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No. 2, 1974

Reportage

Hu Chin

The People of Tachai

Below we present an abridged version of *Story of the People of Tachai* published jointly by the Shansi People's Publishing House and the Shanghai People's Publishing House in April 1973. Comprising fifteen chapters and 200,000 words, this book describes how the people of Tachai advanced from a mutual-aid team to a co-operative, then a people's commune. Our abridgement of six chapters will appear in this and the next issues of our magazine. The story ends in the year 1968, since when more and greater changes have taken place in Tachai. Comrade Chen Yung-kuei, Party secretary of Tachai Brigade, is now a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

— The Editors

From the foot of the Taihang Mountains a broad highway leads halfway up Tiger-head Hill to the new village of Tachai, the centre of the Tachai People's Commune. The main street is flanked with willows and fruit trees, which set off orderly rows of trim new tile-roofed houses. Higher up the slope, above cave-dwellings faced with grey stone, rows of more new houses with red tiles form a pleasing colour contrast. And looking down from the summit of

Tiger-head Hill one can see endless terraced fields, tier after tier, stretching like undulating waves to the distance.

This small mountain village of little more than eighty families and four hundred people every day attracts thousands of visitors, come to see the stupendous changes which have taken place here in the last twenty odd years.

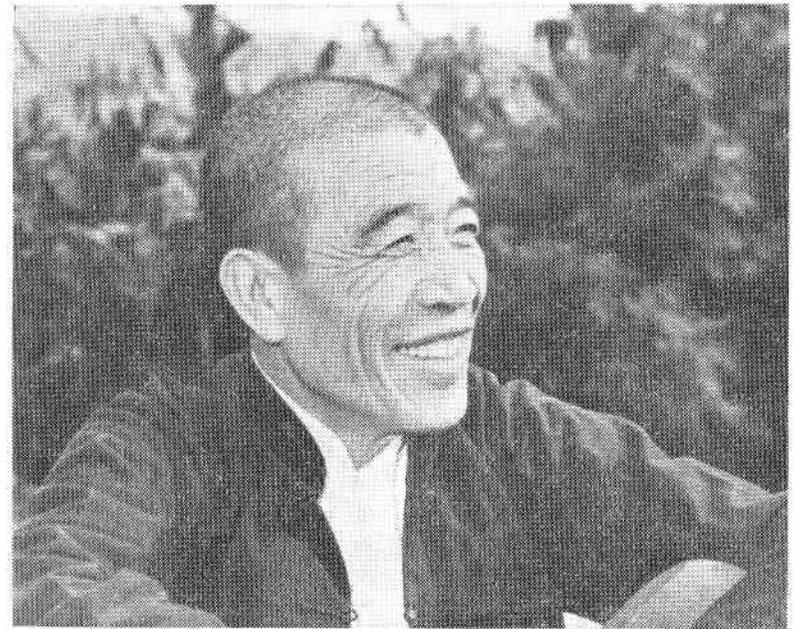
The village of Tachai in Hsiyang County, Shansi Province, is about three miles southeast of the county town. It has become a model in agricultural production, with an average annual yield of more than a thousand catties of grain per *mu*. Before Liberation the hills all around were barren, only Tiger-head Hill behind the village having a thin layer of sandy, stony soil. The freshets which swept down year after year carved the hill into eight ridges and seven long gullies. Barely seven hundred *mu* could be tilled, and this land consisted of more than 4,700 small plots scattered over the slopes and among the ridges and gullies. The two largest plots measured only two *mu* each, the smallest less than one tenth of a *mu*, the whole area resembling a tattered gown sewn with irregular patches.

Steep hills and rocks galore,
A slope before each door;
No *mu* of land that's flat,
And floods on top of that.

Such was Tachai in the old days. A prey to natural calamities and cruel exploitation by the local landlords, the poor peasants and hired hands here had not an inch of land of their own. When times were hardest they had to beg for food or even sell their children.

Then in 1945 came the dawn. Hsiyang County was liberated and with it Tachai. The poor became the masters of their own fate. They overthrew the local landlords and despots who had so savagely exploited and oppressed them, and in the Land Reform the poor peasants and hired hands shared out the land and houses. Filled with new hope, they started to rebuild their village.

After little more than twenty years the people of Tachai have transformed this poor mountain village into a new socialist village famed throughout China. To do this, they had to win through many stormy struggles. Here is their story.



How the Old-and-Young Team Beat the Stout Fellows' Team

1

In the spring of 1946, following Chairman Mao's call to get organized, a drive to set up mutual-aid teams was launched in Hsiyang County. Soon Tachai too was astir. Everybody was discussing how to start mutual-aid teams.

Soon after breakfast one morning the village head, Chen Yung-kuei, went to the village office to talk over this business. Chen Yung-kuei, then just over thirty, was a man of medium height but full of energy. He had square jaws, thick eyebrows and big, flashing eyes. When he reached the village office, he found the other village officers there. After exchanging notes on the situation, they were drawing up tentative plans when a voice sounded from the doorway:

"Uncle Yung-kuei, I want to join the mutual-aid team too."

Chen looked up and saw the poor peasant Liang Pien-liang. Liang was sixteen but so short that he looked more like twelve or thirteen. His mother had died when he was small, and his blind old father had taken him to herd cattle for a landlord and beg for food. After Liberation they received land, but being unable to till it they still had to borrow money from time to time. The news that mutual-aid teams were to be organized had filled young Liang with joy and he urged his father to apply to join. However, the old man was afraid that since they had no labour power, tools or livestock, other people might not want to let them join. He told his son to wait a while. But when young Liang saw so many others applying, he couldn't bear to wait. Without telling his father he went to the village office.

Chen Yung-kuei was pleased by the boy's enthusiasm, but to test him he asked: "Why do you want to join a mutual-aid team?"

"To follow Chairman Mao's call and go the collective way."

Satisfied with this earnest answer, Chen smiled and promised: "Right, we'll count you in."

The lad bounded home at once, and when his father heard the good news he grinned from ear to ear. "Now we've found a way out," he declared.

As soon as young Liang had gone, a man of over sixty came to the door. This was another poor peasant, Chia Keng-yun, who had lost his family in the bad old days. Because his health was poor he found it hard to manage on his own. He too had been afraid that no mutual-aid team would want him and had not dared to apply; but when he heard that several other old men had joined, he hurried to find Chen Yung-kuei. When Chen accepted him readily, the old man went home beaming.

Now the village officers started reckoning. Twenty families had handed in their names. They decided to organize these twenty households into their first team.

That afternoon saw the setting up of the first mutual-aid team in Tachai, a team made up of twenty families. At the inauguration meeting, Chen Yung-kuei was elected as the team leader.

2

A well-to-do middle peasant Chia Chih-fa also applied to join the team, but he had ulterior motives. He thought this would be a good way of getting his land tilled for nothing, without hiring hands whom he had to pay and feed. When the team was set up, he received an unpleasant shock: apart from a few well-off middle peasants, most of the members were poor peasants and hired hands who were either too old or too young to do much work. Instead of profiting by being in this group, he might lose out. He was in a quandary.

Soon after dark that evening Chia Yung-huo, a rich peasant, paid him a secret visit. Having some inkling of what was worrying Chia Chih-fa, he deliberately brought up the subject of the mutual-aid team. Chia Chih-fa simply sighed. Then the rich peasant put forward a proposal which they discussed till nearly midnight. The next day, when Chen Yung-kuei had gone to a district meeting, Chia Chih-fa got some other peasants who had good land and plenty of labour power, tools and cattle to set up a mutual-aid team of their own. They called it the Stout Fellows' Team and decided to ask Chen Yung-kuei to be their team leader.

When Liang Pien-liang heard this, he was furious. He rushed off to consult Chia Keng-yun. In bewilderment the old fellow said: "Let's go and find out what they're up to."

As they were setting off another old peasant Yu, also in his sixties, came panting up to them. "Chia Chih-fa and his lot have gone back on their word," he fumed. "For fear we might take advantage of them, these middle peasants have started their own team of 'stout fellows'. A dirty trick, I call it."

Sensing the gravity of the situation, Chia Keng-yun said quickly: "Never mind whether they are stout fellows or slackers; we don't want to work with the rich who never lift a finger to help the poor. Let's see what Yung-kuei has to say about this."

The three of them went straight to Chen Yung-kuei's house. He was still away at the meeting, but they met five boys and four old men who were also worried by the split. They sat under a big willow to wait for Chen's return.

Presently they heard someone approaching. It was Chia Chih-fa. He had a couplet written on two strips of paper in his left hand, a pipe in his right, and a satisfied smile on his face. When he reached Chen Yung-kuei's house he coughed to attract attention and started pasting his couplet on the door.

Suppressing his anger, Chia Keng-yun demanded: "What are you doing there?"

Screwing up his eyes the middle peasant chortled. "What? Don't you know? We've set up a 'stout fellows' team'. This couplet says: Mutual aid and co-operation will make our families rich."

Young Liang shook his fist and retorted: "That's all wrong. Uncle Yung-kuei says: Mutual aid and co-operation will increase production. Why talk about getting rich?"

Since Liang was only a boy, the middle peasant tried to brazen it out. "Getting rich and increasing production are one and the same thing. What difference is there?"

"No!" cut in twelve-year-old Chia Cheng-hsiao. "Uncle Yung-kuei says we must increase production so as to support the revolutionary war and liberate all China. And after that we shall build socialism. Trying to get rich ourselves is..."

"...is bourgeois." Young Liang took the words out of his friend's mouth. "It means going the capitalist way. Uncle Yung-kuei says we must go the socialist way, not the capitalist way."

This silenced the middle peasant. Amused to see how flustered he was, Chia Keng-yun dealt the final blow. "You've gone back on your word, trying to wreck our mutual-aid team."

Touched on the raw, Chia Chih-fa blustered: "You can't accuse me of wrecking it. Chen Yung-kuei's joined our 'stout fellows' too. Are you accusing him of sabotage?"

The old men insisted that he explain this charge.

"He's joined our Stout Fellows' Team as team leader. So there's no use your waiting for him here. You'd better form another team with people of your own sort." With this final thrust the middle peasant swaggered off.

As soon as he had gone several boys burst out anxiously: "What shall we do now that Uncle Yung-kuei's joined their team?"

At this Chia Keng-yun let out a bellow of laughter.

Old Yu asked: "Brother Keng-yun, what's there to laugh about with our mutual-aid team splitting up?"

Chia Keng-yun answered seriously: "I was laughing because Chia Chih-fa is such a fool. They're gloating too soon. Do you think Yung-kuei's going to leave us in the lurch to join their Stout Fellows' Team?"

This reminded them all of Chen Yung-kuei's character: upright and firm as a rock. He had always cared for poor peasants and hired hands. And he was not the sort to chop and change.

"You're right," said Old Yu. "He'd never leave us in the lurch. Yung-kuei's one of us — we're all bitter melons on the same vine. With him to give us a lead, our mutual-aid team is bound to turn out well."

As they were discussing this, Chen Yung-kuei returned from his meeting. He was wearing a black padded jacket, a white shirt, a blue girdle and a white towel round his head. He strode along smiling at the thought of the glorious future, which the Party secretary had outlined during the meeting, once they had organized themselves to reconstruct this mountain district. In his elation he felt he was walking on air.

Back in the village he was surprised to see so many members of the mutual-aid team waiting for him. He put on a spurt and as he approached them called out: "What's happened, Uncle Keng-yun?"

Before the old man could answer, young Liang told him about the new Stout Fellows' Team. This immediately aroused Chen Yung-kuei's suspicions. What had Chia Chih-fa been up to during his absence? Why did the rich peasants want him to be their team leader? He looked at the couplet on his door: Mutual aid and co-operation will make our families rich. In a flash he remembered the district Party secretary's warning: In building up mutual-aid teams we must nip in the bud the tendency towards capitalism of the well-to-do middle peasants. Chen realized that these poor peasants, old and young, were all his class brothers; their destinies were linked. Going it alone, they would find it hard to raise their yield.



The only way out for them was to get organized as Chairman Mao urged, and take the path of co-operation and mutual aid. With this in mind Chen said: "Brothers, the Party calls on us to get organized so that we can help each other and take the road to prosperity together. If I were to ditch you I'd be going against Chairman Mao's instructions. I'm going to fight shoulder to shoulder with you. Your nine families plus mine makes ten. We ten families of poor peasants and hired hands will join forces and stick it out together to the end."

"Uncle Yung-kuei," asked young Chia Cheng-hsiao naively, "you mean you won't join those 'stout fellows' but will stay in our team?"

"That's the idea." Chen filled his pipe with tobacco, lit up and took a few puffs, then seated himself on a boulder. He then said incisively: **"Without the poor peasants there would be no revolution. To deny their role is to deny the revolution. To attack them is to attack the revolution. They have never been wrong on the general direction of the revolution."**

One of the old men gripped his hands and exclaimed: "That's the way to talk, Yung-kuei!"

"Those are not my words, uncle," was Chen Yung-kuei's reply. "They're the words of our great leader Chairman Mao."

Chia Keng-yun stood up, tears in his eyes. "In the old society we poor peasants were lower than dirt; in the new society Chairman Mao treasures us. We must follow Chairman Mao. Whatever he says, we'll do."

Young Liang though so small thought big. He sprang up and said earnestly: "Right. Well-off middle peasants despise us, but Chairman Mao loves us. We must make a go of our mutual-aid team to repay Chairman Mao and the Party for their concern."

At this point Chen Yung-kuei remembered the couplet. He strode over to tear it down. "Trying to get rich yourself is the capitalist way," he declared. "It's a dead end, the road to ruin. I'm going to go the socialist way, and that's that." He chucked the couplet on the ground and the wind blew it over the cliff.

Then Chia Keng-yun said: "Yung-kuei, those middle peasants call themselves 'stout fellows' because they've good land and plenty

of labour power, cattle and farm tools. We're short of those four things; still, our team should have a name too."

All the others agreed with this.

Chen Yung-kuei thought it over and proposed: "The striking thing about us is that we're mostly old men and boys. Let's call it the 'old-and-young team'."

The rest approved. They elected Chen Yung-kuei as their leader with young Liang as his deputy. In this way the Old-and-Young Team was formally set up.

3

The news that Chen Yung-kuei had stuck with the Old-and-Young Team spread quickly through the village. Comments were rife. The poor peasants and hired hands applauded and said: "Good for Yung-kuei! He cares for us."

A few well-off peasants jeered: "The best worker in the village, but he refuses to join the 'stout fellows' and joins forces with those kids and old men instead. He'll never get anywhere this way."

This news cost Chia Chih-fa a sleepless night. First thing in the morning he hurried to Chen Yung-kuei's house to ask: "Did you see the couplet I stuck on your door, Yung-kuei?"

"I did. I tore it off."

Chia was staggered. He looked at the door. Sure enough, the couplet was gone. "Why? Are you against us setting up a mutual-aid team?"

"I'm against you splitting up our mutual-aid team."

Chia Chih-fa goggled. "How can you call this splitting up the team? We're forming another team of our own free will to benefit all our members."

"I don't want to share any benefits with you. Who told you to paste that couplet on my door?"

"Well, we want you to join our team and be our team leader."

"I've neither cattle nor farm tools," replied Chen Yung-kuei. "I'm not good enough for your team and can't be your team leader."

This sounded to Chia more hopeful. He said: "We know you have neither cattle nor farm tools, Yung-kuei. But we're willing to help a poor peasant so that we can all prosper together."

"If you're so eager to help us poor peasants, why did you pull out of our team and set up your Stout Fellows' Team instead?"

With this retort Chen Yung-kuei hit the nail on the head. The discomfited middle peasant slunk off muttering: "A hen can't turn into a phoenix. A chicken feather can never fly up to the sky. We'll see how you make out in your Old-and-Young Team, Chen Yung-kuei. The autumn harvest will show." Heartened by this thought he tweaked his skimpy moustache and with an unlit pipe between his lips walked home chuckling to himself.

4

Chen Yung-kuei's firm reliance on the poor peasants and hired hands to form a mutual-aid team won the support of the district Party committee. This boosted the morale of the Old-and-Young Team. But though Chia Chih-fa had been snubbed by Chen Yung-kuei, he was still confident that he could outdo Chen's team. To its members' faces he sneered: "H'm! Some too old to ride a horse, others too young to draw a bow. We're going to see some fun."

To this Chen Yung-kuei retorted: "Our old men have experience, our youngsters will grow up. As long as we do as the Party says, we can't go wrong."

"Your old men may have experience," said Chia. "But what use is that if they haven't the strength to work? As for the youngsters growing up, that will take time. We'll see what sort of harvest you get this year."

Chia Keng-yun and Old Yu put in: "Don't you 'stout fellows' be so cocksure. Very soon your selfishness will come to the surface; then each will look after his own interests only and your team will break down."

"Time will show which is the hen and which the phoenix," insisted the middle peasant. "Empty boasts are no good. If you have the guts, we'll challenge you to a contest."

The Old-and-Young Team decided to accept the challenge. As Chen Yung-kuei said: "Mutual-aid teams are to increase production. A contest should show which side is genuinely for co-operation and mutual aid. We're willing to take up the challenge. And neither side should back out."

So the two teams prepared themselves for this contest at the foot of Tiger-head Hill.

The next morning Chen Yung-kuei got up early. As soon as he opened his door, his sixteen-year-old deputy Liang ran up carrying two crates on a shoulder-pole. Behind him came Chia Keng-yun and the other old men as well as Chia Cheng-hsiao and various youngsters. Since all were in fine fettle, Chen made his pep talk brief, then assigned them jobs. Then their first contest — carrying manure up the hill — began in earnest.

Those who had horses and donkeys could cart manure quickly and easily. But the ten families in the Old-and-Young Team possessed neither hide nor hair of a donkey or horse; they therefore had to rely on their own shoulders. Chen Yung-kuei himself could carry nearly 180 catties each trip, but old men like Chia Keng-yun soon started panting if they carried just eighty catties up a slope. As for the boys in their early teens, they could bound up a slope with empty hands, but a load of even thirty to forty catties soon tired them out and made them red in the face. What could be done? Chen Yung-kuei decided that the bigger boys like Liang should carry a lighter load but make more trips, while youngsters like Chia Cheng-hsiao should carry one load between two. And the old men? They adopted a relay system. Chen Yung-kuei himself carried more than anyone else, out-raced the rest, and helped the youngsters and old men up the slope. In this way they did the job fairly fast.

Because the "stout fellows" had more labour power, had horses and better equipment, during the first three days their initial keenness made them get ahead.

"Ha, we're a big horse-cart and they're a wheel-barrow," Chia Chih-fa gloated. "They'll never catch us up till the sun rises in the west."

Chen Yung-kuei called his team together to discuss the position. They said: "The 'stout fellows' rely on draught animals; we'll rely on political consciousness and drive." They decided to start work earlier, knock off later and put in some extra time each evening. This method proved effective. Within a few days they succeeded in matching the other team's speed.

When Chia Chih-fa saw this he exhorted his men: "Let's put on a spurt. If we stout fellows can't beat those old men and boys, we shall lose face completely."

His men said nothing but at heart they were unwilling. And the next evening when they reckoned up the amount of manure they had carted, it was still about the same as that carried by the Old-and-Young Team.

After the Clear and Bright Festival it was time to sow sorghum, millet and corn. Old Man Heaven did not help them: a northwest wind blew every day, no rain fell and the land became so dry that their feet raised clouds of dust. The Old-and-Young Team had not yet finished carrying manure to the hills, but already it was time to start sowing. Having no cattle, they had to dig with hoes instead of ploughing and carry water to the parched fields themselves. This was a trying test. And the well-to-do villagers bandied sarcastic comments: "With no oxen or horses it takes three days to finish one day's work. To get a good harvest, they'll have to pray to heaven." They were hinting that the Old-and-Young Team should borrow draught animals.

These difficulties failed to damp Chen Yung-kuei's confidence. To him it was obvious that on their way forward they were bound to run into difficulties; and only by battling on to wrest victory from their adversities could they show the stuff poor peasants were made of. The important thing at this juncture was to keep calm and strengthen the team's faith in victory so that they could conquer all set-backs and forge ahead. So during a break he called his team together to ask what problems they had and whether they were tired out. Old men and boys alike replied that they were all right, they could stick it out. But they could hardly keep their eyes open.

"I'll tell you a story," said Chen Yung-kuei. "How about that?"

At this, the youngsters livened up and the old fellows, sure that their team-leader had something new up his sleeve, sat up to listen.

The story Chen Yung-kuei told them was about the foolish old man who moved mountains. He described how the foolish old man refuted the wise man's wrong advice and kept hard at work until god was moved to send angels to carry the two mountains away. Hearing this, the whole team laughed. And now that he held their interest, Chen Yung-kuei pointed out the moral of the story. "Chairman Mao wants us to learn from this foolish old man's spirit. We're up against plenty of difficulties with our spring sowing, and the well-off middle peasants are jeering at us. What should we do?"

Young Liang answered: "The foolish old man could move mountains; compared with that, our difficulties are nothing. The wise man in the story is just like those 'stout fellows' who are scoffing at us. We should do like the foolish old man — defeat them with our actions."

The others agreed. They said: "No matter how great the difficulties, we must make a success of our mutual-aid team and finish our sowing on time."

"That's the spirit," said Chen Yung-kuei. "We poor peasants have guts. Still, our big problem now is that we're short-handed. Hard work alone isn't enough. We must use our brains too. What we need now are more hands."

Chia Keng-yun said thoughtfully: "Yung-kuei's quite right. With just the few of us, even if each one does the work of two that's still not good enough. Suppose we rope in our womenfolk to help with the sowing?"

"That's it!" exclaimed Chen Yung-kuei. "Though they aren't used to farm work, they can be a big help carrying water for the seeds. They can 'prop up half the sky'."

They listed the women who could work in the fields and found there were six married women and five teen-agers; just as many as the number of old men and boys.

Then Chia Keng-yun put forward another proposal. "This will give us more hands, but we'll have to change our method of work

too," he said. "Our ten families' fields are so scattered that if we sow each family's in turn we shall waste hours going from one ridge or gully to another. I suggest we make no distinction between different families but till each patch as it comes. That'll save time."

All thought this an excellent idea. Chen Yung-kuei said jubilantly: "If we ten families unite as one there's no difficulty we can't overcome."

That same evening he called all the women and girls to a meeting and enlisted their enthusiastic support. Chattering nineteen to the dozen, they vowed to play their part. At the crack of dawn the next day the whole team, women and men, marched up the hill. Under Chen Yung-kuei's leadership they went all out, helping each other. By dint of good team-work and skilful co-ordination they finished their spring sowing in five days.

