

The Women's Movement in China

A Selection of Readings

Elisabeth Croll



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'We cannot discuss women's liberation, women's independence and women's freedom in isolation. I'm not for what is called women's rights in and for itself, as opposed to men's rights. We cannot make the men our target of struggle. Oppression of women is class oppression. When we talk about this we must remember that the liberation movement of women cannot be separated from the liberation of the proletariat. It is a component part of the proletarian revolution'.

*Wang Tse,
Peking No. 3 Cotton Mill, 1973*

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FOREWORD

This booklet is an anthology of readings on the structure, working methods and goals of the women's movement in China after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. It does not concentrate on the numerous success stories of the achievements of Chinese women, but on the collective organised effort of the great numbers of Chinese women in both rural and urban areas to expand their public role and attain equality of status with men in the family and in all major sections of social, economic and political life. Readings have been chosen which outline both the theoretical and practical problems evident in changing social institutions and attitudes and the methods employed in overcoming these, in the hope that they would be of combined appeal to those specialising in the field of Chinese social studies and to readers who are primarily interested in the organised movement for women's liberation and the role of women in their own society.

The choice of readings has been limited to those which are directly from Chinese sources in order to provide the reader with an opportunity to examine at first hand the Chinese materials on the question of the emancipation of women. The extracts in this booklet are primarily taken from daily newspapers and the publications of the Women's Federation and as such are usually written especially for peasant and urban working women who, after a long history of cultural oppression are learning to participate and lead in public life. Others are written to change the attitudes of both men and women. The language of some of the articles, which may seem alien to some readers reflects the familiarity of the people of China with Marxist-Leninist concepts and the high degree of political consciousness there. Many of the articles were primarily written to be read aloud and discussed in political study sessions hence there is some repetition of key concepts and policies. Individual readings have been edited to cut out excessive repetition. Inevitably these articles lose something in translation and unfortunately the standards of the translations sometimes fluctuate in quality. The sources of the translations of the readings include periodicals and publications from the Foreign Languages Press in Peking, the China Welfare Institute in Shanghai and various monitoring services in Hong Kong. Because the sources of the translations are varied and it has not been possible to check many of the translations against the originals, a few inconsistencies in phraseology may still remain after editing. The names of the sources are all given in *pinyin* romanisation, but the names of places and persons remain as they appeared in the original texts.

Although China itself is developing its own unique socialist ideals and social organisations based on particular socio-economic conditions, the experience of a society which is consciously redefining the role of women cannot but be of interest and relevance to those with similar goals elsewhere.

Elisabeth Croll
December, 1973

FOREWORD TO SECOND EDITION

Since this book of readings went to press in 1973 a new movement has emerged in China which has wide implications for the position of women. An important component of the campaign to criticise Lin Piao and Confucius includes furthering the ideological revolution necessary for the full emancipation or liberation of women. The campaign of the last two years has been described by the women's movement in China 'as a deep socialist revolution in the realm of ideology which was of great significance in the continuous struggle to break down male supremacy and replace old habits and customs' (Foochow Radio, 7 January 1974). As the first edition of this book has illustrated, it was the experience of the women's movement in the 1950's and 1960's that so long as the deep-rooted habits of male supremacy continued to discriminate against and show contempt for women, and while women themselves held traditional conceptions of the female role, it would not be possible for women to take advantage of the opportunities available to them in the new society. To bring the selection of readings up to date, a new selection on the nation-wide campaign to criticise Lin Piao and Confucius have been added. Although for practical reasons they have been placed at the end of the book, they may be thought of as a continuation of the movement for ideological emancipation as outlined in Section IV.

Elisabeth Croll
December 1975.

INTRODUCTION

The low status of women in traditional China, whether in the patriarchal family or in society, has become proverbial. Deprived of the opportunities of social and political association and economic independence it was not until the twentieth century that women began widely and collectively to protest against their social isolation and claim equality in all sections of social, political and economic life. From the turn of the century, a feature which has immediately attracted the attention of observers at each stage of the continuing revolution has been the active participation of women and allied fundamental changes in their role and social status. What formed 'a remarkable phenomenon' in 1911, 'a striking manifestation of social change and awakening' in 1927 had by 1946 'shaken China to its very depths'. In 1971 an impressive array of *prima facie* evidence convinced a group of American women students of China that changes in the lives of women may be 'one of the greatest miracles of the Chinese Revolution'. In China two forces have worked towards the emancipation of women – the actions of the feminists themselves and the revolutionary ideology. Not only do the roots of the women's movement coincide with those of the revolution, but each successive revolutionary phase has had great repercussions in the location, structure and fortunes of the movement for women's rights.

