



Huzi: The True Story of a Boy Artist Growing Up in the Communist Army

Lanjing Zhou

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This is the story of Cao Zhenfeng (1926-2006), nicknamed Huzi. Here the reader will find a certain Chinese point-of-view on some events of the Twentieth Century that changed the world.

Born into poverty, when warlords were fighting civil wars, Japanese bombing civilians, and militias loyal to Chiang Kai-shek conducting summary executions of suspected communists, Huzi joined the Communist Eighth Route Army as a twelve-year-old, "to fight the Japanese and save China." But he could draw, and read and write, which was rare in that army. So he served as a pictorial-journalist at the front lines of the Anti-Japanese War (WW2), China's Civil War, and the Korean War. His illustrated reports were widely distributed to educate and encourage the troops, local folks, and peasants, most of whom were illiterate. And he had many adventures, also narrow escapes. Finally, when he was twenty-seven, 1953, Huzi "retired" from the combat army. The book ends there - he went on to become an authority on Chinese folk art, and a Deputy Director of China's National Art Museum.

The abridged edition of Huzi's story is being provided now in English for use as a "scholastic reader." Organized into four parts, it tells of Huzi's early years and his years during the three wars. Many of his battlefield drawings and excerpts from his wartime journals are included. (The unabridged book has thirty chapters and over 200 drawings.)

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