

A Poem by Chairman Mao Tse-tung

Reply to Kuo Mo-jo

— to the Melody of *Man Chiang Hung*

On this tiny globe
A few flies dash themselves against the wall,
Humming without cease,
Sometimes shrilling,
Sometimes moaning.
Ants on the locust tree assume a great nation swagger
And mayflies lightly plot to topple the giant tree.
The west wind scatters leaves over Changan,
And the arrows are flying, twanging.

So many deeds cry out to be done,
And always urgently;
The world rolls on,
Time presses.
Ten thousand years are too long,
Seize the day, seize the hour!
The Four Seas are rising, clouds and waters raging,
The Five Continents are rocking, wind and thunder roaring.
Away with all pests!
Our force is irresistible.

February 5, 1963

Line 6: In the short story *Prefect of the Southern Branch* by Li Kung-tso, a writer of the Tang Dynasty, a man dozing under a locust tree dreamt that he married the princess of the Great Locust Kingdom and was made prefect of the Southern Branch. When he awoke, he found that the kingdom was an ants' hole under the tree.

Line 7: In one of his poems Han Yu (768-824), a distinguished writer of the Tang Dynasty, sarcastically compared people over-reaching themselves to "mayflies which attempt to shake the giant tree."

Line 8: An allusion to the famous lines of Chia Tao (779?-843), a Tang poet:
The west wind sweeps over the waters of Wei
And everywhere leaves are falling in Changan.