Women first appeared as a new public political and social group of consequence during the first quarter of this century. From the 1890's onwards educational and anti-footbinding reforms were introduced by radical intellectuals and officials to better equip wives and mothers to fulfil their biological role and strengthen the family in order that China might match the wealth and power of the Western nations. In practice, these reforms facilitated the emergence of a women's movement largely made up of urban intellectual/school student patriots, romantics and individual feminists who enthusiastically and determinedly participated in revolutionary and patriotic activities of anti-dynastic and anti-imperialist intent. With the attempted establishment of democratic institutions following the overthrow of the dynasty in 1911, and later in the 1920's, revolutionary romanticism and patriotism gave way to collective feminism. The first organised expressions of the women's movement were associations of suffragettes who fought for the 'vote' with a perseverance and agitation that would have delighted the more militant of their Western sisters. Although the 'women's question' received much attention during the New Thought and May 4th movements (1916 – early 1920's) as part of the widespread intellectual revolt against Confucian family and social restraints, there was little change in the lives of most women. The movement for women's rights, divorced from the embryonic class struggles of factory women, remained an expression of urban upper and middle class interests, but even among these women, despite the small numbers of individual personal gains, a general disillusionment had set in by

the mid-1920's. Lack of progress, repeated harassment and their continued exclusion from most political institutions convinced many in the feminist associations that action along Western lines was no longer applicable – the fight for a 'vote' in near-powerless democratic institutions was proving inappropriate in a country where internal militarism and foreign imperialism were rampant.

The emergence of the nationalist revolutionary movement based on Canton in the 1920's marked the turning point in the history of the women's movement. The Nationalist or Kuomintang Party, reorganised under the influence of Soviet advisers and the newly formed Communist Party, recognised the rights to equality of women and nurtured the women's movement along lines first developed in the USSR. Under the auspices of the Nationalist Party, a Women's Department and networks of women's unions were established in villages and towns of the southern provinces and later in the Yangtse valley. The enthusiasm with which many women simultaneously supported the movement for a unified and independent nation and worked for their own emancipation was to become legendary. It soon became evident both to the Kuomintang and the Communist Parties that this first attempt to awaken and organise peasant and factory women in their own, and in the class struggle, had aroused a powerful revolutionary force. It was this recognition that was directly to affect the future history of the women's movement following the split between the Kuomintang and Communist Parties in 1927. From this time until 1949 the women's movement divided and followed two separate paths of development.

In areas subsequently governed by the Kuomintang, the peasant and working women's unions were ruthlessly suppressed and thousands of young girl activists and leaders lost their lives. The Kuomintang Party continued to pay lip-service to many of the ideals of the Women's movement, indeed women's rights were written into the new code of law passed in 1931, but any attempt by a popular movement to publicise or practise these rights was rarely tolerated. Instead, the leading intellectual feminists, co-opted into government service, proclaimed the achievement of the emancipation of all women. The new law was what women had been fighting for, what need was there then for an organised women's movement? They advanced a new ideal of womanhood which reinforced the traditional roles of wife and mother, re-emphasised Confucian virtues and established a new cult of domesticity. The public energies of privileged urban women were directed into philanthropic and charitable bodies whose social and welfare functions were extended to include war relief in the anti-Japanese war (1937-45), but no overt political actions by women were countenanced and there were no serious attempts to organise women in the factories or villages.

By contrast, in the Liberated Areas, the Communist Party fostered the expansion of the women's movement which was largely composed of the specially deprived and oppressed peasant women of the poor northwestern provinces. After uncertain beginnings the women's associations succeeded in gradually raising their consciousness and instilling enough confidence to draw them into the labour force, war work and land reform. These activities, in addition to directly benefiting the economy and fighting strength of the base areas, also changed the self-image and expectations of the peasant women by

redefining their economic role and elevating their status in the family and in the village community. From a new position of individual and collective strength, women began to defend their own interests and newly won rights as presented in the early marriage, electoral and land laws. Peasant women soon came to identify with, and hold vested interests in, the success of the Chinese Red Armies, later the People's Revolutionary Army.