The other team was not doing so well, however. For the middle peasants had joined it from selfish motives: to get free labour for their own fields. For the first few days they worked fairly well, but then they began to reveal their selfishness. When their own fields were being tilled, they expected other people to bring their best equipment, start work before daybreak and knock off after the moon was high in the sky, preferably not even stopping to smoke a pipe or rest. When other people's fields were being tilled they preferred not to use their own tools and equipment, to start work when the sun was high in the sky and to knock off as it was setting in the west; and every hour or so they stopped for a rest. On fine days they liked others to work for them; on wet, windy days, they like to work for others. As soon as the spring sowing started, each fought to have his own fields sown first, and no one would listen to the team leader Chia Chih-fa. Just at this time, moreover, Chia happened to be lamed by an ox treading on his foot, so he could not get out to work. Then his team members split up, each tilling his own land. Seeing his own fields left unsown, Chia was more tormented by his enforced idleness than by the pain in his foot. He fretted and fumed. However, the other middle peasants did little better. Unable to get their own fields sown on time they rushed to and fro like ants on a hot pan.

Then Chen Yung-kuei took the Old-and-Young Team to help them finish the sowing.

After the spring sowing, Chen Yung-kuei called his team together to sum up their experience. He urged them to do still better, correct their past mistakes and fight on to achieve bigger victories. When the autumn harvest came round, the Old-and-Young Team scored another success. Their average yield per *mu* was 169 catties, sixty catties more than that of those going it alone.

Though the Stout Fellows' Team did slightly better than individual farmers, because the middle peasants were too selfish to pool their forces properly their average yield was little more than 120 catties. So the "wheel-barrow" had beaten the "horse-cart" and the chicken-feather had flown up to the sky. This showed Tachai's poor peasants and hired hands the advantages of organization and the true way to prosperity for all. Those who had not joined a mutual-aid team all applied to join now; and some middle peasants seeing that there was no future in their Stout Fellows' Team transferred to the Old-and-Young Team. By 1949, of the village's 69 families, 49 had joined the Old-and-Young Team and only three families were left in Chia Chih-fa's Stout Fellows' Team.

Organizing the Co-operative

By the year 1952, the boys in the Old-and-Young Team had grown up and become the main strength in the mutual-aid team. Moreover



these years of struggle in Tachai had helped to form a strong nucleus in the Party branch with Chen Yung-kuei as its Party secretary.

1

That year the crops promised well. All predicted a bumper harvest. But in mid-August calamity overtook them. For more than a month there had been little rain, but now the rain poured down for three days and three nights and mountain freshets swept away the luxuriant crops in the fields. The man hardest hit was Chao Ching-sheng. He had fifteen *mu* of hilly land which he still farmed on his own, and ten *mu* of crops were swept away by the flood.

One day as Chen Yung-kuei was gazing down from the hill with a heavy heart at the dykes breached by the flood, young Liang came and reported: "Uncle Yung-kuei, Chia Chih-fa is taking advantage of this flood to force Chao Ching-sheng to sell five *mu* of good land." Asked for further details, Liang said: "I don't know how it happened. I suppose Chao's in debt to Chia."

This was a serious matter. Chen Yung-kuei took Liang by the hand and together they hurried to Chao's house.

Chao Ching-sheng's courtyard was already thronged with people, among them Chia Chin-tsai and some other members of the mutual-aid team. Chen Yung-kuei went up to Chia Chih-fa and demanded: "Why are you trying to force him to sell his land?"

The middle peasant stuttered and stammered but could give no coherent answer.

Then Chen Yung-kuei turned to Chao and said: "Ching-sheng, our land was given us by Chairman Mao. Why should you sell yours?"

Instead of answering, Chao Ching-sheng burst into tears.

The fact was that though Chao had a family of seven, five of them were children aged from ten to three. So he had many mouths to feed and often had to borrow money and grain. Then for three years his wife had been bed-ridden. With the whole family to look after, with debts to pay and medicine to buy for his wife, Chao could not make ends meet. He got some relief from the people's government, the Old-and-Young Team helped him to till his land, and Chen Yung-kuei and other villagers often sent him gifts to tide him over. As time went by, however, Chao felt ashamed to accept any more relief or charity. He counted on his wife recovering, his children growing big enough to help and his crops doing well. But contrary to his hopes, his wife's illness went from bad to worse, his children were unable to share his burden and his own health began to be undermined. When the flood swept away the crops on over ten *mu* of his land, other villagers were concerned for him but Chia Chih-fa was secretly elated.

Ever since Liberation, Chia Chih-fa had been trying to feather his own nest. He wanted to buy more land, hire farm labourers and live on exploitation like the landlords and rich peasants in the past. Chao Ching-sheng's five *mu* of good land on a sunny slope which lay next to his own fields made his mouth water. He had been longing to get his hands on that land, but hitherto no chance had come his way.

When Chao's wife fell ill, Chia thought his chance had come. He started sending Chao grain and cash on the sly. At first the poor peas-

ant refused these, but Chia said: "We're brothers, never mind. I know you're in trouble. Just remember the amount and pay me back later."

Since Chao needed money so desperately, he had to accept the loan. Now after three years, according to Chia's calculation, the interest had snowballed until Chao owed him more than forty piculs of grain. Since one *mu* of land was worth eight piculs, the grain Chao owed was enough to buy five *mu*. Using the flood as a pretext, Chia started complaining that he was hard-pressed and every day urged Chao to pay him back.

Goaded to desperation, Chao retorted: "Don't keep harping on that debt! I've no way of paying it now. But you needn't worry. However short of cash I may be, I still have five *mu* of good land. If it comes to the worst you can have that to clear my debt."

This was just the answer Chia had been hoping for. Beaming, he answered: "Fine, fine. Do as you think fit." Then stroking his skimpy moustache he went away, chuckling.

Chao Ching-sheng felt heart-stricken. Before Liberation poor peasants with no land of their own had to hire themselves out to landlords and rich peasants, so that many families were broken up. After Liberation they had carried out Land Reform. It was the Party and Chairman Mao who had given land to the poor. How could he sell this land? He took out his title-deed which he kept wrapped up in red paper under the mat on his *kang*. The red seal and his own name on the certificate reminded him of their stormy struggle against the landlords and local despots and how they had shared out the land and grain. Claspng the title-deed to his chest, he gazed through tears at the portrait of Chairman Mao by the window. "Ah, Chairman Mao, Chairman Mao," he muttered. "I've let you down." Abruptly he started out.

His wife hastily called to him: "The land is our life. If you sell it, what's to become of our family? Do you want to work as a hired hand again?"

Chao hesitated, then turned and said to her: "If I don't sell, how am I to pay our debt?"

"You mustn't sell the land whatever happens," she insisted. "Go and talk it over with Yung-kuei and the others."

Chao saw a glimmer of hope. "Right, I will," he agreed.

As he started out again along came Chia, tweaking at his moustache. The rich middle peasant marched in and urged Chao to make up his mind whether to pay him back in grain or in land. Chao had no grain but refused to sell his land, so they started quarrelling. Liang who was repairing some tools next door heard the rumpus and went over to see what had happened. Since the matter was serious, he rushed off to tell Chia Chin-tsai and other members of the Party branch committee, after which he raced up the hill to find Chen Yung-kuei.

When Chao saw Chen Yung-kuei he was too mortified to get a word out. Only after repeated urging did he explain what had happened. Chia's attempt to take advantage of Chao made everyone angry. They told him that what he was doing was illegal.

The middle peasant protested: "Debts must be repaid. I lent him grain: why can't I ask for it back?"

"How can you force him to sell his land?" they retorted.

Knowing that he could not defend himself on this score, Chia changed his tune. "I don't insist on his selling his land. If you'll help him return me my grain, I'll be satisfied." He threw out his hands as if at his wits' end, then scuttled off with lowered head.

Once the middle peasant had gone, young Liang asked Chen Yung-kuei: "What shall we do?"

"We certainly can't let Chao sell his land," was the reply. "We'll help him clear his debt. Only we must work out the interest again." Then Chen Yung-kuei and the other Party members went over to Chia Chih-fa's house.

Chia was fuming over his failure to get Chao's land. When Chen Yung-kuei and the others came to his door he made a show of politeness and offered them seats.

Chen Yung-kuei's first words to him were: "Chia Chih-fa, in our new society you can't force anyone to sell his land."

"Of course not," replied Chia. "All I want is to get my grain back." He produced his account book.

When Chen Yung-kuei looked through the book, he found that Chia had lent Chao no more than nine piculs and five pecks of grain. "You only lent him nine piculs five pecks," he said. "Why are you demanding more than forty piculs now?"

Chia Chih-fa had no answer to that, for such a high rate of interest was illegal.

Chen Yung-kuei continued: "Chia Chih-fa, the landlords, rich peasants, local despots and profiteering merchants charged exorbitant rates of interest to exploit us poor peasants in the old days. Now we've overthrown those blood-suckers. Do you intend to follow the Communist Party or to follow those exploiters?"

Chia dared not answer.

"You can make the interest snowball if you want," put in Liang. "In that case we'll know how to deal with you. The government has a law that all usurers' money should be confiscated. . . ."

"No, no, no," stuttered Chia. "I'll stick to the government rate of two and a half per cent."

The middle peasant's crestfallen look made it hard for the others to keep straight faces. After they had settled the account for Chao they gave Chia Chih-fa a good talking to, then left. Chia was so furious at this loss of face on top of his failure to get the land that he could not sleep for days.

So Chao Ching-sheng had been helped to clear his debt. But Chen Yung-kuei was still worried. Natural calamities, man-made misfortunes, the capitalist tendencies of self-seeking middle peasants, the pressure put on Chao to sell his land . . . Chen Yung-kuei's thick eyebrows knit in a frown as he turned these problems over in his mind. If they had let Chao sell his land, he would have had to work as a hired hand again just as in the days before Liberation. Chen Yung-kuei had been through that hell himself for more than twenty years. Could they put the clock back like that? Just then he received instructions to go to Hopei Province the next day to see an exhibition on the exchange of goods between town and countryside. Having entrusted the work in the team to other members of the Party committee, he hastily set off.

The train sped across the vast North China plain where thousands of small plots of land had been linked together and peasants were working in groups of several dozen. Here and there he saw tractors ploughing the dark soil and pumps irrigating the fields. . . . Chen Yung-kuei was fascinated by the sight. He asked his neighbour: "Old Wang, how come the peasants here have so much land? There seems to be a hundred *mu* in one plot."

Old Wang smiled and said: "I've heard that they're trying out agricultural co-operatives here. They've scrapped the old boundaries between different fields."

"Agricultural co-operatives? What are they?"

"I'm not too clear," replied Wang. "You can find out when we get there."

As soon as they arrived at their destination, Chen Yung-kuei asked someone in charge of the co-operative movement to explain this new experiment. He raised questions about the organization, leadership, system of distribution and management, until he was satisfied that he understood.

On the return journey, they eagerly discussed the new things they had seen at the exhibition.

Some delegates from the plains declared jubilantly: "Those tractors are terrific. We must get some quick."

Delegates from mountain districts said with regret: "Tractors are fine, that's certain. But we can't use them up in the hills."

Chen Yung-kuei thought to himself: We've plenty of land in the hills and great potentialities. If we fill up the gullies, make terraced fields and link them up, we could have plots of thirty to forty *mu*. Then we've ridges rising one above the other. The plots there aren't as big as in the plains but the fields get enough air and sunshine for close planting. Besides, our folk are tough and used to intensive farming. We can plant crops on the borders of fields, by walls and in odd corners, so as not to waste any land. . . . He decided that the mountains had their strong points too. So patting Wang's shoulder he said cheerfully: "The plains have their advantages, mate, but so have we. The crucial thing now is to set up co-operatives, then we can cope with anything that crops up."

"They're still just experimenting," replied Wang dubiously. "Who knows when co-operation will come to our district?"

"Don't worry," said the head of the delegation. "The Party Central Committee and Chairman Mao have made the decision. Co-operatives are to be set up everywhere on the basis of mutual aid teams. We'll get back just in time to hear the report on this directive."

Wang beamed and Chen Yung-kuei exclaimed: "That's good news for our mountain district."

After hearing the report in the county town, Chen Yung-kuei hurried back to Tachai. Party members and other villagers at once surrounded him and asked him so many questions that he found it impossible to answer them all.

Young Liang asked: "Uncle Yung-kuei, on your trip this time did you hear of other cases like Chao Ching-sheng's of peasants forced to sell land?"

Chen Yung-kuei laughed. "Sure. Sit down and I'll tell you about them."

They sat on the ground and Chen Yung-kuei started off: "The well-to-do middle peasants all want to buy more land to enrich their families; they envy the life of the old landlords and rich peasants. Such cases can be found in Tachai, all over North China and everywhere in the country. So if people are hit by calamities and can't pay their debts, like our Chao Ching-sheng, what else can they do except sell their land?"

"Not necessarily," put in Chia Chin-tsai. "We poor folk can help each other. Even if each can contribute only a peck or less, if there are enough of us we can make up the sum to clear the debt."

"True, we managed to clear Chao's debt. But all families have their troubles: illness, death and crop failure. What then?"

"What's your idea, Uncle Yung-kuei?" asked Liang.

"There's a way out. The thing to do is to pool our small plots of land to make bigger plots. We should link up these thousands of little fields scattered all over the gullies, ridges and hillsides; then fill up the gullies, build dams and add thick layers of good soil. That way we'll be able to cope with drought or flood. . . ."

"But how can we do this?" Liang interrupted. "Our land's scattered all over the place. Sometimes we even fight over the border of one small patch."

"That's the crux of the matter," answered Chen Yung-kuei. "Though we're organized and have our mutual-aid team, this is still an individual economy which restricts the development of our productive forces. If we don't combine our small plots of land we can't mechanize our farming and won't be able to withstand calamities. Take the flood this year for example. Some families got off lightly, but others had all their crops swept away. We all work equally hard, but when the autumn harvest comes some families are smiling, others are frowning. If things go on this way, the poor will get poorer and poorer and the well-off richer and richer, till we're back where we were in the old society when one family got rich by beggaring thousands of others. We farm collectively in mutual-aid teams but ours is still an individual economy, too weak to stand up to big calamities. When storms blow up, the big fish will eat the little fish. Mutual-aid teams won't solve our basic problem."

"Then what can we do?" Chia Keng-yun sighed. "Our fathers before us always farmed in this way."

"Now we have a way out. Chairman Mao has pointed out a new way for us."

The villagers' faces lit up and they urged him to explain.

Chen Yung-kuei filled his pipe, lit up and took a few puffs before elucidating: "Chairman Mao in his wisdom knows that the peasants all over the country are longing to build socialism. So, to prevent us peasants from splitting up into rich and poor again and enable us to stand up to calamities, he calls on us now to set up co-operatives on the basis of our mutual-aid teams. What does this mean? It means pooling our land and farming collectively. We'll pool all the grain we harvest and distribute it according to the amount of each family's land and labour and other shares in the co-op. If any family is in difficulties, the collective will help it out. In places where they've already started this system, they have whole tracts of land, hundreds of *mu*, linked together, and the co-op members work in teams — it's a grand sight to see!"



Joining the Co-op (serial picture)

by Li Chi-yuan, Lin Fan, Wang Chiao and Meng Ching-chiang

This explanation aroused intense excitement. Though few could visualize what a co-operative would be like, all were sure that what Chairman Mao proposed must be right.

"Let's start right away, Uncle Yung-kuei," urged one youngster. "Strike while the iron's hot!"

"Starting a co-operative is no laughing matter," replied Chen Yung-kuei. "We must take it seriously and discuss it in detail. For a start we must study the instructions from above which go to the heart of the matter. We mustn't be hasty. After supper we'll meet under the big willow tree and I'll pass on what I've learned. In a few days a training class will start in the county town to study how to run co-operatives. After the training finishes, we'll get cracking. All who want to join the co-op must send in a written application which has to be studied and approved by the county. We have to choose officers too and draw up some rules. There's a lot to do. What do you think?"

Of course the Tachai villagers agreed.

2

After several days spent in studying the Party Central Committee's resolution on agricultural mutual aid and co-operation, the peasants of Tachai were more convinced than ever of Chairman Mao's great foresight in pointing out the way ahead at this crucial moment. Applications to join the co-op poured in thick and fast to the village's Party committee. Some applicants went to the homes of Party members to voice their determination; others sold poultry and eggs to the supply and marketing co-operative to raise funds to invest in the co-op. Then they chose Chen Yung-kuei, young Liang, Chia Chint-sai and Chia Keng-yun to go to the county town to ask permission to start a co-operative. But when this small delegation arrived at the county office, the head of the work team sent by the government snubbed them.

"The higher authorities have decided to start with three co-ops on an experimental basis in Hsiyang," he told them. "You'll have to wait. You mustn't rush into this blindly."

This came as a surprise to the Tachai villagers.

"Many hands make light work; the bigger the outfit the stronger it is," they protested. "We want to go the socialist way now. Why must we wait till later?"

Chen Yung-kuei thought: Setting up co-operatives is the way Chairman Mao has pointed out for building up a socialist countryside. It's the crying need of the poor and lower-middle peasants. Even if we don't get permission from above, we can't be wrong to start.

He explained his views to other Party members and villagers, all of whom backed him up. They decided to go ahead. But they needed someone who could write and use the abacus to be their accountant. The poor peasants of Tachai had toiled all their days for the rich in the old society and never had any schooling. Some of them could not even write their own names. When they wanted festive couplets for New Year, or to write their name on a farm tool, they had to get others to help them. This question of finding an accountant worried them all, all but the rich peasant Chia Yung-huo who was secretly rejoicing.

For a dozen years or so before Liberation this fellow had run a workshop for making rugs, and his son had been to middle school in town. After Liberation, Chia Yung-huo had attempted to sabotage the mutual-aid team; however, he failed and nearly exposed himself. Now the situation had changed. Most people were for the co-operative, and it would be useless to try to stem the tide. But since his son could write and do accounts, Chia Yung-huo thought it should be possible to get him into the new co-op as an accountant, and then he himself could seize control of its finances. He racked his brains to work out a plan to achieve this.

One pitch-dark evening when there were no stars, the rich peasant groped his way into Chen Yung-kuei's courtyard. Having made sure that there was no one around, he took a parcel out from under his jacket and placed it on the doorstep, then sneaked away.

Late that night when Chen Yung-kuei came back from a meeting, he trod on something soft in front of his door. He picked up the parcel and took it inside to open it under the lamp. It was a rug with a slip of paper inside. On the paper was scrawled: "Party Secretary

Chen, you have done so much work for all, I am sending you this rug as a token of my appreciation."

Chen Yung-kuei knew at once where this came from and saw through the rich peasant's scheme. In a fury he hurled the rug on to the ground.

His wife who was lying on the *kang* remarked: "Talk about a weasel calling on a chicken! That Chia Yung-huo's up to no good. I'll take that straight back."

She got up and reached for the rug, but her husband stopped her. "Wait," he said. "That would be letting him off too lightly. A fox doesn't leave its den without some reason. I want everyone to see the trick this class enemy is playing."

The next morning Chen Yung-kuei, his rice bowl in one hand, the rug under one arm, went out to have his breakfast with other villagers under the big willow tree. They were joined by Chia Yung-huo, blinking his shifty eyes. After casting a furtive look at Chen Yung-kuei he summoned up the courage to approach him and handed him a written application to join the co-operative. Nodding and bowing he said: "Setting up a co-op is what everybody wants. It's a glorious thing to take the collective road. I hope you'll help me to join, Party Secretary Chen." Watching Chen Yung-kuei's expression as he spoke, he laid special emphasis on the word "help".

To string the rascal along, Chen Yung-kuei asked calmly: "So you want to join the new co-op too?"

The rich peasant sniggered. "That's right. I'd like to join. And I hope you'll sponsor my son too."

Hearing this, all the peasants eating there gathered round. Before Liang could say anything sharp, Chen Yung-kuei spoke up again. "Friends, Chia Yung-huo wants to join the co-op too, and hopes I'll sponsor his son as well. What job do you think would suit his son?"

Liang caught on and answered: "We still need an accountant. His son's been to middle school, he can write and use the abacus. We could make him our accountant."

The rich peasant beamed. Without waiting for any other comments, he crowed: "Quite right. That's how I figured it too. If you all agree, I'll see to it that he works well."

At this moment Chen Yung-kuei's face suddenly darkened. He rounded on Chia and bellowed: "Shut up!" Chia's jaw fell and he shrank back as the Party secretary tossed the rug down and exposed the rich peasant's plot to buy him over. The villagers were furious.

Pointing at Chia's nose Liang cried: "So you tried to corrupt our Party secretary so as to get control of our co-op. You must be out of your mind. Can a toad eat a swan?"

Chen Yung-kuei chimed in: "Yes, Chairman Mao warns us to beware of sugar-coated bullets. This rug's very warm, but officers lying on it wouldn't be able to stand up again." Shaking a finger at Chia Yung-huo he said sternly: "That's enough of your dirty tricks. Communists won't rise to your bait. Your only hope lies in reforming yourself and becoming an honest man."

Then, the picture of misery, the rich peasant slunk off like a beaten cur with his rug.

This taught everybody present a good lesson. But they still hadn't found an accountant. Suddenly a man stepped forward from the crowd, a sturdy, ruddy-faced fellow in his late thirties.

"Let me take on the job, Yung-kuei," he urged.

This was Chia Cheng-jang, the son of a poor peasant, who before Liberation had been a hired hand for a dozen years, a miner for three or four years and a beggar in-between time. He had learned some characters after Liberation by studying for three months in the winter school. But he seemed confident that he could tackle this job.

Chen Yung-kuei gripped his hands. "That's the spirit," he cried. "Communists should be ready to shoulder heavy loads. I'll back you up to the hilt."

"There'll be plenty of difficulties, I know that," replied Chia Cheng-jang earnestly. "But to make our co-op a success, to build socialism and keep the power in our own hands, I'll do my damndest to be a good accountant."

"Good for you!" exclaimed Chen Yung-kuei. "You can learn by doing." The others all approved of this appointment.

So now all was ready for setting up the new co-op. After the autumn harvest, Chen Yung-kuei, young Liang and Chia Chin-tsai led all the poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai to the county

town to ask once more for permission. Raising a merry din with gongs and drums they marched off in smart formation carrying their application written on a sheet of red paper. They were received by the same man in the work team. Without even troubling to glance at their application, he asked coldly: "So your village wants to start a co-op, eh? Have you got enough draught animals?"

"What have draught animals got to do with it?" asked Chen Yung-kuei.

"Use your brain. Can you start a co-op without cattle?"

Chen Yung-kuei explained patiently: "It's because Tachai is poor that we badly need to get organized. Organization will give us the strength to buy cattle and farm tools, won't it?"

The bureaucrat took a few drags on his pipe, then drawled: "You make it sound very simple. Setting up a co-op isn't going to solve all your problems. That's wishful thinking. Setting up a co-op takes time. It's no use being impatient."

The fellow's attitude enraged Chen Yung-kuei. "Chairman Mao calls on us to start co-ops. Why call it wishful thinking?" he demanded. "Why can't it be done?"

The head of the work team blinked, then retorted icily: "I'm not forbidding you to start a co-op. All I say is: you're not ready for it yet."

