



Heroes of China's Great Leap Forward : Two Stories /

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editor

Political fiction

Electronic books

Monografía

Heroes of China's Great Leap Forward presents contrasting narratives of the most ambitious and disastrous mass movement in modern Chinese history. The objective of the Great Leap, when it was launched in the late 1950s, was to catapult China into the ranks of the great military and industrial powers with no assistance from the outside world; it resulted in a famine that killed tens of millions of the nation's peasants. Li Zhun's "A Brief Biography of Li Shuangshuang," written while the movement was underway, celebrates the Great Leap as it was supposed to be: a time of optimism, dynamism, and shared purpose. A spirited young peasant woman, freed from the restrictions of home life, launches a canteen and wins the recognition of authorities and the admiration of her husband. The story-and the film that followed it-made Li Shuangshuang the greatest fictional heroine of the Great Leap. In contrast, Zhang Yigong's short novel The Story of the Criminal Li Tongzhong, written two decades later, was one of the first works published in China to suggest a much darker side to the Great Leap. A village official leads a raid on a state granary to feed starving peasants; he is later arrested and dies a criminal. Although Zhang stopped short of portraying the horrors of famine, his tone of moral outrage provides a rejoinder to the triumphalism of "Li Shuangshuang." The stories are accompanied by an introduction to the Great Leap and portraits of the two writers, including their recollections of that traumatic time and the creation of their very different heroes

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