With the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the nation became explicitly committed to the construction of a socialist society and with it the emancipation of women. In the tradition of Marx and Lenin the Chinese Communist Party recognised that true equality for women is only possible in a socialist society and the success of the revolution itself is dependent on the support and participation of the vast majority of women. In the 1920's Mao Tse-tung had analysed the oppression of peasant women and inextricably linked their emancipation with the fortunes of the peasant's revolutionary struggle. Since 1949 the proletarian revolution has passed through a number of phases. The first years of the new government were devoted to programmes of socio-economic construction. The major reforms initiated in the early and middle 1950's included Land Reform or the redistribution of land and the organisation of peasants, the publicisation of the new Marriage Law, the founding of modern industry and the gradual displacement of individualised peasant production by collectivised agriculture. The period of the Great Leap Forward which followed from 1958 to 1960 is perhaps best known for the formation of the new forms of rural social organisation, the people's communes, its utopian flavour and the subsequent expansion of production. From the 1960's and culminating in the Cultural Revolution, the emphasis has been on the further consolidation of the new forms of social organisation, socialist education to raise the political awareness of the people and the struggle against bureaucratic, routinised, authoritarian and self-interested forms of thought and behaviour. Within the context of these general programmes designed to change the economic base and create new social institutions and values, the separate women's organisation, the Women's Federation (See Section I), has constantly forwarded the interests of women and defined and redefined the 'women's question' on three levels – in the family (See Section II), in society at large (See Section III) and on an ideological level (See Section IV).

SECTION I

THEIR SEPARATE ORGANISATION

'... the thoroughgoing liberation for women is not something ready-made'.

Peking Review, 9 March 1973

The special oppression of women calls for a separate organisation of women. In 1927 Mao Tse-tung identified women as a separate group in society suffering under a fourth oppression or 'thick rope'.

A man in China is usually subjected to the domination of three systems of authority [political authority, clan authority and religious authority] . . . As for women, in addition to being dominated by these three systems of authority they are also dominated by the men (the authority of the husband).*

The experience of the women's movement before 1949 had proved its value in encouraging women to both struggle against their own specific oppression and gain the confidence necessary for full participation in the wider revolutionary activities. Of the experiments reported from the Liberated Areas only those women who had their own separate local associations attended village-wide gatherings enthusiastically, lost their reserve in speaking publicly and brought their combined strength to play in the wider revolutionary movement.**

After 1949 the women's movement continued to retain its own separate organisation and has further developed its interests and network under the leadership of the All-China Democratic Women's Federation (ACDWF) (later the National Women's Federation). The organisation is made up of a number of affiliated groups and aims to strengthen the unity of women of all nationalities and classes, raise their levels of political understanding and vocational ability, break down their social isolation, protect the newly won rights of women and give expression to their aspirations. The first readings in this section (1 to 7) relate to the goals, structure, membership and work-style of the women's movement. The later readings (8 to 10) are devoted to the process of 'struggle, criticism and transformation' which occurred during and after the Cultural Revolution.

* See *Selected Works* of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. 1, pp. 44-46.

** See *Women in the Liberated Areas of China*, D. Jenner, *AREAS Newsletter* No. 1, 1971.

1. China's New Womanhood

The main goal of the Women's Federation has been to encourage women to make use of the new political, social and economic opportunities provided by the establishment of the People's Republic. Article 6 of the Common Programme adopted in September 1949 declared: *The People's Republic of China abolishes the feudal system which holds women in bondage. Women shall enjoy equal rights with men in political, economic, cultural educational and social life.* The first reading, published on Woman's Day in 1956, illustrates that the women of China were aware that they were now living in a new age in which the old standards of women's 'duties' and women's 'rights' were no longer appropriate. New questions required the working out of new norms of behaviour – hence the constant need for discussion, analysis and exchange of experiences.

China's New Womanhood, *China Reconstructs*, March 1956

The women of China won the right to dignity and equality only recently, after long years of tremendous struggle. Now they are energetically transforming these rights into deeper reality. In every walk of life, in cities and villages all over our country, they are asking: how shall we act to use our freedom well for our children, for our country and ourselves? With steady purpose, they are expunging the effects of their age-long feudal oppression from their lives and learning how to make their new position in society.

Such knowledge does not come of itself. Discussion, analysis and exchange of experience show the way forward. Serious questions which affect great numbers of women are debated in the national press and in women's magazines, in forums and in meetings large and small. Should housewives go out to work? Should educated women stay at home and care for their children after they become mothers? Is a weekly nursery better than a day nursery for the children of busy parents? Should women try to do "men's" jobs? What should be the grounds for seeking and granting a divorce? What is the best way to bring up children to be good citizens of the new socialist country that is coming into being? Even very simple everyday problems like "What shall we wear?" as readers of *China Reconstructs* may remember, have come up for wide discussion, and men as well as women have joined in.

For this is a new age, and the old standards of women's "duties" and women's "rights" no longer prevail. The liberation has opened all roads. The new standards have to be thought out and established by women themselves.

The All-China Federation of Democratic Women, the broad national organisation that serves hundreds of millions of women of every age and occupation in every part of China, is helping to find the answers to these new problems.