"We poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai follow Chairman Mao's instructions," countered Chen Yung-kuei. "We all want to set up a co-op and go the socialist way. That's what really counts. The masses are dead set on having a co-op. So how can you say we're not ready for it?"

The head of the work team had no answer to that. Still he would not grant them permission. Unable to contain himself any longer, Chen Yung-kuei sprang to his feet. "Do you carry out Chairman Mao's directives or don't you?" he demanded. "We poor and lower-middle peasants are responding to Chairman Mao's call: we're determined to start a co-op. But you keep raising objections. Are you working for the Communist Party or against it?"

The bureaucrat gaped. Beads of sweat stood out on his forehead.



Chen Yung-kuei continued: "The people demand a co-op. Whatever you say, we're going ahead with it. If you refuse us permission, we'll go to the county committee; if they refuse, we'll go to the provincial committee; if they refuse, we'll go to Peking and ask Chairman Mao himself!" With that he angrily led the others away.

Why was the head of this work team doing all in his power to block the co-operative movement? It was part of a big plot. The call of the Central Committee and Chairman Mao for co-operation in agriculture had appalled Liu Shao-chi and those other renegades who

had usurped important posts in the government and were working for a return to capitalism. When Liu Shao-chi received a report from Shansi Province on the setting up of co-operatives, behind the back of the Central Committee and Chairman Mao he condemned it as "utopian socialism". It was on Liu Shao-chi's instructions that the head of this work team insisted on various conditions for co-operatives: a specified number of Party and Youth League members, as well as draught animals and farm implements. He did his best to dampen the enthusiasm of the masses. But Chen Yung-kuei, quite undeterred by this, had fought back. The bureaucrat was afraid the Tachai villagers might really go to the provincial authorities, so finally he approved their application. He stipulated, however, that their co-op must not comprise more than thirty families. This authorization was sent to Tachai the next day.

The poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai were very pleased to have their application granted, but they did not like the idea of restricting the co-op to thirty families only. This started a heated debate in the Party branch. There were already forty-nine families in the mutual-aid team, and most of the committee insisted that the co-operative could not be smaller than that — it must include all forty-nine families. But the deputy village head Li Chih-fu argued that since this was a new experiment it would be safer to start in a small way and abide by the higher authorities' decision to have thirty families only.

Young Liang was dead against this. He demanded: "Then what's to become of the other nineteen families?"

"Let them stay as a mutual-aid team for another year," said Li. "They can join us once our co-op's consolidated."

Chia Chin-tsai objected: "The forty-nine families in our mutual-aid team are like one big family. How can we decide which ones are to join the co-op?"

"Let the Party committee or the masses decide. What's so difficult about that?" was Li's reply.

Chia Cheng-jang the accountant retorted: "That's not right. We're starting a co-op to benefit everybody."

Chen Yung-kuei had been thinking hard. He was about to speak when a crowd of villagers pushed in, all come to ask to join the co-op. In no time the room was packed.

An old poor peasant Li Hsi-ching cried: "Yung-kuei, we've heard that only thirty families can join. You must count my family in!"

Chao Ching-sheng and his wife pleaded: "Yung-kuei, it's a life-and-death matter for us, joining the co-op. We're sunk without the collective. That's why we're set on going the socialist road."

Chao Ta-ho chimed in: "Right. All of us in Tachai want to obey Chairman Mao's call."

"We're all gourds from the same vine," put in Chia Keng-yun. "We must join the co-op together."

"In the bad old days," said the accountant, "however hard times were we stuck together. Now that we're heading for socialism, how can we kick away some of our class brothers?"

The atmosphere in the crowded room was electric. Chen Yung-kuei, deeply stirred, took out the Party's resolution and read it through carefully again. He thought: It's Chairman Mao who pointed out that co-ops are the way to socialism. Why do some people oppose this? Why restrict the number to thirty families and not let all forty-nine families join? This isn't just a question of size: it's an attempt to stop us taking the socialist road. As he pondered Chairman Mao's instruction and gazed round at these class brothers who had shared thick and thin with him, his heart was in a turmoil.

He cast his mind back thirty years. It was a dark night in the dead of winter. A cold wind was whistling through the gully, and the snow lay more than one foot deep on the ground. Chen Yung-kuei, then seven years old, was trudging home after begging for food all day when he fainted from hunger and exhaustion. An old poor peasant who had been out hiding from the landlord's men who were dunning him for debt found the boy lying in a snowdrift. He carried him to the cave where he lived, and some other peasants brought grain to make him a meal. They spooned porridge into Yung-kuei's mouth and revived him. His first thought was of his father at home. Taking up the bowl of hot porridge he started off

to give it to his father. Then the old peasant told him with tears in his eyes that his father had been hounded to death by the landlord. Yung-kuei let the bowl of porridge fall to the ground and wild with grief ran home. The tumbledown door was half open and there was nobody on the *kang* in the cave, nothing but the broken bowl which his father had used for begging. "Don't grieve too much, lad," urged the neighbours. "Keep this in mind: however long the night, it's bound to end. One day we poor folk will be free. We'll look after you." After that Chen Yung-kuei worked as a hired hand for a landlord who often beat him cruelly. If not for the help from the villagers he would never have survived.

With the past in mind, Chen Yung-kuei clenched his fist and said firmly: "Friends, we'll do as Chairman Mao says and take the co-operative road. This is no crime and no one can punish us for it. Whatever storms blow up we must have our co-op, and with all forty-nine families in it, not one family less!"

The deputy village head asked: "What if the higher-ups find out?"

"What does it matter if they do?" cried Liang. "It's right to carry out Chairman Mao's instructions."

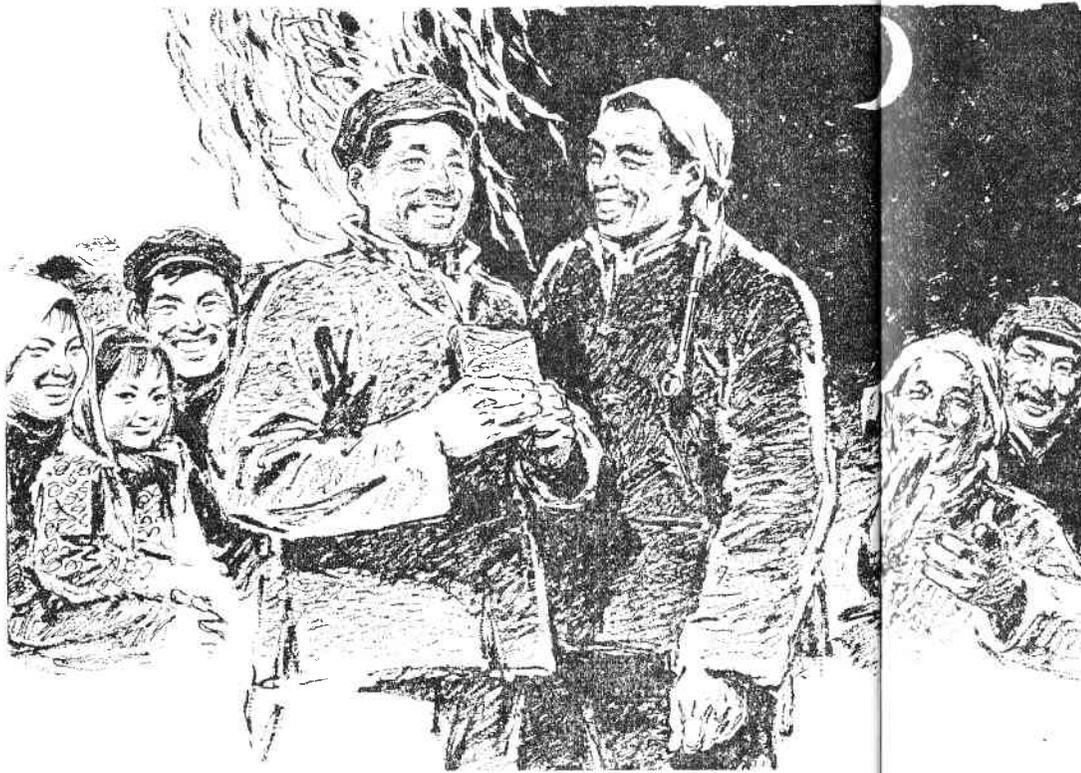
"True," approved Chen Yung-kuei. "To take the socialist way is right. I'd like to see anyone try to punish us for that."

Other members of the Party committee said: "Right. Our committee's ready to take the blame. Anyone who tries to break up our co-op will have to reckon with us and all our poor and lower-middle peasants."

So they decided to include all forty-nine families of the mutual-aid team in the new co-op.

3

The next year, the co-op's crops did well. Two months went by without rain in early summer, but by mobilizing everyone to fight the drought they still reaped a good harvest that autumn with an average yield per *mu* of 240 catties — an increase of over sixty catties.



The peasants were elated and prepared to hold a celebration meeting. At this meeting they also meant to admit other families who had requested to join the co-op.

By the time the threshing was finished and Chen Yung-kuei came back from a county conference, all preparations for the celebration were ready. Chen Yung-kuei reported to the Party committee and other co-op officers the gist of the conference in the county town. In order to speed up socialist construction and the socialist revolution, the government had decided to start planned purchase and marketing of grain by the state, and the quota assigned to Tachai to sell to the state was 45,000 catties.

Young Liang said: "We've had a good harvest. We can do that

easily without counting in the individual farmers." Others promised to guarantee the quantity and quality of this grain to support socialist construction.

That evening when the moon rode high in the sky, the meeting place under the big willow tree was brightly lit. The Tachai peasants, dressed in their best, assembled there in high spirits. The first to arrive was young Liang, wearing a brand-new black padded jacket, his bronzed face wreathed with smiles. Then came Chen Yung-kuei, Chia Chin-tsai and his wife Sung Li-ying, Chia Cheng-jang the accountant and Chao Ta-ho.

Chia Chin-tsai wagged a finger at young Liang and teased: "A new outfit, eh? You look like a bridegroom." At that everybody laughed and Liang, blushing, chuckled too.

Though Chia Chin-tsai was not in new clothes himself, he looked spick and span. Chen Yung-kuei said to him and his wife: "And what about yourselves? Look at you. You were never as spruce as this before, not even when you dressed up to go visiting."

Sung Li-ying pointed at Chen Yung-kuei and retorted: "That goes for you too." Then Chen Yung-kuei, who was also wearing new clothes, burst into hearty laughter.

When everyone had arrived they started the meeting. First Chen Yung-kuei representing the Party branch and co-op leadership gave a summary of the year's work. Then others spoke. After this young Liang as chairman of the meeting announced the second item: the distribution of dividends. And as Chia Cheng-jang the accountant brought bundles of notes wrapped in red paper up to the platform, a great din of rejoicing burst out: cheers, clapping and the shouting of slogans mingled with gonging and drumming. All eyes were glued to the platform. The accountant then called the names, announcing each member's work-points for the year, the size of his investment and land, the amount drawn in advance, and the sum he was now receiving. In turn each co-op member took his money from

Chen Yung-kuei and checked it, then said a few words to express his determination to work even better the next year. So the distribution of dividends went ahead in an orderly fashion.

When Chao Ching-sheng's name was called, he ran to the platform. Standing before Chen Yung-kuei, he wiped his hands carefully on his clothes before taking the bulky bundle. And instead of checking the amount or asking any questions, he just clasped the bundle to his chest and grinned. A child in the crowd piped up: "Look, Uncle Chao's crying." And the crowd saw that tears were running down Chao's cheeks although he was still beaming. A hired hand in the old society, Chao had toiled like an ox but still gone cold and hungry. After Liberation, natural calamities and illness at home had nearly forced him to sell the land given him by Chairman Mao. Now after joining the co-op, through the help of the collective, he not only had plenty of grain and fuel but on top of that was receiving cash dividends. How could he help but be moved? Wiping his eyes, he tried sheepishly to speak but did not know what to say. Then gazing up at Chairman Mao's portrait, he raised the red paper bundle in both hands and cried from the bottom of his heart: "Long live Chairman Mao! A long, long life to Chairman Mao!" The whole crowd joined in, their cheers reverberating through the night.

The peasants still farming on their own were impressed by the advantages of the co-op. As soon as the distribution of dividends ended and before the next item on the programme was announced, they rushed up to apply for membership.

Chen Yung-kuei told applicants to hand in their names, and very soon virtually all the villagers had joined the co-op. Even the well-off middle peasant Chia Chih-fa told Chen Yung-kuei that he would like to join.

"Didn't you say you intended to wait another year and see?" Chen asked.

"No, the co-op's fine. My mind's made up," replied Chia.

Chia Chih-fa had it all worked out. When the co-op first started Chen Yung-kuei had approached him. "It's good to get organized, Chia Chih-fa," he said. "The others are applying to join. How about you?"

But at that time Chia thought: The mutual-aid team did all right because each household kept the grain reaped on its fields; so people pulled together and worked with a will. Now the co-op's going to pool all the grain: that'll make for bickering. So many different households won't see eye to eye; then the co-op may be a flop. But not wanting to say this outright, he told Chen Yung-kuei: "Sure, I'm all for the co-op, and I'd like to join, but . . . my wife's so set in her ways she wants to wait another year. . . ."

Chen Yung-kuei knew that this middle peasant was a slippery customer. "All right," he said. "Wait another year. But don't take the wrong path again."

"Of course not," promised Chia.

Though Chia Chih-fa did not join the co-op he had a high opinion of Chen Yung-kuei as a farmer and organizer. So he watched carefully how the co-op was run. When the co-op started ploughing, he followed suit. When the co-op started sowing, so did Chia. When the co-op spread manure, Chia with his donkey carted manure to his fields. When a drought came, however, the disadvantages of going it alone became clear. Although Chia set three members of his family to work, when they carried water up the hill their crops in the gully were parched; when they carried water to the gully their crops on the hill were parched—they just couldn't keep up. Later the co-op helped them combat the drought, and Chia dunged his fields again; still his crops were sparse, the corn-cobs no bigger than two thumbs with grains small as the teeth of a mouse. His yield per *mu* was just over a hundred catties.

After the autumn harvest Chia saw clearly how much better the co-op had done, for its threshing floor was just across from his house. And when the distribution of grain began, he watched from his window and secretly took notes to reckon up the size of their harvest.

"You're not a member of the co-op," said his wife. "What is it to you how they distribute grain? Why go to all this trouble?"

"You don't understand," said her husband knowingly. "The co-op's reaped plenty of grain, but I wonder just how much each household will get."

After the distribution of grain, Chia worked out all the individual shares. He discovered that two families of well-to-do middle peasants, both with about the same amount of land, labour power, cattle and tools as his own, had each got two thousand more catties of grain than he by joining the co-op. Having worked out this sum, he threw down his pen in disgust. "That settles it," he told his family. "We'd do better in the co-op. Let's go straight to Yung-kuei and apply for membership."

Chen Yung-kuei discussed the matter with the Party committee and co-op officers. They decided that Chia Chih-fa genuinely wanted now to join the collective and by accepting him they could help him to overcome his wrong ideas. So they agreed to have him.

Thus the membership of Tachai's co-op jumped suddenly from forty-nine to over seventy households. By the end of 1954, all the villagers had joined it.

The Three Battles of Wolf Lair

1

After the Tachai co-op was set up, Chen Yung-kuei, branch Party secretary and chairman of the co-op, resolved to lead the masses to transform their barren hills and gullies into arable land on which to grow more grain. His proposal won warm support from the county Party committee. After the autumn harvest that year they drew up a ten-year plan, determined to go all out to build embankments in their seven big gullies, filling the gaps behind these with good soil, and to terrace the summits and sides of their eight ridges.

This news fired the villagers with enthusiasm. "This time we'll really change poor old Tachai!" they cried.

However, a few people opposed this plan. Who? The landlords, rich peasants and several wavering well-off middle peasants. They said, "We've nothing here but steep hills and deep gullies. You can't change them with your piddling mattocks, blunt shovels, broken baskets and brittle shoulder-poles."

Chen Yung-kuei retorted boldly: "However big the hills, however deep the gullies, they're dead. But we are alive. Each ridge we level and each gully we fill in will be one ridge and one gully less. If we stick it out we can change the whole of Tachai."

"The whole village has only about eighty households with less than sixty able-bodied men. How long will it take you?"

"The Foolish Old Man was able to move two mountains," Chen Yung-kuei replied stoutly. "Why can't our eighty households fill in a few gullies? If we can't finish in three years, we'll stick at it for five or ten; if our lifetimes aren't enough, the job will be finished by our sons and grandsons."

Chen Yung-kuei, tenacious as the Foolish Old Man, was set on transforming Tachai. After repeated discussions, the poor and lower-middle peasants were all in favour of the ten-year plan. In the winter of 1953, they made a start on White Camel Gully.

The Taihang Mountains are bitterly cold in winter: water freezes as soon as poured out and the northwest wind cuts like a knife. But the co-op members plunged fearlessly into this battle in White Camel Gully, the men quarrying stones to build embankments, the women carrying earth to fill in the gaps. Within eighteen days they completed the job, which by rights should have taken a month. Eyeing the twenty-four stone embankments and five *mu* of new fields they had built up, the co-op members were beside themselves with joy. "These five *mu* aren't ordinary fields," they declared. "They're man-made!" To commemorate this victory, Chen Yung-kuei suggested that White Camel Gully be renamed "Co-operative Gully".

The success in reclaiming White Camel Gully strengthened their determination to transform Tachai. They battled on. By the spring of 1955, they had filled in six out of their seven gullies. Then the Party committee called on the villagers to launch an attack on the final gully — Wolf Lair.

Wolf Lair, the largest gully in Tachai, was over a mile long, a dozen yards across, and two hundred yards deep in some places. In the rainy season each summer, water poured down from all sides into this gully. Then rampaging freshets uprooted rocks too heavy for two men to carry and hurtled them far away. As the local people said:

Great freshets, wolves and rocks
Are Wolf Lair's bane;
No grass grows there in drought,
It floods in rain.

Building embankments to make fields here was a tall order, and some people doubted whether it could be done. After consultation with the Party committee Chen Yung-kuei decided to call a mass meeting that evening to discuss the matter.

In winter the days are very short in the mountains. It gets dark quickly. After supper Chen Yung-kuei, his pipe dangling from a string round his neck, went to the co-op office. A lamp had been lit there and Chia Cheng-jang the accountant was hard at work, clicking the beads of his abacus and jotting down calculations.

"Have you worked it out, Cheng-jang?" asked Chen Yung-kuei as he walked in.

"This is really something," the accountant exclaimed, looking up at Chen Yung-kuei. "I've just made a rough calculation. Reclaiming the whole of Wolf Lair will get us about twenty *mu* of arable land in the very first year."

"Sure you've figured it right?"

"Quite sure. With any luck we'll get more than twenty *mu*."

Assured on this point, Chen Yung-kuei sat down on a bench to smoke his pipe.

The co-op members, knowing that this meeting was to discuss the reclamation of Wolf Lair, turned up unusually early and in force. In less than the time needed to smoke a pipe the room was filled with people, men and women, old and young, all talking and laughing.

Before Chen Yung-kuei had finished smoking one pipe someone called out: "Uncle Yung-kuei, everyone's here now, why not start the meeting?"

It was young Liang's voice. Liang had worked very hard these years, working with more and more energy as he saw the swift transformation of Tachai. He was itching now to come to grips with Wolf Lair Gully.

"Hold your horses, young fellow," said Chen Yung-kuei. "The hard battle's still ahead." Knocking the ash out of his pipe, he stood

up and announced: "You all know we're here to discuss reclaiming Wolf Lair. Cheng-jang's just figured out that if we reclaim the whole gully we'll get about twenty *mu* of land in the first year. What do you say? Can we do it?"

"Goodness! Twenty *mu*!" some co-op members exclaimed.

"That's more than any of the other gullies we reclaimed. Sure, let's tackle it. Think how much more grain that means for the state."

"This is good for the revolution, so let's go ahead."

At this moment a be-whiskered man of about fifty stood up slowly from his seat by the door. This was Pan Shou-yeh, a well-to-do middle peasant who had just joined the co-op the previous year. He stroked his whiskers and drawled: "It sounds good, all right. But I doubt if we can do it."

"Why not?" a co-op member asked.

"The hill's high, the gully's deep and its sides are steep. The freshets there are greater than anywhere else. How can we tame them?"

"Why can't we?" another villager retorted. "We've already tamed six gullies out of seven. We can tame Wolf Lair too."

"Wolf Lair's different." Pan Shou-yeh shook his head. "It's not like White Camel Gully. It's *Wolf . . . Lair . . . Gully*."

"So what?" exploded young Liang, springing to his feet. "Wolf Lair's only a gully, a bit larger than the others. It's true that it's deep and steep. But we'll build more solid embankments. As long as we have the spirit of the Foolish Old Man who moved mountains we can lick even a Tiger Lair, to say nothing of a little Wolf Lair!"

This forceful announcement was greeted by warm applause. Pan Shou-yeh simply grunted, then lowered his head and kept quiet.

The villagers' approval of young Liang's speech gladdened Chen Yung-kuei's heart. Seeing that it was late, he consulted some other cadres and then declared: "Taming Wolf Lair is a big thing for Tachai. As you all put it, so long as it's good for the revolution we'll do it. Now we'll take a vote the usual way. Those in favour clap, those against. . . ." A burst of applause broke out. ". . . Those against, raise your hands."

Pan Shou-yeh raised one arm, intending to put up his hand, but when he saw that no other hands had been raised he quickly thrust

both his own up his sleeves and said with a sheepish smile: "It's cold today."

Chen Yung-kuei replied meaningfully: "If you get closer to the rest of us you'll feel warmer." Pan, his nose twitching, squeezed in among the others and sat down. Then Chen Yung-kuei announced: "We'll start our all-out assault on Wolf Lair tomorrow!"

The next day Chen Yung-kuei got up at dawn. A white towel tied around his head and a mattock over his shoulder, he set off for the work-site. It was the coldest time of winter. Though the wind was not too strong early in the morning, the temperature remained at about twenty degrees below zero. Before very long, his eyebrows were white with frost.

As he neared Wolf Lair he heard thudding sounds from the gully. Who could be out so early? He hurried up the slope ahead and looked down: a short, spry youngster was lustily swinging a mattock. It was young Liang. Chen Yung-kuei climbed down the gully to accost him, but the lad turned abruptly to hail him first: "So it's you, Uncle Yung-kuei. Why are you out so early?"

"Aren't you still earlier?"

"I can't sleep when there's a job waiting to be done." Liang smiled ingenuously.

"Neither can I," was Chen Yung-kuei's reply.

They set to work hammer and tongs, so that by the time Chia Lai-heng and the others arrived they found a pile of stones by the site of the first embankment. The co-op members promptly plunged into battle. Piles of stones soon mounted up, but the digging of the foundation went very slowly. What was the matter? The fact was that the gully was so deep and its sides so steep that in winter it got practically no sun and the ground was frozen solid. The men's mattocks rebounded after each hard blow, jarring and numbing their arms. Though they strained and sweated they made little headway.

