correct policy is. Yue Daiyun explains the fears she felt for her husband and children during the years of the Cultural Revolution and the effects of Lao Tang's association with Laing Xiaio and the Gang of Four. The subject nature of the book contributes to the credibility of the book as Yue Daiyun discusses her experiences and views. The effect of



the subjective tone is to let the reader know what those years were like for the people who lived through them.

Structure

To the Storm was titled for a poem that Yue Daiyun had written and then destroyed during the Cultural Revolution so it would not be seized and used against her. The book is divided into sixteen chapters, each pertaining to a period in the life of Yue Daiyun during those turbulent years. The chapters for the most part are chronological but events in each chapter jump around in time as Yue Daiyun provides background information on different characters or events, which are informative for the reader.

There are several maps throughout the book which assist the reader in determining the location of the various places in China where Yue Daiyun and her family are sent. There is also a section with pictures which allows the reader to associate names and faces.

The Table of Contents contains the chapter number, title, and page number of each chapter. There is a Foreword by John S. Service that provides background information in China and the Revolution of Mao. In the Preface, Yue Daiyun discusses the reasons of writing the book. This is followed by a section called Chronology which lists the significant events in the life of the author.

There is a Postscript at the end updating the reader on the status of the author and the family after the end of the book. There is a Glossary of names, organizations, and terms that is very useful to the reader as well as a well structured Index that makes it easy to look up information. The book is structured and organized to be informative.



Quotes

"Only later did I learn that Lao Tang had known for perhaps a month that I would be criticized, that he was disciplined for his defense of me, that he had received a serious warning from the Party. In a moment he remarked, his voice breaking, 'As a husband I cannot even protect my wife'" (Chapter 1, pg. 5.)

"Some were simply curious to see what would happen to such a woman, a person who had been sent to the Soviet Union and to Czechoslovakia as a representative of Beijing's students, a person who had been asked to report on her studies as a model for others, a person who had progressed so smoothly to be a high-ranking cadre, a person who had fallen so low" (Chapter 2, pg. 26.)

"It was never said that the sent-down cadres were being relocated primarily to get them out of the way; it was said that in the countryside they would receive education and at the same time organize the peasants, while others would stay behind to organize the students on campus. Supposedly the two tasks were equally important but few believed the official explanation" (Chapter 3, pg. 56.)

"I confessed that I had wanted to do something to distinguish myself and had not been sufficiently obedient to authority but I just could not allege that I had intended to take over the power of the department or that I had wanted to harm the Party. Predictably, the cadres were not satisfied with my confession, so Lao Wei alone had his cap taken off" (Chapter 4, pg. 91-92.)

"Without question, I decided, the positive aspects of those two years outweighed the negative. I actually felt grateful to have learned about peasant life at firsthand, to have witnessed the way the peasants suffer adversity without complaint, and to have experienced a kind of warmth and kinship that my life as an urban intellectual would probably never provide" (Chapter 5, pg. 101-102.)

"Yue Daiyun is a rightist who was dismissed from her job but was later generously allowed to return to the podium. Still she shows no gratitude and instead has tried once again to subvert the Communist Party" (Chapter 6, pg. 127.)

"When I returned from Zhaitang in 1960, I had not been completely without hope, clinging to the idea that the future might be brighter than the past, that I might still have a chance to do something to benefit my country. Returning from Xiaohongmen in 1966 was different, for I could see nothing to strive for, no hope, no future, only suffering" (Chapter 7, pg. 153.)

"I wanted to escape from this environment where intellectuals were constantly abused, where relationships among people were so cruelly antagonistic" (Chapter 8, pg. 203.)



"The revolutionary movement that had begun as an attack upon bureaucratic privilege had by then evolved into a power struggle in the broadest sense, with everyone competing for advantage and trying to carve out a sphere of influence, creating in the process a level of anarchy that in many places approximated civil war" (Chapter 10, pg. 224.)

"Although I could walk to Lao Tang's company in half an hour, we were allowed to visit each other only on holidays, which at the start of our stay in the countryside came very infrequently" (Chapter 11, pg. 258.)

"The leader of my teaching group instructed that as part of the student's orientation, I would give a talk explaining why I had become a rightist, why I had opposed Chairman Mao's literary thought, and why my former attitudes had been dangerous and harmful. As I listened aghast to this suggestion, he continued to say that my life had followed a zigzag course and that I had made a big mistake, one that could now be used as a valuable lesson for the new students, an example of how the old educational system had led people to become enemies of socialism" (Chapter 12, pg. 278-279.)

"In the cadre school I had been obliged to fabricate an explanation about how I had opposed Chairman Mao's view of literature, and now I must teach the virtues of the model operas when I knew that workers, peasants, and soldiers were not perfect, and that the more we insisted on their flawlessness, the more people would distrust the new literature" (Chapter 13, pg. 305.)

"Impressed by the group's prestige and by the prospect that it would dictate policy for the whole country in the movement to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, I had not the slightest premonition that membership in this elite body would ultimately bring disaster instead of benefit to my family" (Chapter 14, pg. 323-324.)

"During the Cultural Revolution his fate had been shared with many others, but now in the whole country there was only one Liang Xiao, only thirty-two individuals to bear the brunt of the people's wrath and resentment. It was said that this would be the last struggle, and I feared it might be the most terrible of all" (Chapter 15, pg. 358.)

"I would join in the efforts to rebuild the Party, convinced that whatever its past mistakes, it alone could lead China forward. I was far less confident of success than in 1949 and far less certain that I could contribute, but I knew that I had to try" (Chapter 16, pg. 387.)



Topics for Discussion

Why was Yue Daiyun sent to work in the countryside at Zhaitang? What was the purpose of her reeducation? Why did she require reeducation?

In what way was Yue Daiyun caught up in an internal struggle within the education system during the Four Clean-Ups Campaign?

Why was Lao Tang considered to be a black gang member? How did his problems at Beida begin? What role did Nie Yuanzi play?

What was the Cultural Revolution? What was its purpose? How was it ended?

What was Lao Tang's relationship with Jiang Qing and the Gang of Four? How did he become involved with them?

Why were Lao Tang and Yue Daiyun so concerned about the future of their children being affected by the pasts of the parents?

Were Yue Daiyun and Lao Tang victims of circumstance? Do you think they deserved the treatment they received?