"What a hell of a place!" one lad grumbled. "So hard to dig."

"We'll never reclaim Wolf Lair with just these poor mattocks and shovels," put in Pan Shou-yeh scornfully.

"Why not?" retorted Chen Yung-kuei, aware that the reclamation of Wolf Lair was not only a battle to conquer nature but a battle to

overcome conservative ideas. "You're wrong, Pan Shou-yeh. Men can move mountains. So long as we're all of one mind, we can make Wolf Lair bow its head." He went over to the lad who had grumbled and said: "Don't lose heart, young fellow. Wolf Lair's only a paper tiger: if you're weak it'll bully you, if you're tough it'll give way." He took the mattock from the young man's hands and swung it hard against the frozen ground.

Soon the women arrived with baskets of food for the men. Chen Yung-kuei called a halt for breakfast, and while the others had their meal he squatted down by the site of the embankment to think. The layer of frozen earth was so thick that it was holding up the digging of the foundation. How to speed up the work? "Your meal's getting cold, Yung-kuei. Come and eat, quick," a voice behind him urged. He stood up and walked over to the others. But as he picked up his earthenware casserole another co-op member said: "It's cold. Better heat it."

"Heat it." This gave Chen Yung-kuei an idea. Putting down the casserole he called to Sung Li-ying: "Li-ying, all you women go and fetch us some firewood, quick. The more the better."

"We've all finished our meal," replied Sung Li-ying. "You don't need much firewood to warm up your food. I'll fetch you a couple of branches."

"No, we need a lot. Hurry!" insisted Chen Yung-kuei. "I want to thaw out the soil."

"Thaw it out? That's an ideal!" The co-op members cheered. "You go on with your meal while we go and collect firewood."

Soon they brought back a pile of branches and dry grass and lit bonfires on the site of the foundation. Chen Yung-kuei made them sit round the fires to rest and warm up, while he read them Chairman Mao's glorious work *The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains*. By the time the fires burned out the ground was softened and digging it had become easy. The co-op members pitched in with their mattocks and shovels, working like a house on fire until the sun set behind the mountains and stars twinkled overhead. When they knocked off they left behind them a stone embankment, the first embankment to be built in Wolf Lair.

That winter all the able-bodied men in Tachai, over fifty of them, put their shoulders to the wheel. Each day they went off to work before dawn and returned home after dark, eating their breakfast and midday meal on the work-site. In three months they built thirty-eight stone embankments and terraced more than twenty *mu* of land. The following spring, for the first time in Wolf Lair, they sowed, fertilized and weeded the fields there. The crops, well-cared for, thrived. Chen Yung-kuei and the poor and lower-middle peasants felt jubilant. A bumper harvest was in sight. But just then it poured with rain and freshets roaring down from the mountains washed away all the thirty-eight embankments they had worked so hard to build as well as the tens of thousands of cubic metres of earth they had carried there. The entire crop was lost. More than twenty *mu* of "man-made fields" were laid waste. Wolf Lair was back where it started.

2

The failure of the first assault on Wolf Lair weighed heavily on the hearts of Tachai's poor and lower-middle peasants. And the one who took it most to heart was Chen Yung-kuei. For days, whether at meetings, under the big willow where they gathered to eat or in their own cave-houses, people talked of nothing else. A few well-to-do middle peasants took this chance to beat a retreat and started to grumble.

Early one morning without stopping for breakfast, Chen Yung-kuei set off to the county town to report to the Party committee there Tachai's failure to reclaim Wolf Lair and the different reactions of the villagers, as well as to ask for instructions. He was received by one of the Party committee who seeing the anxious expression on his face patted him on the shoulder and invited him to sit down. Having heard his report he said slowly, "Your attempt to tame Wolf Lair's a step in the right direction, Yung-kuei. The trouble is you haven't mastered the laws of this work." Taking a copy of *On Practice* from his drawer, he offered it with both hands to Chen Yung-kuei. "Take this back with you," he told him. "Study it seriously,

then get your people to draw a lesson from their failure. I'm sure Wolf Lair can be reclaimed." Putting Chairman Mao's celebrated treatise in his pocket, Chen Yung-kuei returned to Tachai with a light heart.

The next morning, as Chen Yung-kuei took his rice bowl towards the big willow tree he heard Pan Shou-yeh telling a co-op member who was squatting there beside him: "I said Wolf Lair couldn't be tamed. But some people insisted it could. Now see where they've landed us: all our hard work's gone for nothing, washed away by a single flood."

Chen Yung-kuei, hearing this, saw red. Striding quickly forward he shouted: "What's that you say, Pan Shou-yeh?"

Seeing who was standing in front of him, the middle peasant stuttered: "N-nothing."

"Quit griping," Chen Yung-kuei warned him. "What d'you mean by saying: 'All our hard work's gone for nothing, washed away by a single flood'? In three winters and springs we've tamed six out of seven gullies. Do you call that nothing?" He fished out *On Practice* from his pocket and confidently told the others: "Chairman Mao points out here that failure is the mother of success. If we sum up our experience seriously and find out why we failed, we can overcome all difficulties and conquer Wolf Lair. We failed because our embankments weren't solid enough, their foundations weren't deep enough, and the stones we used weren't big enough to stand up to the freshets."

The fact was that on his return from the county town Chen Yung-kuei had taken a few mouthfuls of cold corn-pone, then gone with some other members of Tachai's Party committee to Wolf Lair to analyse the reasons for their fiasco. By the ruined embankments they had discovered the answer. Now the co-op members were convinced by Chen Yung-kuei's reasoning and their morale instantly soared. After further discussion they reached the decision to launch another attack on Wolf Lair that winter.

In the winter of 1956, the Tachai people started their second assault on Wolf Lair. To avoid renewed failure they took precautionary measures: dug the foundations one and a half yards deep



and made the thirty-eight embankments more solid by using four rows of stones instead of one, choosing bigger stones this time. In addition, at the top of the gully they built a reservoir one *mu* in area and six or seven yards deep to slow down the freshets, while on the upper left side of the gully they dug retaining ditches to reduce the amount of water pouring further down. With more people joining in and good team-work, they completed the job in less than three months — much faster than the first time.

On the day when the project was finished, as they walked home past the new fields the sight of the sturdy embankments filled all their hearts with joy.

“These embankments are strong as walls of bronze,” someone gloated. “No freshets can wash them away. I bet they’d stand up even to battering by the Yangtse and Yellow River.”

“You have to use a mule to know its worth,” Chen Yung-kuei reminded them. “The strength of these embankments will have to be tested by storms.” He said this loud enough for all to hear, not wanting people to get too cock-sure.

The spring after Wolf Lair was reclaimed for the second time, they sowed crops there again. At the sight of the flourishing young plants Chen Yung-kuei smiled. At the same time he felt worried, for the rainy season was approaching once more. The weight on his shoulders seemed heavier every day, and he ran to the gully to watch whenever it rained.

One night Chen Yung-kuei was woken by a crash of thunder. He sat up and looked out of the window. The thunder and lightning were shortly followed by rain, and before he had finished dressing it was pouring. “Hell!” he swore. He lit a paraffin lantern, jammed a straw hat on his head and dashed out with a shovel toward Wolf Lair. When he reached Ephedra Gully the rain was coming down in torrents. Sloshing anxiously up the eastern edge of Wolf Lair he examined the first embankment. Nothing wrong there. He went on to the second: that too was standing firm. Then he checked all the others in turn . . . not one had collapsed. Easier in his mind he climbed up to the new reservoir. But as he neared it a thunderous crash made him cry out in dismay: the reservoir’s embankment had

been breached. A flash of lightning lit up the gaps through which angry waves were racing. Then he heard a series of crashes from down below. He raced down the slope to look. All the embankments, intact a few minutes ago, had been razed by the cataract from the reservoir. Once more, a whole winter and spring of hard work had been washed away by the flood!

Chen Yung-kuei's heart ached as if pierced by ten thousand arrows. He fixed incredulous eyes on the rocks cascading down the gully. Then he retraced his steps to examine each of the thirty-eight ruined embankments. When he reached the top he sat down on a boulder, so deep in thought, so overwhelmed by grief that he did not even notice when the rain stopped. Through his mind flashed scene after scene from the two battles they had waged against Wolf Lair. Was it really impossible to tame this gully? Ought they to beat a retreat? One thing he knew: the battle of Wolf Lair was more than a fight against nature, it was a serious class struggle too. However great their setbacks, they must not retreat. The only thing was to fight on! If they pulled out now that would mean admitting defeat to the class enemies — the landlords and rich peasants. It would boost their arrogance and lower the morale of the poor and lower-middle peasants. Chen Yung-kuei's mind was in a tumult. Springing to his feet, he clenched his fists and swore: "Come on! We're ready for even bigger storms!"

A fiery red sun rose over the Taihang Mountains. Standing on the crest of Tiger-head Hill, Chen Yung-kuei gazed toward Peking and seemed to hear our great leader Chairman Mao encouraging him: **"In times of difficulty we must not lose sight of our achievements, must see the bright future and must pluck up our courage."** This filled him with boundless strength. He took up his shovel and strode back to the village.

Once home he put away his shovel, took off his straw hat and hung the lantern on the wall. He sat down on the *kang* to smoke a pipe and ponder the problem. After news of this fresh disaster spread, what would the cadres and masses think? How would the landlords and rich peasants react? What would well-off middle peasants like Pan Shou-yeh say? And how was he to rally the villag-

ers? The more he thought, the more problems occurred to him, the more work he realized needed to be done. He had finished two pipes, one after the other, when his wife came into the room. The frown on his face and the mud on his clothes made her start.

"*Aiya!*" she cried. "Where have you been?"

"Wolf Lair."

"What about the embankments?"

"Washed away."

His wife heaved a long sigh, then went to the kitchen to fetch him a big bowl of rice. "Here, have your breakfast," she urged, putting the bowl before him. But Chen Yung-kuei went on puffing away at his pipe.

Now several members of the Party committee burst in.

"Uncle Yung-kuei, Wolf Lair's a wash-out again!" cried young Liang in distress.

"I know. Have you seen it for yourselves?"

"We're just back from there," Chia Cheng-jiang told him.

Silence fell. Some of them squatted down to smoke, others lowered their heads in thought. Even young Liang, usually so lively, said not a word. Chen Yung-kuei reflected: A household in trouble looks to its neighbours for help; our Tachai villagers look to the Party committee. If the cadres feel so hopeless, how can they do ideological work among the masses and give the lead to fight on? He knocked out his pipe on the edge of the *kang*, then put it on the table.

"We'll hold a committee meeting now," he said. "Let's discuss whether our idea of reclaiming the gullies is right or wrong."

"Of course it's right," young Liang answered. "If we don't tame them, we can't wipe out Tachai's poverty and backwardness."

"Should we reclaim Wolf Lair too?"

"Yes, we should."

"I agree we should," said someone else. "But we've failed twice. The masses may have lost heart."

"Whether the masses lose heart or not depends on us cadres," Chen Yung-kuei pointed out. "What does reclaiming Wolf Lair mean? It means taming the floods to revolutionize our barren hills.

Since that's the correct path to take, we must stick to it even if it costs us our lives."

"Yung-kuei's right," put in Chia Chin-tsai. "Whether the masses lose heart or not depends entirely on us."

"Of course our two failures will affect folks' morale," Chen Yung-kuei went on. "Some of them may want to give up. And the landlords and rich peasants may try to stir up trouble and attack us. This is a testing time for us Communists. We must stand firm and not waver."

His words at once put fresh heart into these Communists who had known such bitterness in the bad old days, redoubling their confidence in victory.

3

After supper Chen Yung-kuei and the other cadres went to the co-op office to hold a general meeting. They waited a long time, but very few people showed up. Only after Chen Yung-kuei sent young Liang and Chia Lai-heng from door to door to call them again did the co-op members start arriving in twos and threes. When almost all were present, Chen Yung-kuei declared the meeting open.

"The purpose of today's meeting is to discuss whether we're taking the right line in reclaiming Wolf Lair or not," he announced. "Shall we stick at it, or shall we give up half way?"

Meetings in Tachai had always been cheerful affairs with a keen, lively atmosphere. But today's was the exception to the rule. Nobody wanted to talk. Some smoked their pipes, some sighed, all eyeing each other in silence. Though Chen Yung-kuei urged them to speak, the only ones to open their mouths were a few activists.

"Since you haven't thought the problem through, we'll adjourn today's meeting," said Chen Yung-kuei. "Go back and think it over. In a day or two we'll get together again."

Since the second disaster in Wolf Lair discussion had been rife throughout the village, no two people thinking alike. Chia Yung-huo, rich peasant and diehard, seized this chance to raise a stink. On the sly he made scathing remarks to Pan Shou-yeh and other

middle peasants. "Men have men's way, water has water's way," he said. "How can men beat the Dragon King? This is a sheer waste of energy and money."

Pan Shou-yeh had never really believed that Wolf Lair could be reclaimed. Now, at the instigation of the rich peasant, he grumbled to anyone he came across: "Call this taming Wolf Lair? Two winters of back-breaking work washed away by floods! I'm not going back to perish of cold there this winter."

Talk of this sort further undermined the morale of some co-op members.

After the meeting broke up, the only ones left in the room were Chen Yung-kuei and a few other cadres.

"The last few days Pan Shou-yeh has been pouring cold water and discouraging everyone," said Chia Chin-tsai thoughtfully as he filled his pipe. "We ought to give him a good talking to."

"Our people are too easily discouraged." Young Liang indignantly pounded his fist on the table. "A few sarcastic remarks and they lose heart. Let him go on sneering, I say, while we go on tackling Wolf Lair. We must stick to our guns!"

While listening to his comrades-in-arms, Chen Yung-kuei counted on his fingers the co-op members who had spoken at the meeting. They were all former poor peasants and hired hands. This suddenly gave him an idea. He said: "Pan Shou-yeh's the wavering type who'll beat a retreat when difficulties crop up. But I think someone's been putting words in his mouth. Seems to me someone else is behind him."

"You mean Chia Yung-huo?" put in Chao Ta-ho, their security officer. "A couple of days ago, I spotted him sneaking out from Pan Shou-yeh's place after dark. I asked him what he was doing there. He just stuttered some feeble excuse. He must be taking advantage of our difficulties to stir up trouble."

"Someone told me yesterday that Chia Yung-huo keeps calling on Pan Shou-yeh these days," Chen Yung-kuei added. "We must step up our vigilance. We must also do our very best to straighten out the villagers' thinking." They discussed how to put fresh heart into the masses, then went their different ways.

Chen Yung-kuei went that same evening to see the poor peasant Old Keng-yun. He found the old man busy making tinders out of the stems of weeds. Squatting down by the door to help him, Chen Yung-kuei asked: "Uncle, do you think we should go ahead with taming Wolf Lair?"

"We're just wasting our time." The old man sighed. "We can't tame it. To have built up the other gullies is good enough."

"Of the seven gullies we've tamed six," said Chen Yung-kuei. "That's not at all bad. But if we give up Wolf Lair, we'll reap twenty *mu* less grain each year; we'll be letting down the collective, the Party and Chairman Mao."

"That's no way to talk, Yung-kuei. It's not that we don't want to reclaim it, it's that we can't. We can fail once or twice, but we can't afford to fail a third or fourth time."

"Uncle, we were all oppressed in the old society," Chen Yung-kuei rejoined. "At that time, all the hills and land belonged to landlords and rich peasants. We tilled the fields year in year out; but the harder we worked the more those devils fleeced us. Now things have changed. The hills and land belong to us. If we don't build them up, who will? Even if we fail a fifth or sixth time, we must go on!"

This aroused the old poor peasant's deep class feeling. He stopped twisting tinders to clap his big hands on his knees. "All right then, we'll keep up the fight to tame Wolf Lair. It'll only cost us some strength, it won't take away our houses and land."

Four days later, in the evening, the co-op office was crowded with people again. Chen Yung-kuei first led them to study *The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains*, then they resumed their discussion on taming Wolf Lair. Old Keng-yun took the floor first. He was followed by Chia Cheng-jang who said: "In the old society, my father and his elder brother tilled three *mu* of land on Chaopei Ridge. Each year they sowed a gourdful of seeds but harvested only half a gourdful of grain — how could they feed the family? So they started reclaiming waste land around their three *mu*. They built retaining walls and terraced fields, sweating away till their backs were bent and my uncle even lost one arm. At last they built up

ten *mu* of good fields. But in those days Tachai belonged to the rich. All the grain my family reaped after a year of back-breaking work wasn't enough to pay the rent. Those ten *mu* my dad and uncle reclaimed with their sweat and blood were used by the landlords to squeeze more money out of us." He stopped to glance at the crowd.

It was very quiet in the room.

"Today, we poor and lower-middle peasants have become the masters of our own fate and the masters of our land," said Chen Yung-kuei. "Every hill and stream belongs to us. The power is in our hands now, and this makes the landlords and rich peasants gnash their teeth. They've been gloating over our two failures. We must show them we have guts. Even if we lose pounds of weight, we must build up Wolf Lair!" Chen Yung-kuei's words warmed the hearts of all and boosted their morale.

"Even the moon wanes sometimes," one remarked. "How can we be successful all the time? We must persevere."

"People who are afraid of stumbling will never be able to climb high mountains," said another. "Those who fear difficulties can't make revolution. We must go ahead."

The meeting was in full swing when a group of people pushed someone into the room. "Speak up, why are you sabotaging the work on Wolf Lair?" they shouted.

"Speak up!"

"Out with it, quick!"

The man they had pushed in was the rich peasant Chia Yung-huo.

Chao Ta-ho jumped on to a bench and told the co-op members indignantly: "This scoundrel hates to see us building up our hills and gullies. He's seized on our setback in Wolf Lair to stir up discontent everywhere he goes. A little while ago he was blethering: 'Men have men's way, water has water's way. How can mere mortals beat the Dragon King?'" He rounded on Chia. "Did you say that or not?"

"Come clean!" shouted everyone. Chia Yung-huo shook with fear.

At this Pan Shou-yeh, sitting in a conspicuous place, was unable to keep quiet any longer. He recalled the things he had been saying



the last few days and realized he had been fooled by this rich peasant. He must try to clear himself. Screwing up his courage, he jumped to his feet and said: "Chao Ta-ho's quite right. After the embankments collapsed Chia Yung-huo also said to me: 'A whole winter's back-breaking work has been washed away.' Because my political level is low, I was taken in."

"He's said worse things than that," Chao Ta-ho declared. "Ac-

ording to this swine, reclaiming the gullies is a sheer 'waste of energy and money'."

"What do you mean by 'waste'?" Chen Yung-kuei asked the rich peasant angrily. "We poor and lower-middle peasants think we've done fine. Of our seven gullies, only Wolf Lair remains untamed. Isn't that fine? Are you blind? You're deliberately undermining our collective economy and throwing mud at us poor and lower-middle peasants."

By now the place was packed. The discussion had turned into a mass meeting to denounce the enemy.

The thoroughgoing ideological work done by the Party members and this struggle against Chia Yung-huo made the people of Tachai more determined than ever to reclaim Wolf Lair.

During the day Chen Yung-kuei worked in the fields and discussed the problem with the co-op members. At night, lying on the *kang*, he continued turning over in his mind the reason for their two failures.

Late one evening as he sat by the lamp studying *On Practice* again and trying to think out a way to tame Wolf Lair, he looked up at the concave smoke-blackened ceiling of his cave. How had it managed to stand the weight of the hill above for so many years? he wondered. Come to that, how did arched stone bridges without piers stand up for generations on end to the weight of heavy traffic? It dawned on him that the arched form must have special powers of resistance. He jumped up in excitement to share this idea with his com-

rades; but just as he reached the door in came two men: the poor peasants Li Hsi-ching and Old Keng-yun.

Before he had time to greet them Old Keng-yun pointed up at the ceiling and asked: "Yung-kuei, why is the ceiling vaulted?" Turning round to point outside, he asked again: "Why is the stone bridge in Back Valley arched?"

"We've hit on the same idea, mates." Chen Yung-kuei beamed. "Tell me what you think, quick."

"A few of us old fellows have been putting our heads together to track down the reason for our failure," Li Hsi-ching said. "We all think it's because the retaining walls we built in Wolf Lair were too straight." With his finger he drew two lines, one straight and one curved, in the form of a bow. "This is how we should build embankments: Bow-backed on the upper side and straight on the lower. When freshets pound on the arch of the bow it will stand up to them just like a vaulted ceiling or an arched bridge."

Chen Yung-kuei nodded. Grasping Li's hands, he said eagerly: "That's a good idea, a very good idea. We'll tame Wolf Lair this time for sure." He started leading the two old peasants out.

"Where are we going?" Old Keng-yun asked.

"To talk this over with Chia Cheng-jang, Lai-heng and the others."

"What's the hurry? Won't it keep till tomorrow?" Old Keng-yun chuckled.

"If you're in no hurry," Chen Yung-kuei retorted, "why knock me up in the middle of the night?" All three of them burst out laughing.

As soon as it was dawn, Chen Yung-kuei called on all the village cadres in turn, then summoned the co-op members to a mass meeting. When they learned why the embankments had been washed away and the new proposal for making them more solid, all agreed to launching a third assault on Wolf Lair.

4

Soon winter came again. The third battle of Wolf Lair was about to begin.

58



Studying Marxism-Leninism and Chairman Mao's Works (serial picture)
by Li Chi-yuan, Lin Fan, Wang Chiao and Meng Ching-chiang

On the eve of this new assault a rally was held in Tachai at which Party Secretary Chen Yung-kuei gave the co-op members a briefing.

"We've learned from our two failures," he said, "and worked out a new way to construct embankments. This time we'll build thirty-eight arched embankments in Wolf Lair with foundations five metres deep. Our old embankments were the same thickness on top as underneath, so they couldn't stand up to the freshets. This time we'll taper them like pagodas rising from a broad base of seven or eight rows of stones. The last two times we just piled stones on top of each other; this time we'll fill all the cracks with pebbles and mortar. This is a tall order. But we Tachai people have the spirit of the Foolish Old Man who moved mountains, and we've learned a lesson from our failures. We must make Wolf Lair bow its head this time. How about it, comrades? Can we do it?"

"Yes!" they roared.

Stirred by their spirited response, Chen Yung-kuei held up his hand for silence. "All right, comrades. Let me assign the tasks." At once there was quiet. "First, to build the embankments we need plenty of stones. Who'll take on the job of quarrying?"

Before he could finish a man stepped out from the crowd. Short and wiry, in his fifties, he had square jaws, a broad wrinkled forehead and a perpetual smile on his face. This was the old hero Chia Chin-tsai, a stone-mason and one of Tachai's oldest Party members. He called out loudly: "Give me the job, Yung-kuei!"

Looking at this old hero who always fought to shoulder the heaviest loads, Chen Yung-kuei approved: "Fine! Old Chia will see to the quarrying. And bringing down the stones after they're quarried will be another difficult job. We're asking young Liang to take charge of it."

Young Liang jumped on to a bench and shouted: "Don't worry, I'll see you get all the stones needed. To tame Wolf Lair, I'm willing to carry down the whole of Tiger-head Hill!"

Applause burst out.

"Chia Lai-heng and I will be in charge of building the embankments," Chen Yung-kuei continued. "Chia Cheng-jang will see to digging the foundations and keeping us supplied with mortar."

He read out the names of the men in each team and was about to wind up the meeting when someone called out: "Yung-kuei, you've given all the men tasks, why have you left us women out?" It was Sung Li-ying, chairman of the Tachai women's association.

Chen Yung-kuei grinned. He had certain tasks in mind for the women, but not knowing how many of them would be willing to work in the open in winter he had not announced their assignment. Now he said readily: "Sure, women prop up half the sky. We'll give Sung Li-ying's team the job of carrying earth to fill in gaps and delivering the mortar. Cheng-jang can concentrate on the foundation."

All the women clapped their hands at this.

These dispositions made, the bugle sounded early the next morning. Then, a mattock on shoulder, Chen Yung-kuei strode off towards the morning sun, leading his intrepid assault force up the hill.

Upon arrival at Wolf Lair, Chen Yung-kuei shouted: "We've been told that Wolf Lair can't be tamed. Now we Tachai people are going to pull the wolf's teeth. We'll see who comes out on top."

Swinging his mattock hard he set to work. All the co-op members followed suit, some digging foundations, some quarrying stones, some bringing these down to the gully, some fetching mortar, others building the embankments. The work-site was a hive of activity. Before the sun sank behind the western mountains a bow-shaped embankment seven yards high, fourteen yards long and two yards thick at the top had appeared in Wolf Lair Gully.

First thing the next morning when Chen Yung-kuei opened his door he saw it was snowing hard. The ground was white, the snow lying more than one foot deep, and the northwest wind was howling. He stepped outside and observed footprints on the path leading up the mountain. Chia Chin-tsai must have gone up already to quarry stones. Since the work of building was going ahead so fast, Chen Yung-kuei decided to give him some reinforcements. With this in mind he walked quickly to the village.

Chen Yung-kuei's guess was right. When Chia Chin-tsai got up at dawn and looked outside he thought: It's freezing today. Never mind. Snow can't put out the fire in a Communist's heart. Cold may freeze the ground but it can't stop me quarrying. He scrambled into his black padded clothes, stuck his pipe through his belt and rolled up his trouser-legs. Then he put on a padded army cap and thick padded shoes, slung a tool bag over one shoulder, a sledge-hammer over the other and, a broom in his left hand, set off for the quarry.

When he reached the quarry he put down his hammer and tool bag, swept a space clear of snow and set to work. In less time than it takes for a meal, he chiselled a hole in the rock. Inserting a spike into this he struck hard on it with his hammer. But the green-blue rock, ideal for building embankments or reinforcing cave-houses, had no cracks or seams and was as unyielding as granite. He untied his belt, took off his jacket, planted his feet apart and hammered with all his might. Eyes wide, lips clamped together, arm-muscles bulging, he looked like a man of iron. Surely he could smash any rock, however hard. But when he struck the forty-ninth blow, his sledge-hammer broke into two. The rock here was hard as flint!

Just at this moment two young men came running up. "Grandad Chin-tsai," they announced, "the building's going so fast, more stones are needed. Uncle Yung-kuei's sent us to be your assistants."

"That's fine. I'll be glad of your help," replied the stone-mason.

The two young men were about to set to work when they noticed the broken hammer. Picking up the handle they saw blood-stains on it. Admiration for the old man's drive and revolutionary spirit made them work with a will; but because they were inexperienced, though they hammered away till they were covered with sweat the rock remained intact.

"Knock off for a rest, lads," said Chia Chin-tsai with a smile. "I've just struck forty-nine blows. Let's see if I can't crack it with a hundred."



Spitting on his hands he took over one of the hammers, swung it high and struck with all his might, again and again. At the ninety-eighth blow he roared: "Crack!" The rock split neatly apart. The two young men, applauding, used crowbars to roll this quarried rock over the cliff. Now that a start had been made, the rest of

the quarrying was easier and soon they had cut a big pile of rocks.

At this stage transport became the major problem, with the ground deep in snow and the mountain path so slippery. Young Liang and Chao Ta-ho rose to meet the challenge, carrying rocks together and trying to outdo each other. Young Liang was lightly built and a whole head shorter than the stocky, tough security officer. The latter, pointing to a rock weighing more than five hundred catties, asked: "What about this one?"

"Can do!" young Liang replied.

They tied an iron chain around it and slipped their carrying-pole through a link in the chain. Others standing by shouted: "Up!" But as the two men straightened up, their carrying-pole which was thick as a bowl snapped, even the iron chain broke into two. They took a new carrying-pole and chain and tried again. And this time they succeeded in hoisting up the rock. But the whirling snow made it hard to see a thing. They lurched slowly down the slippery path and reached the work-site looking like two snowmen.

Having sent reinforcements to the quarry, Chen Yung-kuei himself went to the work-site with Chia Cheng-jang, Chia Lai-heng and some other cadres before the appointed time. They swept the ground and set to work in spite of the snow which kept dashing into their faces, some delivering mortar, others carrying stones. Chen Yung-kuei, a master mason, deftly fitted stones of all sizes and shapes into place.

Winter mornings in the north are bitterly cold. The whirling snow and howling north wind chapped their hands so that the sharp stones "bit" them and drew blood. But Chen Yung-kuei and his comrades worked on regardless. In pairs they heaved into place rocks weighing three or four hundred catties each, then filled in the gaps with stones and made all fast with mortar. The solid arched embankment grew apace.

As the work speeded up, the storm too gained momentum.

"Are you cold, comrades?" shouted Chen Yung-kuei.

"Not us!"

“The cold and frost can’t sap our determination; the icy wind can’t shake our confidence. We Tachai people have guts!”

After this third fierce battle Wolf Lair at last bowed its head to the heroic people of Tachai. The project planned to take a month was completed successfully in twenty-seven days. Thirty-eight big arched embankments stood like massive walls of bronze in the wind and snow. The terraced fields reclaimed here were to bring Tachai some of its highest yields.

(To be continued)

Illustrated by Chen Yu-bsien



Written for the Sake of Forgetting

1

I have long been meaning to write a few words in memory of some young writers. My sole reason is the hope that in this way I may shake off the grief and rage which have assailed my heart now for two years, so that I can relax. To put it bluntly, I want, in fact, to forget them.

Two years ago, in February 1931, during the night of the seventh or the morning of the eighth, our five young writers were murdered.* No Shanghai papers dared report this at the time: They may not have wanted to or may not have thought it newsworthy. *Literary News* alone carried a few articles containing veiled allusions to the matter. In Number 11 (dated May 25), Mr. Lin Mang wrote in his "Impressions of Pai Mang":**

*On February 7, 1931, the five young writers Yin Fu, Jou Shih, Li Wei-shen, Hu Yeh-pin and Feng Keng were secretly murdered by the Kuomintang reactionaries. Lu Hsun wrote this essay on the second anniversary of their death.

**Pai Mang was another name for Yin Fu.

He wrote a good many poems and translated some by the Hungarian poet Petofi. When Lu Hsun, then editor of *Torrent*, received his manuscript, he wrote to say that he would like to meet him. But as Pai Mang did not care to meet celebrities, finally Lu Hsun looked him up himself and encouraged him as best he could to write. But the young man could not shut himself up in a tiny room to write. He went his own way again and before long he was once more arrested. . . .

This account is actually incorrect. Pai Mang was not so arrogant. It was he who called on me, though not because I had expressed a wish to see him. I was not so arrogant either as to write casually to a contributor I did not know, telling him to call on me. The reason for our meeting was perfectly natural. He had sent in a translation from the German of a life of Petofi, and I wrote to ask him for the original, which was printed as the preface to the collected poems. He found it more convenient to deliver the book in person than to post it. He was a young man in his twenties with regular features and a dark complexion. I forget what we talked about on that occasion except that he told me that his surname was Hsu and he came from Hsiangshan; and when I asked why the woman who collected his mail had such a peculiar name (just what was peculiar about it I forget), he said she had peculiar tastes because she was a romantic, but he didn't see eye to eye with her on everything. This is all I remember.

That night I checked his translation roughly with the original and found that, apart from one or two slips, he had deliberately mistranslated the meaning of one phrase. Apparently he did not like the expression "national poet", for in each case he had changed this to "poet of the people". The next day I received a letter from him saying he regretted our meeting: he had talked too much while I had talked too little and seemed so cold that he had felt a certain constraint. I wrote back explaining that it was human nature to speak little at a first meeting, and told him he should not alter the original to suit his own taste. As he had left his book with me I sent him two volumes of Petofi from my own collection, suggesting that he translate a few

more poems for our readers. He did so, and brought the translations over himself, and this time we talked more. These poems and the life were later published in Volume II, Number 5 of *Torrent*, the last number to appear.

The third time we met was on a hot day, I remember, when someone knocked at the gate and I opened it to find Pai Mang. He was wearing a thick padded gown and dripping with sweat, which made both of us burst out laughing. Only then did he tell me that he was a revolutionary, had just been released from gaol, and had had all his clothes and books confiscated, including the two volumes I had given him. He had borrowed this gown from a friend who had nothing thinner, for he had to wear a long gown; so he couldn't help sweating like that. I dare say this is the occasion Mr. Lin Mang was referring to when he said: "He was once more arrested."

Delighted by his release, I immediately paid him for his translations so that he could buy a thinner gown. Still, I was very upset to think of my books falling into the hands of the police — pearls cast before swine. There was nothing special about the books themselves, one being a volume of prose, another of verse compiled by the German translator, who claimed that these were more comprehensive collections than any to be found in Hungary itself. They were printed by Reclam's Universal-Bibliothek and could therefore be bought anywhere in Germany for less than a dollar. But to me they were treasures, for I had ordered them from Germany through the Marusen Bookshop* thirty years before, when I was a passionate admirer of Petofi. I was afraid, the books being so cheap, that the shop would be unwilling to order them; thus I made my request with considerable trepidation. For a while I carried both volumes about with me; but as times alter men's affections change, and I gave up the idea of translating Petofi. I decided it would be a happy fate for these books to be given to this lad who was as devoted to Petofi as I had formerly been. That is why I took this presentation so seriously that I got Jou Shih to deliver the two volumes for me. It was too

*A bookshop in Tokyo selling Western books.

bad that they had fallen into the hands of "Three-strippers"* and their like!

2

It was not modesty alone that stopped me from trying to meet contributors. The desire to save trouble was an important factor. I knew from long experience that nine out of ten young people, especially young writers, were hyper-sensitive and took themselves tremendously seriously. If you were not very careful, misunderstandings tended to arise. So in general I avoided them. Even if we met I was naturally too nervous to dream of asking any favours. The only young writer in Shanghai in those days with whom I dared laugh and chat freely, whom I even asked to do odd jobs for me, was Jou Shih who had taken the books to Pai Mang.

I forget when and where I first met Jou Shih. I believe he once said he had attended my lectures in Peking, so it must have been eight or nine years earlier. I forget, too, how we became on close terms in Shanghai. However, he was then living in Chingyunli, only four or five doors from my house, and somehow or other we struck up a friendship. The first time he called I fancy he told me his name was Chao Ping-fu (Peaceful Return). But once, when talking about the colossal effrontery of the gentry in his parts, he said a certain local worthy had taken a fancy to his name and told him to stop using it because he wanted it for his son. This makes me suspect that the *fu* in his original name was the one meaning "happiness", for that would appeal more to a country gentleman than the *fu* meaning "return". He came from Ninghai, Taichow, as you could tell at a glance from his brusque Taichow manner. He was rather standoffish too, sometimes reminding me of Fang Hsiao-ju** who I imagine must have been very like him.

*Members of the police force in the International Settlement of Shanghai at that time, who wore three stripes on their armlets.

**Fang Hsiao-ju (1357—1402), a Ming-dynasty writer from the same district as Jou Shih. Loyal to Emperor Hui-ti, he refused to work for Prince Yen who usurped the throne, and therefore he was killed.

He shut himself up at home writing or translating; but after we had met a number of times and found a good deal in common he got hold of a few more young people who shared our views, and we set up the Dawn Blossoms Press. Its aim was to introduce the literature of East and North Europe and to bring in foreign woodcuts, for we felt we should give what support we could to this vigorous, simple art. Then, in line with this aim, we put out *Dawn Blossoms, Modern Short Stories of All Countries* and *The Garden of Art*. We also published the paintings of Koji Kukiwa* to harass the pseudo-artists of the Shanghai Bund, that is, to show Yeh Ling-feng up as an impostor.

Jou Shih had no money, though. He borrowed over two hundred dollars to start printing. In addition to buying the paper, he did most of the editing and most of the odd jobs — running to the printers, making prints or proof-reading. He was often disappointed, however, and would frown as he related what had happened. All his early works breathe gloom, but actually this was not his character: he believed that men were good. When I described cases of deceit, extortion or friends betrayed, the sweat would stand out on his forehead and his short-sighted eyes would stare in shocked surprise.

"Are such things possible?..." he would protest. "Surely not..."

But before long Dawn Blossoms Press had to close down — I will not go into the reasons here — and for the first time Jou Shih knocked his idealistic head against a brick wall. All his hard work was wasted, and on top of that he had to borrow a hundred dollars to pay for the paper. After that he was less sceptical of my contention that "human hearts are evil", though sometimes he would still sigh: "Are such things really possible?" None the less he went on believing that men were good.

He now sent the stock still left to Dawn Blossoms Press, which was his by rights, to Tomorrow Bookstore and Kuanghua Bookshop,

*A contemporary Japanese artist whose work Yeh Ling-feng plagiarized.

hoping to raise a little money on it. At the same time he went on translating for all he was worth in order to pay off his debt. He sold the Commercial Press his translations of *Danish Short Stories* and Gorky's novel *The Artamanovs' Business*. I fear, though, these manuscripts may have been lost in last year's fighting and fire.*

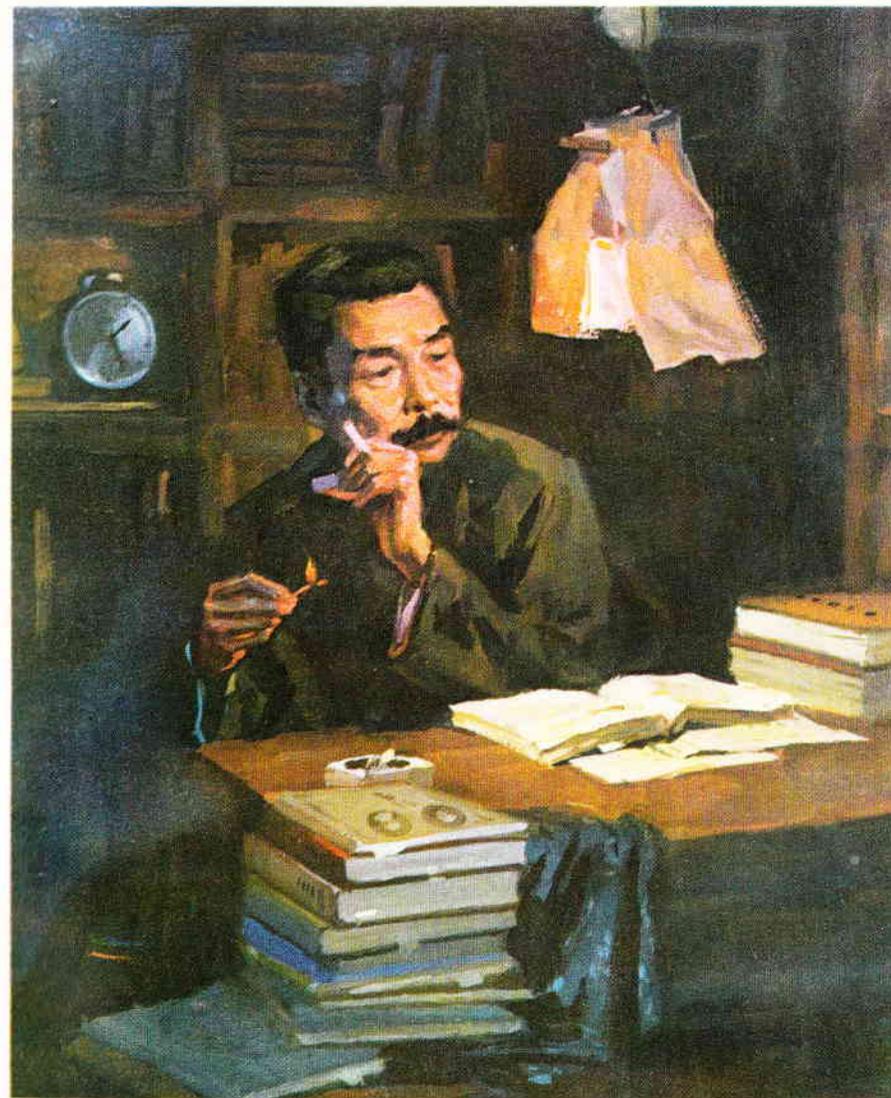
By degrees he became less stand-offish, until finally he dared walk out with girls — friends or girls from his home town — but he always kept three or four feet away from them. This was a very bad habit, for when I met him in the street with an attractive young woman three or four feet away I could never be sure if she was his friend or not. Yet when he walked with me he kept close to my side, supporting me, in fact, for fear I might be knocked down by a car or a tram. This solicitude combined with short-sightedness made me for my part so uneasy that the whole walk was an ordeal for us both. That is why I never went out with him if I could help it. The sight of the strain on him made me feel under a strain too.

Whether motivated by the old morality or the new, if he could help others at his own expense he chose to do so and would take up a new burden.

Then came a time when he made a decisive change. One day he told me explicitly that he felt obliged in future to write works with a different content and form. I said: That sounds difficult, like switching to a stick when you're used to a knife — how can you manage it? He answered simply: One can learn!

This was no empty boast. He did start learning from scratch. At about that time he brought a friend to see me, a Miss Feng Keng. Some conversation with her made me conscious of a great barrier between us, and I suspected that she was a romantic, eager for quick results. I also suspected that she was responsible for Jou Shih's recent decision to write a long novel. At the same time I suspected myself as well: because Jou Shih's uncompromising answer had

*Referring to the fighting on January 28, 1932 when Japanese troops invaded Shanghai.



A Keen Student of Marxism (serial picture)

by Cheng Yu-min, Pan Hung-hai and Ku Pan

shown up the weakness of my argument which meant, actually, taking the line of least resistance, I was perhaps unconsciously transferring my resentment to her. I was, in fact, no better than the hyper-sensitive young writers whom I dreaded meeting because they took themselves so seriously.

She was a delicate girl, not pretty either.

3

Not till after the League of Left-Wing Writers was founded did I discover that the Pai Mang I knew was the Yin Fu whose poems appeared in *The Pioneer*. I took a German translation of an American journalist's account of his travels in China to one meeting to give him, thinking this might help him to improve his German. But he did not turn up. I had to enlist Jou Shih's help again.

Not long after this they were both arrested, however, and that book of mine was also confiscated, falling into the hands of "Three-strippers" and the like.

4

When Tomorrow Bookstore asked Jou Shih to edit a periodical, he consented. This publisher also wanted to print my translations, and asked him to find out what arrangements to make about royalties. I copied out my contract with the Pei Hsin Bookshop and gave this to him. Having stuffed it into his pocket he hurried off. That was late in the evening of January 16, 1931 and little did I know that this was to be our last meeting and our final parting.

The next day he was arrested at a meeting, and I heard that I was wanted by the authorities because he had that copy of my contract in his pocket. The contract itself was plain and to the point, but I had no wish to go to any pointless places to explain it. I remembered a venerable monk described in *The Life of Yueh Fei** who "sat

*A popular novel describing the famous Sung-dynasty general Yueh Fei (1103-1142) who resisted the northern Tartars.

cross-legged and departed this world” as soon as the bailiff pursuing him reached the gate of the monastery. He left behind this couplet:

As from the east the law arrives
I seek the Western Paradise.

That was the best way conceivable to slaves of leaving this sea of bitterness. When no “champion of justice” was in sight, this was the ideal way out. Not being a venerable monk, I could not seek nirvana at will. Besides, I hankered after life. So I ran away.

That night I burned old letters from friends and, carrying my small son, went with my wife to a hotel. Within a few days all sorts of rumours had spread to the effect that I had been arrested or killed, but of Jou Shih there was very little news. Some said the police had taken him to Tomorrow Bookstore to find out whether he was an editor there or not; others said he had been taken to Pei Hsin Bookshop to find out whether he was Jou Shih or not, and he had been handcuffed, sure sign that his case was grave. But no one knew the nature of the charge.

During his imprisonment, I saw two letters he wrote to fellow provincials. The first was as follows:

January 24

I came to Lunghua yesterday with thirty-five other prisoners (including seven women). Last night we were put in chains, creating a precedent for political prisoners. This case involves so many people that I don't expect to be out very soon, so I'd appreciate it if you'd take over my work in the bookshop. Everything's all right and I'm studying German with Yin Fu. Please tell Mr. Chou* not to worry; we haven't been tortured. The police and the security officers have asked me several times for his address, but of course I don't know it. Don't worry.

All the best!

Chao Shao-hsiung

That was on the front of the page.
On the back was written:

*Lu Hsun's real name was Chou Shu-jen.

I want two or three tin rice bowls. If they won't let you see me, just leave the things for Chao Shao-hsiung.

He had not changed. He was eager to study German and work harder than ever; and he still showed the same concern for me as when we were walking together. Some of his statements were wrong, though. They were not the first political prisoners to be put in chains; but he had always thought too highly of officialdom, imagining it to be enlightened until its cruel treatment of him and his friends. In fact that was not the case. Sure enough, his second letter was very different. He wrote most bitterly and said that Miss Feng's face had swollen. Unfortunately I made no copy of this letter. By that time even more rumours were rife. Some said he could come out on bail, others that he had already been sent to Nanking. Nothing was certain. And more telegrams and letters were arriving to ask for news of me. Even my mother in Peking fell ill of anxiety, and I had to write letter after letter to put things right. This went on for about three weeks.

The weather turned colder, and I wondered if they had quilts where Jou Shih was. We had. Had he received the tin bowls?... But then we received reliable news that on the night of February the seventh or the morning of the eighth Jou Shih and twenty-three others had been shot at the Lunghua Garrison Headquarters. There were ten bullets in his body.

So!...

Late at night I stood in the hotel courtyard, surrounded by junk. Everyone was asleep, including my wife and son. I was profoundly conscious that I had lost a fine friend, China a fine young man. I calmed down a little after my first distress, but force of habit asserted itself in the calm and made me string together these few lines:

Used to the long nights of spring time,
My hair grows white as I hide with my wife and son;
Dreams show my dear mother in tears,
And the chieftain's flags over the city are always changing.*

*Referring to the continuous wars among warlords at that time.

Cruel to see my friends become fresh ghosts!
Raging I turn on the bayonets and write these lines.
Will they ever see print? I frown
While moonlight glimmers like liquid on my dark gown.

The last two lines were not true though, for in the end I copied the verse out and sent it to a Japanese singer.

But in China at that time we could not publish this poem. We were sealed in more tightly than in a tin. I remember Jou Shih had gone home just before New Year and stayed so long that some of his friends reproached him on his return. He told me in great distress that his mother had lost the sight of both eyes, and he could not bear to leave when she asked him to stay a little longer. I know the heart of that blind mother and Jou Shih's devotion. When *North Star* was first published, I wanted to write something about Jou Shih, but could not. All I could do was to select Kathe Kollwitz's* woodcut *The Sacrifice*, which shows a mother giving up her son in agony of spirit. And I alone knew that this was to commemorate Jou Shih.

Of the four other young writers killed at the same time, I had never met Li Wei-shen and had only seen Hu Yeh-pin once in Shanghai and exchanged a few words with him. The one I knew relatively well was Pui Mang or Yin Fu, for we had corresponded and he had written for my magazine. But I can find nothing of his today. I must have burned all his contributions on the evening of the seventeenth, before I knew he was among those arrested. I still have his *Poems of Petofi*, and looking through this I found just four lines of his translation penned beside one of the "Wahlspruch" (maxims):

Life is a treasure,
Love even dearer;
But to win freedom
I would throw both away!

*Kathe Kollwitz (1867-1945), a progressive German woodcut artist. Her works expose the evils of capitalism and express the people's feeling of revolt. After these young writers were murdered, she and other progressive writers and artists abroad protested to the Kuomintang reactionaries.

在一个深夜里，我站在空梭的渡口中，周围是堆着的破旧的什物；人们都睡觉了，连我的女人和孩子。我沉重的感到我失掉了很好的朋友，中国失掉了很好的青年，我在悲愤中沉静下去了，然而积习却使沉静中抬起头来，迸成了这样的诗句：

记得于长夜过春晴，挈妇将雏鬻有丝。梦里依稀慈母泪，城头变幻大王旗。忍看朋辈成新鬼，怒向刀丛觅小诗。吟罢欲看与写意，月走如水收

缁衣。

但末二句，似未全准了，我终于怕这写给了一个日本的歌人。

可是在中国，那时是确实有些冤案的，禁锢比摧残还厉害。我记得李在在年底曾回故乡，住了好些时，到上海很受朋友的责备。他悲愤的对我说，他的母亲跟眼已几乎失明了，要他多住几天，他怎样能够就走呢？我知道这失明的母亲的眷眷之心，李石的拳拳的心。雷曰北斗，创刊时，我就想^痛默关于李石的文章，然而不能，只得送了一幅珂勒惠支(Kathe Kollwitz)夫人的木刻，名曰“牺牲”，是一个母亲悲哀地献出她的儿子去的，算是只有我一个人心里知道的李石的纪念。

On the second page is written Hsu Pei-ken,* which I suspect was his real name.

5

Two years ago today, I was lying low in a hotel while they went to the execution grounds. A year ago today, I was escaping through gunfire to the International Settlement while they lay buried none knows where. Only this year on this day am I sitting at home again while everyone is asleep, including my wife and son. Once again I am profoundly conscious that I have lost fine friends and China fine young men. I grow calmer after my distress, but force of habit asserts itself in my calm and has made me write.

If I go on, I shall still be unable to publish what I write in China today. When a lad, I read Hsiang Tzu-chi's *Reminiscences*** and blamed him for writing a few lines only, then finishing when he had barely begun. But now I understand.

It is not the young who are writing obituaries for the old, but during the last thirty years with my own eyes I have seen the blood shed by so many young people steadily mounting up until now I am submerged and cannot breathe. All I can do is take up my pen and write a few articles, as if to make a small hole in the mud through which I can draw a few more wretched breaths. What sort of world is this? The night is so long, the way so long, perhaps I had better forget and remain silent. But I know, if I do not do so, a time will come when others will remember them and speak of them. . . .

February 7-8, 1933

*Hsu Pei-ken was in fact Pai Mang's brother, head of the Kuomintang's Bureau of Aviation.

**A third-century writer who, after his best friend was killed, wrote *Reminiscences* to express his grief. This is a short poem consisting of little more than 150 words.

Preface for the "Album of Works from the All-China Woodcut Exhibition"

We have had woodcuts in China since early times. Today we can still find the original woodcuts of Buddhist images and playing-cards dating from the end of the Tang Dynasty, as well as later illustrations for popular novels and primers. And from these we can see that this art originally belonged to the common people, in other words it was "vulgar". During the Ming Dynasty woodcuts were printed on stationery bearing lines of poetry, which seems rather cultured; still, the literati flourished their writing-brushes all over these designs, proving them actually no better than doormats.

We cannot say that the new woodcuts which have sprung into being in the last five years owe nothing to our ancient culture; on the other hand, they are certainly not just dry bones from a sepulchre

In the spring of 1935, the Peking and Tientsin Woodcut Society organized by young Chinese artists held an All-China Woodcut Exhibition in Peking, Tsinan and Shanghai. This preface was written for the album of works selected from that exhibition.

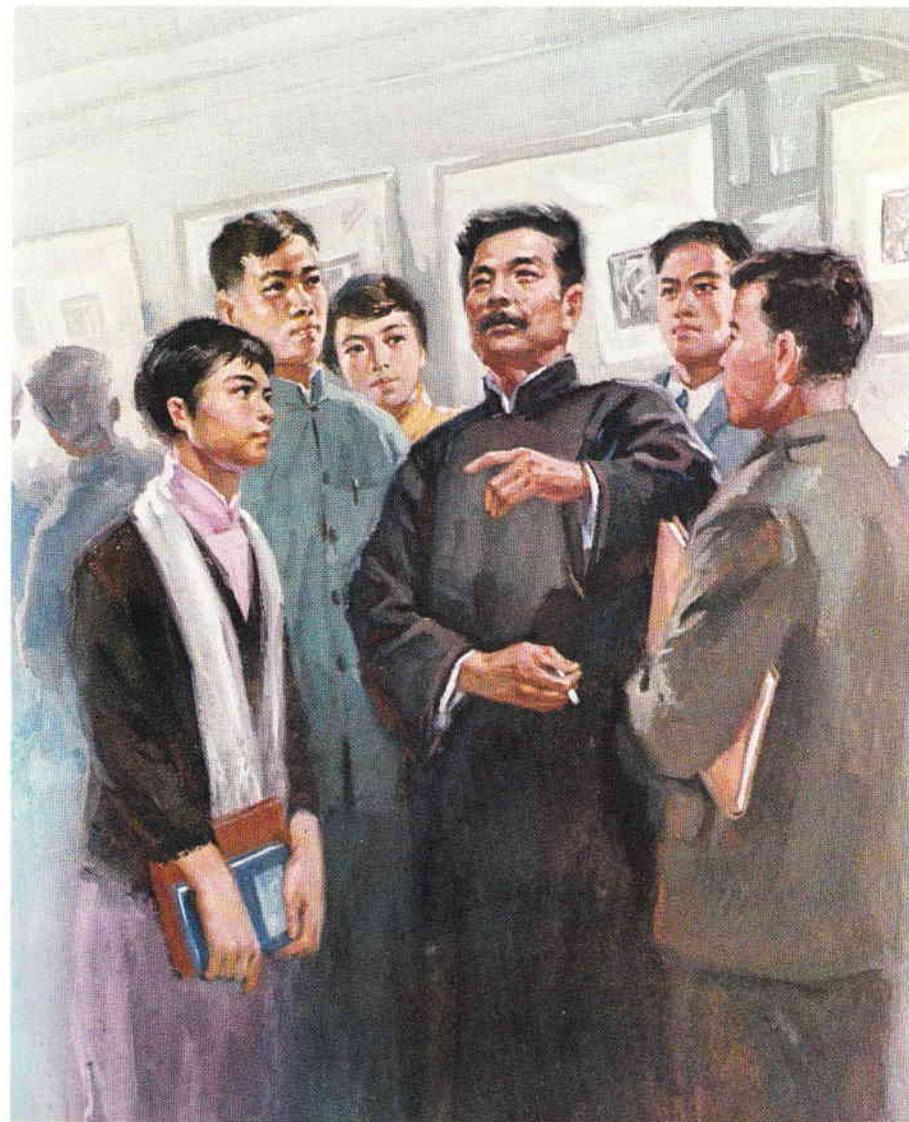
decked out in new costumes. They reflect a common need in the hearts of the artists and the mass of our countrymen; and this is why just a handful of young people with knives and blocks of wood have been able to develop this art so vigorously. This shows the enthusiasm of these novices whose art, therefore, often reveals the spirit of our present society. Their achievements can be seen here. Of course we cannot call their works "cultured", yet they are definitely not "vulgar" either. Before this, we had woodcuts but never a situation like the present one.

That is why we call this the new art of woodcut, and why the people support it. Being of one blood how can it be disregarded? So the woodcut has not merely obliterated the distinction between "cultured" and "vulgar"; a more glorious and greater task actually awaits it.

The landscapes and still-life once so highly regarded as subjects occupy a smaller place in these new woodcuts; yet we find that works of these two categories are still relatively successful. This is because these subjects were the most common in traditional Chinese painting, and so their finest features have made their influence felt in the long run. The woodcuts most needed now, to which the artists devote their greatest efforts, are human figures and illustrations for stories; but these still remain less effective, and sometimes the depiction of common objects, forms or expressions is unrealistic. These facts make it apparent on the one hand that ancient culture both assists and hampers the creation of later works; on the other they demonstrate that it is by no means easy to be "vulgar".

This album is the first collection of the best woodcuts from all over the country. But it is a beginning, not a successful conclusion. It marks the advance of the vanguard. Let us hope that in future their ranks will be expanded into a mighty host with flying banners.

Written on June 4, 1935



Concern for the Youth (serial picture)

by Cheng Yu-min, Pan Hung-hai and Ku Pan

A Preface to Pai Mang's "The Children's Pagoda"*

Spring is more than half over yet it is still cold, and sitting alone late at night after a whole day of rain I find the continuous patter of rain-drops depressing; the more so since a letter from far away arrived this afternoon, asking me to write some kind of preface for Pai Mang's poems. The letter began: "You probably knew my late friend Pai Mang. . . ." This makes me even sadder.

Speaking of Pai Mang, yes, I knew him. Four years ago I wrote *Written for the Sake of Forgetting* in the hope of forgetting him and those others who died for the cause more than five years ago now. Many fresh bloodstains have long since overlaid my memories of them, but this reminder once more conjures up a lifelike picture of him: the cotton-padded gown he wore in summer, the sweat glistening on his young face, and the smile with which he told me: "This is the third time. I came out on my own. The last two times my brother

*Pai Mang's collection of poems *The Children's Pagoda* was actually not published until after Liberation. In 1958, the People's Literature Publishing House printed the manuscript preserved by Lu Hsun.

bailed me out, then tried to interfere. This time I'm not going to tell him. . . ." I guessed wrong in that article I wrote: Hsu Pei-ken was his elder brother. Head of the aviation bureau, he finally shared his younger brother's fate though for a different reason.* Pai Mang's real name was Hsu Pai, while the pen-name he used most frequently was Yin Fu.

If a man is loyal to his friends, the possession of a dead friend's writings is like a ball of fire in his hands: he can hardly eat or sleep till he has had them published. I know this feeling very well and realize that it is my duty to write some sort of preface. What distresses me is that I understand nothing at all about poetry and have no poets among my friends: whenever I had one I always quarrelled with him. I never quarrelled with Pai Mang, however, perhaps because he died too soon. So I shall say nothing here about his merits as a poet — that is beyond me.

The Children's Pagoda is not coming out to compete with our usual run of modern poets, but for another reason. This book is a glimmer in the east, an arrow whistling through the forest, a bud at the end of winter, the first step in the army's advance, a banner of love for the pioneers, a monument of hate for the despoilers. This collection cannot compare with any so-called mature, polished, serene or profound works; for these poems belong to an utterly different world.

There are many, many people in that world, and Pai Mang in his life was friend to them all. This fact alone, I think, is sufficient to ensure this collection's survival, with no need for any preface of mine.

The night of March 11, 1936.

Written by Lu Hsun in Demi-Concession Studio, Shanghai.

*In 1934 the Kuomintang Bureau of Aviation was burnt down in a fire, and Hsu was arrested for this. Thus both he and Pai Mang shared the fate of imprisonment.

Shih Yi-ko

"Create a Host of New Fighters"

—*Lu Hsun's care for the younger generation*

In China when young people speak of Lu Hsun, they think of him as an exacting, warm-hearted teacher who cared for and guided the younger generation.

The year 1919 saw a thoroughgoing revolutionary movement against foreign imperialism and feudalism in China. That was the May Fourth Movement, the vanguard of which consisted of fearless students. Lu Hsun wrote many stories and essays during this movement issuing a courageous call to arms to young people to rise up and smash their dark, airless "iron dungeon" — the feudal ideology, feudal system and feudal culture which had dominated China for more than two thousand years. To enable the younger generation to win liberation, Lu Hsun with his shoulder propped open the gate of darkness so that the young might step out into a more spacious, brighter world.

In 1925 the northern warlord government suppressed this patriotic democratic movement, expelled the student delegates from their schools and forcibly disbanded the Women's Normal University in Peking, getting police and thugs to drag the girl students out. Lu

Hsun, then teaching in this university, firmly took the side of the progressive students and battled against the reactionary authorities. When the students moved elsewhere to continue their studies, he volunteered to teach longer hours.

In March 1926, when young people and other patriots in Peking held a big demonstration against Japanese aggression in China, the warlord government gave the order to fire on the unarmed masses and several dozens of them were killed. This was known as the March 18 Incident. Liu Ho-chen, a student of the Women's Normal University, was among those killed. Then Lu Hsun with bitter sorrow and indignation wrote *In Memory of Miss Liu Ho-chen* and other memorable essays to praise the courageous and self-sacrificing spirit of these young people whom he called "true fighters". He described March 18 as "the darkest day since the founding of the Republic" and excoriated the savage butchers and hack writers in the warlords' pay who slandered patriotic students. A dauntless champion of justice, Lu Hsun called on the youth to advance with redoubled courage. At the same time he advised them not to fight the vicious enemy with bare hands by means of demonstrations and parades but to use more effective tactics, accumulating strength to fight "trench warfare". He urged them to carry this anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle through to the end.

In 1927 the Chinese people's first revolutionary civil war was winning victory when Chiang Kai-shek, representing the big landlords and big bourgeoisie, betrayed the revolution. On April 12 he staged a counter-revolutionary coup d'état, massacring many Communists, workers and peasants as well as large numbers of progressive students and other young revolutionaries. Lu Hsun, who witnessed the fascist atrocities of the Kuomintang reactionaries in Kuangchow, was overwhelmed with indignation and anguish. Regardless of his own safety, he did his utmost to rescue arrested students. When all attempts failed, he gave up his teaching post at the Sun Yat-sen University.

The Chiang Kai-shek fascist regime which had waded to power through the blood of the people now launched a reign of white terror. From 1930 onwards Chiang Kai-shek sent some million well-equipped

troops and planes to carry out five "encirclement and annihilation" campaigns against the communist base in Kiangsi Province. Concurrently, in Kuomintang-occupied areas, there were ruthless campaigns to wipe out revolutionary culture. The revolutionary masses were deprived of the right to hold meetings, form groups, voice opinions and publish books. Progressive writers were murdered, progressive bookstores smashed, progressive books and magazines were banned. Lu Hsun too was persecuted and frequently tailed by Kuomintang agents. Unintimidated by this white terror, Lu Hsun rallied Left-wing writers and artists to carry on the struggle.

Early in 1931, five young writers including Jou Shih were arrested. In the Kuomintang gaol their thoughts turned to their beloved mentor, and Lu Hsun expressed concern for these young comrades too. When he heard of their murder in secret, he wrote a series of impassioned articles including *The Revolutionary Literature of the Chinese Proletariat and the Blood of the Pioneers* and *Present Situation in Literature and Art in Darkest China* to denounce to the people of China and the whole world the heinous crimes of the Kuomintang reactionaries. He bade young people never to forget the cowardice and savagery of the enemy and to continue the fight. *Written for the Sake of Forgetting*, published in this issue, reveals Lu Hsun's deep feeling for these five young martyrs. This was a time when the forces of reaction were rampant, a time of rigid repression and censorship, yet, as Lu Hsun wrote in one poem, in this silence could be heard the "peal of thunder". He was firmly convinced that the days of the reactionaries were numbered and the revolutionary masses would ultimately triumph. Thus while commemorating the dead he affirmed: "A time will come when others will remember them and speak of them."

All his life Lu Hsun fought shoulder to shoulder with young people, giving them forceful encouragement and support. Wherever he lived and worked, whether in Peking, Amoy, Kuangchow or Shanghai, there young people met to study and discuss their problems.

Lu Hsun's love and concern for the younger generation stemmed from his noble revolutionary goal. He saw clearly that the forces of darkness in China were very stubborn. Thus the overthrow of

the rule of foreign imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism could not be achieved in a single generation. Neither could the eradication of the old ideology and culture of the reactionary classes. These tasks would require hard and sustained efforts for many decades to come. It was therefore imperative to build up new forces, to pass on the torch of revolution from generation to generation. Young people represent the future of a country, its vigorous revolutionary force. In the long run, the success or failure of the revolution depends on whether or not the younger generation advances along the revolutionary path. Lu Hsun grasped very early the importance of training a new generation of fighters. He laid great stress on this. Hence he encouraged young writers to form progressive literary societies such as the Wei-ming (Nameless) Society and the Mang-yuan (Wilderness) Society, spurring on these young people to repudiate the feudal forces and the old man-eating culture with him. In March 1930, at the inaugural meeting of the League of Left-Wing Writers, Lu Hsun solemnly declared that one important task for the proletarian literary movement was the "creation of a host of new fighters". Time and again, to defend the new-born force of the revolution, he struck back at the diehards' retrogressive views and attempts to oppress and destroy progressive youth. To help young writers play their militant role, even when seriously ill he spared no pains to polish manuscripts for them, write prefaces for their works, find publishers for them and even read and correct their proofs. The preface for Pai Mang's *The Children's Pagoda*, which we publish in this issue, shows Lu Hsun's high regard for this young writer.

To promote the new revolutionary woodcut art and to help the new woodcut artists, Lu Hsun published at his own expense reproductions of old Chinese woodcuts and modern woodcuts such as those of Kathe Kollwitz, making presents of these albums to young woodcut artists. He sponsored exhibitions of woodcuts from which the young artists could learn. He also organized a woodcut class with a Japanese friend as instructor, and went himself in the summer heat to act as interpreter. Ten days before his death, although mortally ill, he attended an exhibition put on by young woodcut ar-

tists. The preface he wrote for the album of reproductions from the All-China Woodcut Exhibition, published in this issue, shows his delight in the vigorous growth of the new woodcut art and the enthusiastic support it had received from the masses. While affirming the success of these new works, he also pointed out certain weaknesses and expressed the earnest hope that better works and more new artists would appear in future.

Lu Hsun declared: "As long as I can help a flower to grow, I will gladly serve as compost. . . . In the path of life I . . . let my blood flow drop by drop to sustain others, happy to do this even though it weakens me." Throughout his life, he showed his eagerness "head bowed, like a willing ox" to serve the younger generation.

Since the problem of the youth affects the future of China, the struggle to win the youth has always been very fierce. The feudal landlord class did their utmost to make young people venerate Confucius and study the Confucian classics so as to turn them into loyal subjects and filial sons for their moribund class. The comprador bourgeoisie advocated "study to save China" and for fear of revolution tried to lure young people into purely academic research, an ivory tower which would insulate them from revolution. Then there were bogus Marxists who held forth loudly in salons, hiding their revisionist ideas behind high-sounding revolutionary catchphrases in the hope of converting young people to their opportunist line, to act as their trumpeters and followers. The young people themselves were often confused owing to their different backgrounds, different surroundings, different ways of life and education. As Lu Hsun pointed out: some of the young were still asleep, others had woken up; some were advancing, others were retreating; some were even serving as henchmen for the enemy. For young people have always had a choice of two completely different roads to take.

Lu Hsun resolutely combated all the erroneous ideas and tendencies aimed at corrupting the youth. He believed that the young should study but, first and foremost, they should be concerned for the future of China and the emancipation of their people. They must pay attention to current social problems and never forget the tasks set by their age. As early as 1925, Lu Hsun pointed out that it was

the task of youth to overthrow that old society, wipe out the man-eaters and create a new age of a kind never known before in China. He spoke of a "third age" which was neither feudalism nor capitalism but a completely new era of liberation for the common man. In the Chinese people's struggle against the reactionary Kuomintang regime, Lu Hsun urged the young to "wage the same struggle" as the workers and peasants, to "go deep among the masses" and "share in the life of the revolution or keep their fingers closely on its pulse".

To go deep among the masses of workers and peasants and take part in social struggles is the main way for young bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intellectuals to transform their world outlook and carry the revolution to the end. It had not escaped Lu Hsun's notice that some young intellectuals tended to be cut off from reality, cut off from the workers and peasants. As a result, they could not see the strength of the masses and had romantic ideas about revolution, idealizing cruel class struggle into something beautiful and poetic. Other young people considered the revolution a means for personal advancement. When storms shattered these hopes they lost heart or were wrecked on the rocks of this revolution which they had been extolling. Lessons of this kind from history made Lu Hsun earnestly advise young people to take part in actual struggles so as to grasp the arduous, protracted nature of the revolution. They must never cease to overcome their wrong ideas, must adopt a positive attitude and dedicate their whole lives to the cause of the proletariat.

Lu Hsun also pointed out the importance to all revolutionaries of studying Marxism. To arrive at the revolutionary truth, Lu Hsun himself went through long periods of painful groping. He knew the wretchedness of wandering this way and that without knowing which course to follow. When he finally discovered Marxism, he studied it avidly, unremittingly, finding in it a source of wisdom and strength. He compared his indefatigable translation of Marxist theoretical works with Prometheus stealing fire from heaven. "Marxism is the most illuminating philosophy," Lu Hsun affirmed. "When I use the Marxist viewpoint to examine problems which I formerly could not unravel, they all become clear." Just as Lu Hsun determined to go on studying as long as he lived, he pointed out to young people who wanted to take the revolutionary road the necessity

of studying Marxism-Leninism with perseverance, undeterred by difficulties. He made this point in connection with the class struggle in literature and art.

Lu Hsun also warned young people that they must learn how to distinguish between true Marxism and false, or they would be led astray. For this, he advocated the method of comparison, recommending this to those who had been fooled. He used a simple metaphor: If you can't tell copper sulphide from real gold, weigh them both and it will be clear which is genuine gold. He advised young people eager to master Marxism and not be taken in by meretricious arguments to study some solid, reliable Marxist classics; for when they compared these with opportunist theories, they would see what was correct and what was wrong.

He wanted the young to go into real life and study Marxist theory in order to overthrow foreign imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism and build a new China, so that the working class and the masses could be liberated. This was the task imposed on the Chinese proletariat by history, the basic goal for the youth taking part in the revolutionary struggle.

Lu Hsun was a great patriot unprecedented in Chinese history. He made impassioned appeals to the young to have the courage to speak out, to laugh, cry, show anger, curse and fight. He urged them not to fear pitfalls or thorns, ridicule or shots in the dark, but to smash that accursed age in a China shrouded in darkness. Lu Hsun stood at the forefront of the struggle, eyeing with contempt those butchers armed to the teeth and defying all reactionary opportunistic trends whether "Left" or Rightist. His unyielding courage and fortitude are a shining example for millions of young people.

More than thirty years have passed since Lu Hsun's death. Under the leadership of our great leader Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese people have set up a socialist new China. Nurtured by the sunshine and dew of Mao Tsetung Thought, a new generation is growing up vigorously. Our superior socialist system has opened up a future infinitely bright for our younger generation, but they will never forget Lu Hsun's concern for the young people of his age and his wise teachings. His glorious image will always live in the hearts of the youth of New China.

Tsui Ching-wen

Chairman Mao Is at Our Side

Sea on three sides and on the fourth a mountain,
With our observation post on the mountain peak;
White clouds drift past our window,
The waves roll under our feet.

Spread out the map and reckon up the distance:
From here to Peking a thousand miles and one;
But to us the distance is nothing,
For Chairman Mao is here, here at our side.

Whenever we open the Chairman's works
A red sun lights up our minds;
Then it seems as if our beloved teacher, our great leader,
Were here, here in our observation post.

Tsao Chen-chien

Over the Hills I Canter

Over the hills I canter with a message
And find the slopes covered with fruit;
Red peaches sweet as honey bar my way
And ripe pears graze my cheeks.

Each peach tree drinks a thousand buckets of water,
Each crate of pears gallons of sweat;
Taking care not to knock down the fruit
I dismount and, stooping, lead my horse under the boughs.

Out from the orchard come some fruit-pickers
Who stop me to offer me peaches.
"Give your good horse a rest," they urge,
"And try some of our peaches to quench your thirst."

"I must hold to the Three Main Rules of Discipline
And the Eight Points for Attention,*
Doing as Chairman Mao teaches,
Keeping the interests of the masses in mind."

A white-haired old man steps over
And lays one hand on my arm.
"You army boys helped us get in our harvest,
What does it matter if you eat some fruit?"

I remount and wave them my thanks.
"My task is urgent and I mustn't stop;
Your kindness, refreshing as sweet dew or rain,
Spurs on horse and rider and has quenched our thirst!"



*The rules of discipline laid down by Comrade Mao Tsetung for the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army during the Second Revolutionary Civil War. A standard version was reissued by the Chinese People's Liberation Army in 1947.

Chen Kuang-pin

*Muyanghai**

Muyanghai,
Sea of sheep!
But where are the sheep,
Where the sea?

For a thousand generations
The place has belied its name.
Far-stretching wasteland under a leaden sky,
Soil white with alkali. . . .
When last was the tinkle of camel-bells heard here?
When last did wild geese fly this way?
Here was nothing but swirling sand, withered grass,
Chill wind and bitter rain;

*Muyanghai, literally "sea of sheep", is in Inner Mongolia.

Ground underfoot by a tyrant
And sunk in gloom the grassland
Was a pearl buried fathoms deep
In stinking mud. . . .

Then sent by Chairman Mao
Came a new generation to open up the wasteland;
Their splendid songs re-echo through the sky
As they set about transforming Muyanghai.
New canals bring water from the Yellow River
To irrigate the desert,
The wilderness becomes a sea of green
Protected by nine wind-breaks.

Muyanghai,
Sea of sheep,
Just look at you now!
A green lake glimmers in the morning sunlight,
White flocks of sheep stretch out to the horizon,
Fish frolic in the water,
Paddy fields smell sweet.

Muyanghai,
Bright mirror of the northern waste,
Fair flower of our motherland,
From year to year your loveliness increases.

After thousands of generations,
Muyanghai,

You have opened a new chapter in your history
In the glorious old tradition of Nanniwan.*
Spring fresh and radiant reigns eternal here,
For our pioneers have given their youth to this land.



*Nanniwan in north Shensi won fame when a contingent of the Eighth Route Army responded to Chairman Mao's call to open up wasteland there during the War of Resistance Against Japan.

Chou Ke-chin

Li Hsiu-man

Two men from the county's agricultural bureau came to our commune looking for Li Hsiu-man, Party secretary of Victory Brigade. They wanted to sum up her experience in leading the brigade to learn from Tachai. But Hsiu-man had just gone home after spending two days attending an enlarged session of the commune Party committee. I was told to take the two visitors, Comrades Fang and Chao, to find her. Since it was already late in the afternoon, we immediately started out.

As we walked along, Fang eyed the parched crops and said sympathetically, "You cadres at the grass-roots level must have your hands full these days."

"Yes," said Chao. "The drought looks bad, doesn't it? I wonder if Li Hsiu-man is prepared for a long battle?"

As I offered no comment Fang turned to ask, "Tell me, young Chang, at yesterday's meeting how did you allocate the men and pumps sent by the county to fight the drought?"

"We had a heated argument," I said. The two men stared in sur-

prise. "Very heated it was, and Hsiu-man started it all. You see, Hsiu-man's brigade is high up, spread over three hills and five ridges with very few water sources. Since the irrigation canal they are building isn't finished yet, the commune meant to let them have most of the equipment the team brought. She wouldn't have it though. She announced firmly, 'If you say we're in difficulty, that's a fact. But this team from the county has brought us Chairman Mao's concern for the poor and lower-middle peasants and that warms the cockles of our hearts. We'll put on a spurt and think of more ways to combat the drought. We fully appreciate the thought behind the pumps and things sent by the county committee but we'd rather let the other brigades have them.' When pressed for her reason she repeated that her brigade was quite able to overcome its difficulties, for doesn't Chairman Mao teach us that there's nothing to beat self-reliance and arduous struggle? After that it became impossible to allocate the equipment because all the brigades refused it, saying they were better off than the rest. And so the argument went on..."

"So that's how it was," Fang chuckled. "Seems to me that Comrade Hsiu-man is emphasizing self-reliance and hard struggle even more than before."

"Why, did you know her before?" asked Chao in surprise.

"I came into contact with her, but that was twenty years ago."

We urged him to tell us about it. After a thoughtful pause, Fang began.

It was the winter of 1953 when the movement for agricultural co-operation was developing in our county. Mutual-aid teams were merging into co-ops. I was sent to this township to help launch the co-ops. One evening, while the north wind howled outside and I sat in the township office talking over some work with the township Party secretary Chen, a young woman burst in. Wearing a jacket of red-floral print, she seemed no more than twenty, big eyes sparkling out of a round rosy face. Her long plaits were coiled on top of her head and she carried a baby strapped to her back. When Chen stood up to greet her, she solemnly placed in his hands a sheet of paper on which was written an application.

Though scrawled in pencil, the application was clear. All twelve households applying were poor peasants and they wanted to form a co-op with the name of "unity".

"Comrade Hsiu-man," said Chen warmly. "Our Party branch committee will discuss your application right away. You want to go the co-operative way. I'm sure your request will be granted."

"If you're short of capital, tools, draught animals, or the like," I put in, "the township will do its best to help out."

She seemed overjoyed, but replied, "Many, many thanks. By pointing out this road of co-operation, the Party and Chairman Mao have shown their great concern for us. We won't ask anything more from the Party..." With that she turned to go. At the door she cried out, "Neighbours, Secretary Chen has promised to approve our application!" Outside, a cheer rocked the whole compound.

After that, I saw her quite often at meetings and in the fields, always full of energy, big eyes sparkling with excitement. Wherever she went, she carried that baby strapped to her back.

Once, after we finished discussing her work in the co-op, I remarked jokingly, "Running around with a baby on your back, you hardly look like the chairman of a co-op."

"Does a chairman have to look a certain way?" came her retort. "Can't a woman do revolutionary work with a baby on her back?"

"Don't you find it inconvenient? Particularly in the fields."

She smiled. "It's nothing once you're used to it."

"Can't you leave the baby at home?"

Instead of answering, she changed the subject.

One day, chatting with Chen, I said casually, "Doesn't Li Hsiu-man have some old folk at home? Why does she always carry her baby around?"

Chen's eyes blazed as he told me, "Her parents died long before Liberation. They were hired hands in a landlord's house. She was an orphan and grew up as a day labourer, good at all kinds of farm work. She married Teng Hsing-chun after Liberation. Teng, an orphan too, was one of the first to join the peasants' militia." Chen



lowered his head. His voice was choked with grief. "But he died in battle the year our Land Reform started."

My heart went out to this courageous young woman who instead of being overwhelmed by her own misfortunes had put her whole heart into building socialism. Then I was transferred to another district and did not see her again.

"Did you say her husband's name was 'Teng Hsing-chun?'" asked Chao.

Fang nodded. "Yes, Teng Hsing-chun."

"So that's who she is!" Chao muttered as if to himself.

"Why, did you know her too?" Fang asked in surprise.

"I worked in this district at the time of the Land Reform," said Chao. "Once, while we were out running down some bandits, one of the militiamen fighting alongside our armed forces was killed. His name was Teng Hsing-chun. The brave fight Teng put up was decisive in enabling us to wipe out the bandits and capture all the escaping reactionaries. . . . I remember we held a solemn memorial meeting for Teng. The district sent men to fetch his wife, who seemed extremely young. Not only the leadership but all the comrades did their best to comfort her. She wept bitterly at first. Then she stopped crying, bit her lips and looked thoughtful. At the memorial meeting she went up bravely to speak, expressing her determination to turn grief into strength and take an active part in the Land Reform as well as other work of the Party in order to revenge Teng. She spoke with such force that all present were deeply moved. Two days later she asked to go home. When the district gave her the widow's pension she was entitled to, she refused it. Simply would not take the money. They had to send the money on to the township office for her.

"Before leaving, she grasped the district Party secretary's hands and made a request which took everyone by surprise.

"'Hsing-chun's dead and the Party has lost a member,' she said. 'Comrade Secretary, I want the Party organization to accept me. . . . Let me take Hsing-chun's place and guard our motherland.'

"The district secretary was touched. 'That's fine,' he assured her. 'Go on home now. You must live courageously and do your work

well. I'll talk to your Party branch about your desire to join the Party.' But she kept her big eyes fixed on him. So eager was she to take up the fight where her husband had left off she was not satisfied until the secretary said, 'I am sure you can carry on Hsing-chun's work — I know you'll strive all your life for socialism, communism.' "

"And that young woman was Li Hsiu-man?" Fang asked in amazement. But Chao did not reply, for he was lost in reverie.

The last glow of the setting sun turned the hilltops a flaming red, fading gradually into the golden shades of dusk. A cool breeze sprang up, reviving parched rice and cotton shoots, which rustled gently. The russet tassels of maize turned a dark crimson.

As the twilight deepened we hastened our steps. I soon noticed that beside our path ran a newly dug channel. This must be a branch of the irrigation canal.

"We're nearly there," I informed my companions.

They quickened their steps and kept close behind me as I headed for Eagle's Cliff. A bit further on, we saw a hurricane lantern. Probably one of the militia, out guarding the newly built canal. I was glad I could now find someone to ask the whereabouts of Li Hsiu-man. From experience I knew that it was no easy task to find a brigade Party secretary. During the day you might climb to a hilltop and look down. Wherever the work was going with the greatest swing, you could be sure of finding the Party secretary. But what was one to do at night? There were a dozen teams in the brigade scattered several miles apart. Where were we to find her?

When we drew near the lantern we found no one in sight. Only a copy of *The Communist Manifesto* and a small notebook. Fang picked these up.

"Look," he cried. On the cover of the notebook was the name Li Hsiu-man, written in a fine hand.

"That's good. She can't be far then," said Fang.

"She must be patrolling," said Chao.

"Hey, what business have you here?" This angry roar from a powerful throat was followed by the appearance of a young man with brilliant eyes. A white towel thrown casually over one shoulder, he carried a pick-axe. Sturdy and strong he planted himself four-

square before us. As I stepped forward to explain, he said more mildly, "You're young Chang, aren't you? But I've never met these two comrades. Are you from the county team?"

"They've come from the county to see Secretary Li..."

"Oh, when we finished work at sunset, my mother was on the construction site at Eagle's Cliff. Maybe she's still there."

All three of us stared. So the chubby baby Fang had described strapped to the young co-op chairman's back was now standing before our eyes. Fang seemed particularly stirred. He said fondly to the young man, "So... you are the boy who grew up with New China!" The young chap smiled bashfully.

"What's your name?"

"Teng Pao."

Old Chao looked up, his lips quivering. "Teng Pao, Teng Pao..." he muttered repeatedly, clearly thinking of the lad's father who so bravely gave his life for the revolution.

"Comrades, I'll take you to the construction site to see if mother's there," said Teng Pao and picked up the lantern. We trailed behind him, following the newly dug canal.

"So you're reading *The Communist Manifesto* too, young man. Good for you."

"I've only just started. I find it hard in places and still need my mother's help. She's the teacher of our brigade's class to study the Marxist classics."

As we walked along chatting and laughing, Teng suddenly stopped. "Do you know we've completed our irrigation canal over the hills ahead of schedule?" he asked me.

"So you'll get water ahead of schedule? That's great." I turned to explain to my companions, "We're now coming to Eagle's Cliff. That's a really tough spot to tackle. Only the other day I was asking Secretary Li when they would be able to conquer it. She said that if they went all out they might do it in a fortnight. But they've now done the job in a few days..."

"If we had stuck to the old plan, we couldn't have done it in a month." Teng Pao waved his fist. "My mother and the other Party comrades studied the problem carefully and mobilized the masses to

discuss it. We agreed to change the old plan of dynamiting the cliff. See? Isn't the cliff still standing? We'd hit upon the idea of tunnelling instead. That's how we've led the water through."

Suddenly there was a burst of applause followed by laughter. From the cliff a crowd surged towards us. Running in the lead were a bunch of teen-agers, pine torches in their hands, crying excitedly, "The water's coming, the water's coming..."

True enough, in the canal by our feet, muddy yellow water was rushing down the long, long channel. Following this stream of water the teen-agers squeezed past us. Behind them came young men and girls holding flash-lights, their faces radiant.

"Let's go to the tunnel and see if my mother's still there," said Teng Pao.

We brushed past the joyous crowd and continued towards Eagle's Cliff.

The water here was crystal clear as it cascaded from an opening more than a metre high. A couple of old men, lanterns in hand, were gazing fondly at this fount of water.

"Grandad Chung," Teng Pao said to a tall old man. "Have you seen my mother anywhere? These comrades are looking for her." He introduced us one by one. But none of the old men seemed able to answer Teng Pao's question. After a pause they looked up at the deep blue night sky as if to say, "Heaven only knows where she's gone."

We too looked up. A new moon hung on the crest of a mountain where it touched the sky and stars twinkled down merrily at the gurgling water in the new canal.

Teng Pao asked again, "You really haven't seen my mother? They're trying out the engine in the pump room below, could she have gone there?"

"You should know what your mother's like," old man Chung retorted laughingly, a touch of reproof in his voice. Turning to the three of us, he said, "Look at this water. Hsiu-man wore herself out, leading us to build the canal. Now that we've got water everyone is rejoicing, but she..." His face took on a thoughtful look.

"Why?" I asked, puzzled. "Isn't she happy too?"

"She lets the others do the rejoicing," said the old man. "That's her way. She works herself to the bone, leading us poor and lower-middle peasants along the socialist way. Every time a big problem's solved and a new stride taken in either revolution or production, she'll be busy consulting Chairman Mao's works again, planning what steps to take next. . . . These last two years especially, she's been marching firmly, steadily along the Tachai way. Take this new four-mile canal over the hills for instance, the idea came up last autumn. While everyone else was busy celebrating the bumper harvest, Hsiu-man left the young people to their rejoicing and sought us old folks out."

"Our country is much stronger since the Cultural Revolution," she said. "But China is a big country and every year there're bound to be one or two districts struck by natural calamities. Are we to be satisfied just because our own stomachs are now full? We must look ahead, not rest content with the little we've done." Her eyes flashing, she told us, "The Party branch has studied the question. We've had pretty good crops these last few years because we've had ample rain. But a drought could put us in a real spot. Should that happen are we to ask our brothers who have reaped good crops to please be generous and help us out? Are we to tell our worker brothers that they must tighten their belts because we've had a crop failure? . . . Eh?" So we put our heads together and after a few discussions we decided on a canal through the hills. It so happened that a drought set in this very spring . . . ha . . ."

Clear water gurgled through the tunnel and raced merrily along the canal paved with flagstones.

"They're trying out the motor tonight to get the water flowing through the whole canal. Mother may be in the pump room down by the river," said Teng Pao. "If you go over this cliff and follow the canal downhill, you'll see the pump room. I can't take you there as I'm on duty here."

We went as Teng Pao directed. After a long walk we found the small pump room by the Chihsi River.

"Yes, Secretary Li was here watching when we started the pumps," said the young man in charge. "But she left as soon as the water went over the hills. Where could she be now?" The young man paused

to think. "If you follow that path over there into the gully about one third of a mile from here you'll see a big oak tree beside a small thatched cottage. That's where she lives. It's nearly midnight, perhaps she's gone home."

We hurried into the gully. Before long we found the oak and the thatched cottage. But all the windows were dark. I groped at the door and a padlock clanked under my hands. Without a word, we waited under the eaves.

"Hey, look," I cried, noticing a light flickering in a distant clump of bamboos. Together we hurried towards it, crossing footpaths through the fields and climbing over stone embankments.

We soon made out the storeroom of a production team. Under a lantern sat a woman, head bent over her sewing, a pile of sacks at her feet. She must be mending them. Though her face was hidden I had a clear view of her strong shoulders and nimble hands as she deftly plied her needle. The hair coiled at the nape of her neck was black and lustrous but at her temples it was flecked with silver.

An old man in the storeroom was folding up the sacks. We were close enough now to hear what he was saying. ". . . You see, when there was no water in the fields and the paddy was wilting, I didn't think these sacks would be needed. Better put them away for next year! . . . Then the water came and I was just too happy to think what we should be doing now that we've got water. . . ."

"Yes, there'll be plenty to do now that the water's come. We must manure the fields and put in late rice. The early rice has to be threshed. . . . Do you think we've enough sacks here, grandad? It's going to be another bumper harvest, you know. . . ."

"Secretary Li. . . ." I cried.

Yes, it was she. She looked up alertly then put down her work and rose to brush the hemp fluff from her clothes. A kindly smile on her round face, she called, "Young Chang!"

We all went in. . . .

Illustrated by Kao Chuan

Spring Showers

As the first peals of spring thunder died away a few drops of rain pattered down. The day was just dawning. Before the fleecy clouds had dispersed, the peasants of Pomegranate Village were hurrying to the fields, ploughs and harrows over their shoulders. For today, the second day of the second lunar month, was the time to start the spring ploughing.

Barely had the sun peeped out over the horizon when a horse-cart with pneumatic tyres rumbled out of the village to the accompaniment of the driver's cries and cracks of the whip. Aunt Lai-fu running after the cart shouted: "Come back early, lassies! Don't hold up the sowing."

"Right. . . ." called back the plump girl who was driving. The slim girl sitting behind her in the cart chuckled.

This plump carter was Aunt Lai-fu's eldest daughter, Chubby. She had just turned twenty-seven and was the head of the village store. The other girl Brownny, the accountant, was seven years younger. In the past few years they had worked hard, speeding east and west, rain or shine, to secure supplies for the brigade. After Chubby joined the Party and Brownny the Youth League they had put on an extra

spurt, like maize shooting up after the summer rain. No wonder the Red Banner for "Best Service" always went to Pomegranate Store, till it seemed it had taken root on the store's stone wall.

But early this year the Red Banner had changed hands. It had been won by Plum Village Store. This set Chubby and Brownny thinking. They decided to find out more about this rival of theirs.

It so happened that the previous day the commune's office in town had telephoned, asking them to take delivery of a new insecticide for Pomegranate Brigade. The two girls planned to call at Plum Village on their way back to pick up some tips for their work.

With Chubby perched on the shaft cracking her red-tasselled whip and Brownny singing away for all she was worth, the sturdy team went like the wind. In no time the cart had mounted the dyke by the river and Plum Village was in sight.

"Chubby," Brownny remarked abruptly, "I just don't believe the two of us aren't up to the Plum Village people. If we knuckle down to it, I'm sure we can win back the Red Banner."

Chubby lowered her whip and glanced back over her shoulder. "Swell-headed, aren't you?" she said reprovingly. "To catch them up, we must learn from them and go all out to support agriculture. You're talking big before you've even seen how they work. Is that the way to learn?"

Brownny bit her lip but retorted: "Well, even if we're willing to learn from them, they may not be willing to teach us."

"Why take such a dim view of people?" retorted Chubby, smiling. "It's true we belong to two different villages but we have the same aim -- to serve agriculture. They won't refuse us a helping hand just because they want to keep the Red Banner."

"Very well then, I promise to learn humbly so long as they're willing to teach." Brownny raised a clenched fist as if taking an oath.

Chubby, well satisfied, couldn't help giggling at this. Brownny responded with a sheepish smile.

Now the cart left the dyke, turning off towards Blue Arch Bridge. Abruptly, a gruff voice hailed them: "Say, comrades, where are you from? And where are you going?"



Chubby brought the horses to a halt and answered, "From Pomegranate Village. We're going to town to fetch insecticide." She eyed the muscular young man on the bridge, at his feet two bulging sacks and a shoulder-pole.

"What do you want? A lift? A hefty chap like you too lazy to carry a load light as a feather — for shame!" rattled Brownny pertly.

"Take me for a slacker?" The young fellow laughed. "No, comrades, I've just noticed that the stone piers down below look askew. I want to fix them to avoid accidents. These two sacks of

seed-kaoliang are for Peach Blossom Village. Will you take them there on your way?"

This made Brownny feel a proper fool. She could say nothing. Chubby came to her rescue, suggesting: "I tell you what. On our way back from town we'll get a couple of men from the next village to do the job. It won't take them longer than the time for a meal. That's better than your tackling it single-handed."

But the young fellow wouldn't hear of this. "That won't do," he said gravely. "The earlier the ploughing's finished the better. The villagers are working round the clock. For them every minute counts. We can't take them away from the fields for this little job. If you don't want to take the seeds, forget it."

With that he took off his shoes and socks and waded into the water.

Quick-witted Chubby winked at Brownny. Together they skipped down, shouldered a sack apiece and loaded them on the cart.

Back in the driver's seat, Chubby shouted to the man below the bridge: "Hey! We'll bring you back your sacks on our way back."

The young man, already hard at work, did not look up. "Thanks," he said gruffly. "There's no need. Leave them with the seeds at Peach Blossom Village."

With a crack of the whip the cart lumbered over the bridge, then swiftly gathered speed. . . .

On their way back from town with the insecticide, the two girls turned off to Peach Blossom Village.

Chubby reined in the horses beside a field where villagers were busy ploughing. She alighted to accost a middle-aged peasant. "Is your brigade leader anywhere around, comrade? We've brought you some seed-kaoliang."

The man beamed. Rubbing his sinewy hands he said, "I'm the man you're looking for. More seeds. . . it's good of you to take so much trouble."

"Don't treat us as outsiders, brigade leader. It's up to us to help," rejoined Brownny modestly, leaping down to unload the sacks.

"Here, let me do that." The brigade leader quickly stepped forward to lift one sack over his shoulder and tuck the other under his

arm. "Come on, comrades," he said warmly to the girls. "Have a bowl of tea and a rest."

"No, thank you." The girls' hands swayed like lotus leaves in the wind as they brushed this suggestion aside. "We're not a bit tired."

An old woman approached them, smiling, and clasped their hands. "You've put yourselves out for us, lassies," she said fondly. "You come so many miles from Plum Village Store, sweating away to help us farm more scientifically. And every time you do us a good turn, you say it's no more than your duty. Isn't it my duty, then, to invite you home to have a cup of tea?"

At this the sisters realized that the pig-headed young man they had met on the way must be from Plum Village Store. This made them feel even more contrite.

"Quite right," put in the brigade leader. "I really don't know how to thank you people. During that drought last year the head of your store brought us a pump himself, then stayed up all night repairing a diesel engine for us. When we had white peonies to sell, back he came with a cart to collect them. Recently he's been to even more trouble to get us good seeds. Why, the other day he brought us two crates of seed-kaoliang and carried off two crates of millet in exchange, walking thirty-five miles there and back with those heavy loads. He doesn't know the meaning of the word 'tired'. We're sparing of praise, we poor and lower-middle peasants, but I tell you that young chief of yours, though he may not be much of a talker, has a heart of gold. Yes, pure gold through and through he is."

Chubby and Brownie listened to this in silence, just nodding from time to time. Then they said a reluctant goodbye to these warm-hearted, good-humoured folk of Peach Blossom Village.

The cart bowled along the highway. Towards noon the weather changed. Thunder rumbled and grey clouds closed in from all sides. Another timely spring shower was in the offing.

Chubby cracked her whip harder than ever and loosened the reins as the team clattered up Blue Arch Bridge. Brownie, looking up, was dismayed by the sea of leaden clouds above their heads.

"There's no shelter anywhere near, Sister Chubby. What about the insecticide if it comes on to rain?"

"Don't worry," answered the elder girl calmly. "If we speed up we should get back before the rain. If not, we'll cover the insecticide with our jackets."

Just then, some distance away, they saw an old peasant. He was running towards them yelling: "Stop! Are you from Pomegranate Store?"

"Do you want a lift, grandad? Get up, quick." Chubby reined in the horses.

The old man, who looked a vigorous seventy, shook his head.

"My son Trusty told me to wait at the bridge," he explained. "He said there'd be a shower at noon and a cart from Pomegranate Store would be passing this way with bags of insecticide." Then his face lit up and he pointed to the distance. "Look, here he comes."

The girls turned and saw a man dashing their way, two big bamboo hats in his left hand and an oil-skin under his right arm. It was the young man they had met at the bridge that morning. Their hearts were flooded with gratitude and compunction.

The old peasant, fixing his eyes on his son, commented approvingly yet with exasperation: "Look at him, racing about like mad all day long. Ever since he joined the Party last year, he's given himself heart and soul to the store."

Brownie burst into peals of laughter while Chubby listened quietly, dimpling, as she tried to piece together all she had seen and heard that morning.

The young fellow dashed up, perspiration bedewing his forehead. His father demanded bluntly, "Why so slow? You've kept our friends here waiting."

The young man handed the oil-skin to the girls. "Let me help you cover the cart," he offered, panting.

"You must be Comrade Li, head of Plum Village Store," replied Chubby with emotion as she took the oil-skin. "Thank you! Thank you for all your help."

He brushed this aside. "It's not worth mentioning. You helped me out this morning, didn't you?"

"No, really, Comrade Li," put in Brownny. "We need your help badly. We want you to tell us your experience in supporting agriculture, so that we can improve our work."

"There's no end to the work we can do," said the young man diffidently. "You people do a fine job. I've been wanting to come and pick up some tips from you to overcome the shortcomings in our store."

"Mind you do come," blurted out Brownny. "Or Sister Chubby here will say it's my fault for not being modest enough to learn from you."

For this tactless remark, Chubby pinched her friend's arm.

The spring shower was coming. The young man gave the girls the bamboo hats. As they were leaving Chubby asked, "So when can we expect you?"

"Early in April — before the Clear and Bright Festival," was the brisk answer.

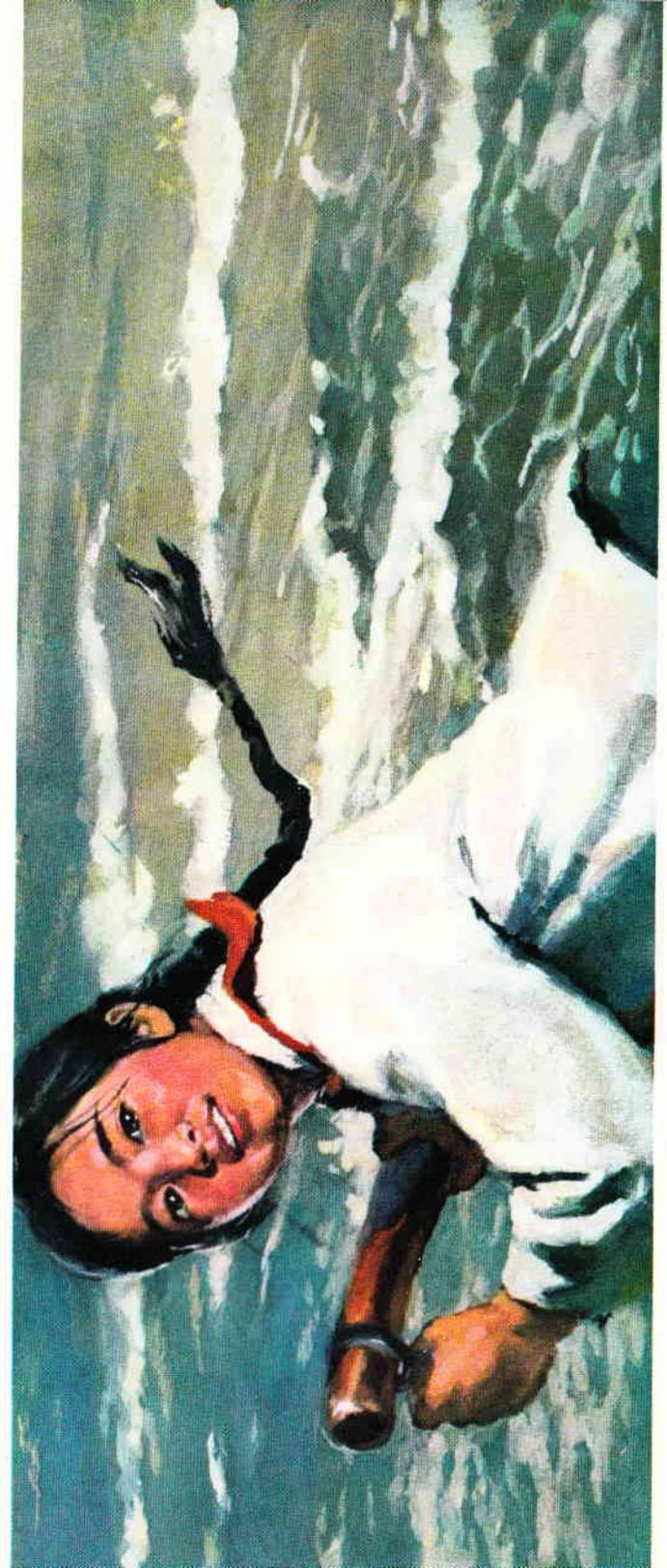
"That's the time for sowing to start." The old man gleefully tweaked his beard. "I'll be coming too, to learn just how your brigade speeds up germination by soaking seeds in warm water."

"Is that a promise?" the two girls asked together.

"It sure is!" answered father and son in unison.

Another clap of thunder. Then, wafted by a soft breeze, the rain came gently down.

Illustrated by Yeh Chia-bo



Conch Ford (serial picture) by Tung Hsiao-ming, Kao Erh-ku and Liang Ping-po

Chi Cheng

New Serial Pictures

Picture-story books with simple captions are widely popular in China today, especially among children.

In the thirties, our great writer Lu Hsun refuted the allegations of bourgeois writers that picture-serials were a “low form of art” which “lacked refinement”. Lu Hsun himself eagerly promoted this art form on the grounds that “the masses want it; the masses appreciate it”. He urged young artists to take this form seriously and work hard at it, for he had “high hopes” of it. However, it is only under Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line on art that this art form has received serious attention. Since the Cultural Revolution notable progress has been made in this field, which is one of the liveliest in our modern art. This was clearly apparent in the National Exhibition of Serial Pictures and Traditional Chinese Paintings held in October and November last year in the Peking Art Gallery.

The ninety-seven picture-serials exhibited were chosen from new works produced in all parts of China since the Cultural Revolution. All the artists had striven to create images of proletarian heroes and



A picture from *Heroic Workers of Taching*

reflect the fervid life and struggles of workers, peasants and soldiers. Doing away with the decadent feudal, bourgeois or revisionist content which was a feature of so many works before the Cultural Revolution, they introduced completely new themes expressed in a greater variety of artistic forms, which for the most part attained a fairly high technical level. These achievements testify to the artists' serious attitude towards their work.

This exhibition made it evident that the Cultural Revolution has heightened the artists' political acumen; for many important themes in these new works deal with this period of our socialist revolution and socialist construction, convincingly demonstrating the victory of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in art. Some depict the determination of the workers and peasants of Tachai, Taching and elsewhere to take the socialist road, relying on their own strength and hard work. Examples of these are *Heroic Workers of Taching* in gouache and *The Path of Tachai* in the traditional style. Other picture-story books praise the educated young people who choose to settle in the countryside, government functionaries who do farm

work, bare-foot doctors, the revolution in education and other new developments since the Cultural Revolution. Thus *Sparks of Youth* portrays Chao Ling-hua, a Shanghai schoolgirl who goes to work on a state farm and together with her comrades fights bravely and selflessly against class enemies and natural calamities to win a fine crop of cotton. *Conch Ford* in gouache tells the story of a Little Red Soldier who helps row some PLA men along the eastern coast. *Battle to Prevent Disease*, a series of line-drawings, describes the fight against enemy sabotage in the drive to prevent and cure schistosomiasis. All these works have won wide acclaim.

The basic task of all socialist art, including serial pictures, is to create successful images of proletarian heroes. In picture-story books this is best done by depicting the development of the main characters as the plot unfolds. The fine examples in the exhibition showed that our artists have used the special features of this art and absorbed good techniques from other pictorial arts to enhance their images of heroes and heroines in typical circumstances.

A picture from *Sparks of Youth*





A picture from *Dr. Norman Bethune in China*

Some of these new serials deal with our revolutionary history. For instance, *Dr. Norman Bethune in China* tells the story of this Canadian doctor who came to China during the war against Japanese aggression, while *Guerrilla Contact Station on the River* describes the support given to our Party by the people in enemy-occupied territory.

Another popular favourite in this category is *Story of Lu Hsun* in gouache. This series of pictures skilfully executed with varied brushwork presents the life of this great revolutionary writer, vividly portraying his lofty moral stature and determination to fight until his death. Each picture successfully presents one aspect of this outstanding revolutionary, thinker and writer. One deals with a line of poetry written by Lu Hsun as early as 1903: "I dedicate my life-blood to China." It shows Lu Hsun as a young man studying in Japan. Striding along the seashore pounded by angry waves, with head thrown back he gazes towards his distant motherland, while the sun rising behind the waves enhances his noble image. Another picture *A Keen Student of Marxism* shows Lu Hsun after his arrival in Shanghai in 1927. Secretly, because of the white terror, he is avid-

ly reading Marxism in his study. The low-hanging lamp is covered with a paper shade to conceal it from passers-by outside. Lu Hsun has a cigarette in one hand, a lighted match in the other, but he is so engrossed in what he is reading that he has forgotten to light the cigarette. His attitude, commonplace as it is, highlights his keenness to study. And the whole environment contributes to this, the clock on the bookcase in a shadowy corner suggesting the lateness of the hour and the paper shade on the lamp conveying the need to study Marxism in secret under the white terror. These evocative details create artistic scenes providing much food for thought. Another picture of this series *Debunking the Four Renegades* shows effective contrasts between light and shade. Lu Hsun is standing proudly before the Japanese Uchiyama Bookstore, his stern expression revealing his dauntless revolutionary spirit and adherence to principle. From his gleaming eyes it is clear that he has seen through the four renegades Chou Yang, Tien Han, Yang Han-sheng and Hsia Yen, who are flunkeys of the bourgeois. Though the renegades are not depicted, their vicious characters are conveyed by the shadows at Lu Hsun's feet. This picture brings out very forcefully Lu Hsun's firm proletarian stand, his stern defiance of the enemy, and the fearless tenacity with which he opposed wrong trends. *Sending a Congratulatory Message to Chairman Mao* presents Lu Hsun in October 1935, already ill with tuberculosis, when he sent a wire to Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee immediately after hearing of the arrival of the Chinese Red Army in the revolutionary base in northern Shensi after the Long March. Standing before the window bathed in rosy morning sunlight, he is holding the draft of his message. The excitement on his face conveys his belief: "On you is placed the hope of China and mankind." This brings home to us this great writer's deep proletarian feeling for Chairman Mao and the Party.

In conception, composition and style *Story of Lu Hsun* is a consistent organic whole. At the same time the artists have taken great pains in the use of colours and other artistic techniques to evoke the atmosphere of each separate scene. As a result the whole series has great depth and power and Lu Hsun's character is well rounded out.

Other serial pictures in this exhibition use themes taken from the history of the international communist movement, showing the activities of revolutionary forerunners such as Marx and Lenin. *Song of the Proletariat*, a series of charcoal sketches, presents Eugene Pottier, Pierre Degeyter, Eugene Varlin, Louise Michel and other heroes and heroines of the Paris Commune, taking Pottier as its central figure. Contrasts between light and shade, between solid objects and space, between different angles, characters and scenes are used to project the heroic characters. These are usually portrayed from a lower angle to give them an appearance of greater height, while the reactionaries are portrayed from a higher angle to make them appear more despicable and sinister. Contrasts of light and shade are used not only in individual scenes but between different scenes as well. For example, the 65th picture representing the enemy's attempt to ban *The Internationale* is predominantly dark, while the following scene of the Paris workers' defiant singing of this song is lighter. This switch from darkness to light indicates that the voice of truth must triumph and the forces of reaction are powerless to silence it.

A picture from *Song of the Proletariat*



A picture from *Song of the Proletariat*

The examples mentioned above do not of course include all the fine serial pictures in this exhibition, but suffice to show the new strides taken in this field since the Cultural Revolution. In addition to many traditional black-and-white sketches, there are many works in gouache and coloured ink, as well as woodcuts and scissorcuts. So the technique is richer and more varied, facilitating the suiting of form to content. The ranks of the artists have also been expanded to embrace not only professionals but a sizable contingent of workers, peasants, soldiers, students and teachers. One feature of this exhibition is the number of professional artists who have co-operated with amateurs to create new serial pictures. *Song of the Coal Mine*, *A Slab of Stone* and *Sparks of Youth* are cases in point, produced with the help of workers, peasants and educated young people who have settled in the countryside, who have first-hand experience of real life. Professionals and amateurs work together, learn from each other and join forces to improve the quality of their work. This fine situation is the result of following Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in art, and the prospect ahead is even more promising.

A Friendly Gathering of Japanese and Chinese Calligraphers

In the latter half of last November, calligraphers in Peking met with friends of the visiting Japanese Calligraphers' Delegation in the Orchid Hall in Chungshan Park.

The get-together started with speeches by Chao Pu-chu, a Chinese calligrapher, and Houn Kagawa, well-known seal-cutting artist of Japan. Chao Pu-chu recited a poem he had made for the occasion:

Our art of calligraphy coming from the same source,
Our friendship is the deepest.
Since ancient times our calligraphers have kept pace;
With water from the Eastern Sea as ink,
A thousand flowers will blossom under our brushes
Bringing spring to both our countries.

Then he wrote this poem in cursive script on white paper. Next, Houn Kagawa wrote in bold forceful strokes the four Chinese characters meaning The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains. Other Japanese calligraphers also demonstrated their skill. Jioteki Bai wrote in magnificent clerical script "We were steadfast and never moved and our wills unite like a fortress". Santo Murakami wrote in rustic script "On perilous peaks dwells beauty in her infinite variety", a line from one of Chairman Mao's poems. And Hokai Murakami wrote "Rocks from another mountain can polish jade". The virtuosity of their Japanese confrères won praise from the Chinese calligraphers.

The history of calligraphy in both Japan and China is one of give and take over the centuries. Since the founding of New China, calligraphers of both countries have exchanged many visits. A number of the Japanese delegates have come to China more than once and struck up a deep friendship with our calligraphers.

The Chinese calligraphers and painters both old and young who were present on this occasion also gave an impromptu display of their art and exchanged presents with their Japanese friends.

Publication of More of Lu Hsun's Manuscripts

Recently the Peking Cultural Relics Publishing House has put out *Selected Manuscripts of Lu Hsun* Vol. III, the first two volumes having appeared in 1959 and 1963 respectively.

Volume III presents twenty-nine of Lu Hsun's essays. *Postscript for "The Grave"*, the first facsimile in the volume, was written in 1926 while the others date from the 30's. These essays epitomize Lu Hsun's struggle against class enemies of all descriptions and are filled with the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat. From these facsimiles we can also see how seriously Lu Hsun, China's cultural giant, took the task of writing for the revolution.

New Programme by Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra

The Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra gave a series of concerts in Peking recently. The lively programme, rich in national flavour, was warmly received by the Peking audience.

Flowers of Happiness in Full Bloom, Ode to Lei Feng and *Women Weavers* sung by eleven girls to the accompaniment of various Chinese string instruments, expressed the fine spirit of the broad masses of workers, peasants and soldiers in socialist revolution and socialist construction. *Fighting the Typhoon*, a *cheng* solo about heroic dockers, was composed by the veteran *cheng* musician Wang Chang-yuan after a period of work with the dockers. *Long Live Chairman Mao! Long Live the Com-*

Communist Party of China! and *Never Forget Class Bitterness* were expressively sung by Chu Feng-po, the popular soprano who sings the arias of the modern revolutionary ballet *The White-Haired Girl*, *River Water* and *Joyful Delivery of Grain to the State* performed by Min Hui-fen on the *erh hu* portrayed the feelings of the labouring people in the old and new societies by means of vivid contrasts. *River Water* with its plaintive melody voiced the sorrow and indignation of the boatmen towing boats before Liberation; while the second work revealed the happiness of the peasants in New China as they deliver grain to the state after a good harvest.

A Concert on the Grassland

Kazakh folk-singers recently sang new songs for local herdsmen at a concert in Kaohu Commune, Fuyun County in the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region.

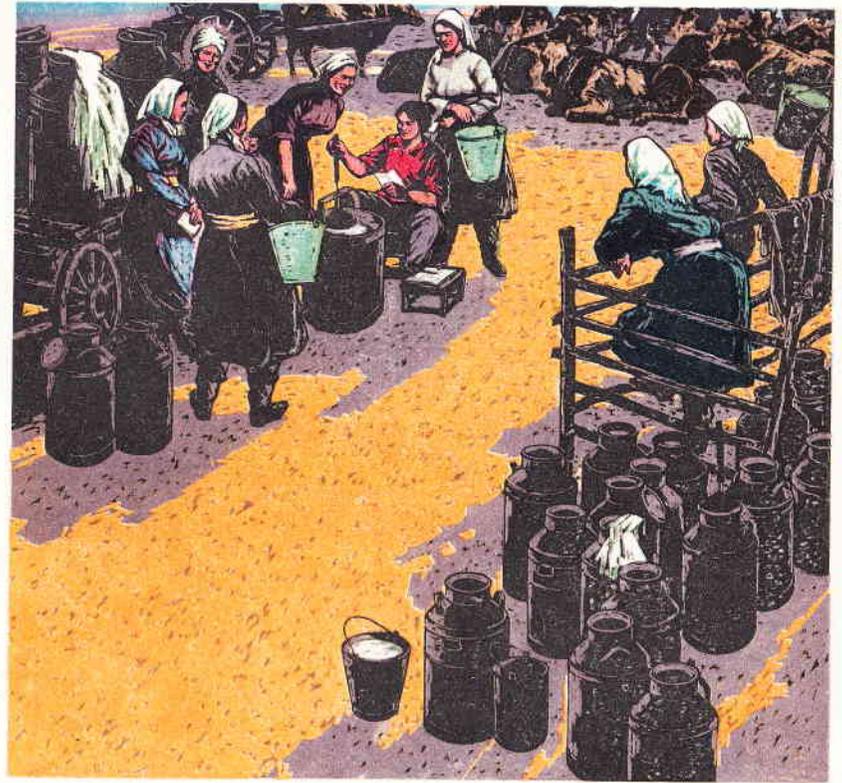
In his new composition, *Glad Tidings of the Victorious Conclusion of the Tenth Party Congress*, Ismail Gule, a 72-year-old popular folk-singer, depicted the rejoicing of the herdsmen at the conclusion of the Party's Tenth Congress, their love for Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party, and their indignation at the crimes of the anti-Party clique of Lin Piao aimed at restoring capitalism. Shayik, brought up in the old society, is a postman in the new. He sang of the happy life of today. For ten years and more he has toured the vast grassland on horseback, singing for the herdsmen wherever he goes. In recognition of his outstanding work he has twice been received in Peking by our great leader Chairman Mao. Mutalif who excels in playing the *tumbra* gave a stirring and exuberant performance of *Song of the Factory* and *Celebrating a Bumper Harvest*.

Fossil Skeleton of Extinct Elephant Found in Northwest China

The fossil skeleton of an extinct elephant was recently excavated in Panchiao Commune, Hoshui County, Kansu Province. Belonging



to the extinct order of stegodons, the skeleton measures about 4 meters in height and 8 metres in length. The tusk is 3.03 metres long. This type of elephant lived from approximately the end of the Tertiary Period three million years ago to the Quaternary Period ten thousand years ago. It was taller than the modern elephant, with longer tusks and a transverse ridge on the cusps of the molars. Previously only teeth or skull fragments of this elephant had been discovered in Asia and Africa. The fossil recovered in Kansu is the largest and best preserved stegodon skeleton so far found in the world.



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