2. Introducing the Women's Federation

The first National Congress of women was held in March and April 1949 –

six months before the People's Government was set up. In anticipation of the approaching victory of the Communist Party and the subsequent enormous task of constructing a new country, this Congress decided the time was ripe to establish a permanent nation-wide women's organisation. In the first extract, from an address delivered at the Congress, one of the leaders of the women's movement, Teng Ying-chao, welcomes the founding of a central body to generally give direction to and co-ordinate women's work. She describes some of the preliminary work of the women's movement in the Liberated Areas and warns that they must overcome the weaknesses inherited from the old generations of women: 'narrow-mindedness, frailty, sense of reliance on others, susceptibility to sentiment, vagueness in political conceptions and lack of principles'. The second extract formally introduces the Women's Federation and briefly summarises its goals and structure.

A Report on the Present Policy and Tasks of the Women's Movement, 1949. *Documents of the Women's Movement*, ACDWF, 1949.

In accordance with the development of nationwide victory of the revolution and the needs of the women's movement, a unified policy should be adopted to direct more effectively the women's campaigns, to mobilise more extensively the women masses and to expand the women's democratic movement. Therefore we suggest to the Women's Congress the establishment of an All China Democratic Women's Federation.

At present, various women's organisations have been set up, embracing hundreds of thousands of women from all of the Liberated Areas. From those organisations large number of woman cadres have emerged. Good results have been achieved. Since the Women's Union of the Liberated Areas, answering the call of the Chinese Communist Party, proposed the convocation of an All China Women's Congress last December, women's representative conferences of all levels have been held all over the Liberated Areas. The purpose of these meetings was to sum up their work and to strengthen women's relations with the broad masses . . .

Work has been carried out among women to ensure political, ideological, functional and organisational preparations, as well as to build up a foundation among the masses. Therefore conditions for erecting a centralised leadership of the women's movement on a nationwide scale are ripe. Hundreds of thousands of women have representation at this convention. And we think we have the power to form an organisation of general leadership for democratic women throughout the country. Let us hail the birth of the All China Democratic Women's Federation . . . we must, on the basis of our present work, strive to penetrate deeper into the masses, and to stick to a systematic way of working. The task of the women's movement and all the policies concerning women's work can be carried out by coordinating all correlative elements. All women's bodies and organisations must not neglect this point. Any thought and method tending to one-sidedness and isolation must be overcome.

All women's work should be based on the existing circumstances and on the consciousness of the woman masses. The remnants of subjectiveness.

compulsiveness and formalism must be eradicated. Thus the women's movement can be further elevated, expanded, so as to meet the nationwide victory . . .

We must overcome the weakness we inherited from the old generations such as narrow-mindedness, frailty, triviality, sense of reliance on others, susceptibility to sentiment, vagueness in political conceptions and lack of principles.

We must actively take it as our own responsibility to reform the society and to serve the woman masses. Led by the All China Democratic Women's Federation and educated by the wisdom of the masses, we must make every effort to improve ourselves, to hold fast to our struggles and to make ourselves excellent workers in building a new society.

Introducing the All-China Democratic Women's Federation, People's China, March 1955.

The All-China Democratic Women's Federation (ACDWF) was founded in Peking on April 3, 1949 – six months before the People's Republic of China was proclaimed. It seeks to unite Chinese women of all nationalities and democratic classes so that they can exert their united strength to work in various fields of national construction, to protect women's rights and interests and promote child welfare, to ensure equality of women, and raise the level of their political understanding and vocational ability. In general it strives to bring about the complete emancipation of women and to rally all peace-loving women the world over in defence of peace.

Membership of the Federation is based on affiliated groups, and various national organisations of women are affiliated to it. The democratic women's federations in every province, municipality and autonomous region are its member-organisations. Below them come the county and city women's federations, right down to the lowest units – women's councils in the *hsiang* (rural districts) and villages, and the ward women's councils in the cities. Members of the women's councils both in town and countryside are directly elected by the women in their own constituencies.

The highest body of the Federation is the All-China Women's Congress, which draws up the policy and programme of the women's movement all over the country. Between meetings of the Congress the executive committee is responsible for carrying out the work of the Federation, for putting its decisions into effect, and generally leading the work of all women's organisations.

3. Local Representative Conferences

Local women's groups centred in schools, factories and other places of work or in the residential community have taken a variety of forms. Small study groups might examine Marxist writings, Party policies, local social and economic conditions and the special implications of each of these for women. Groups might take the form of practical work teams or consciousness-raising

groups which play a supportive role in meeting the practical and emotional problems of its members. Representatives of these groups are directly elected to women's councils or 'representative conferences' which meet in villages, rural districts or city wards. This report from the First Women's Congress in 1949 established the women's representative conference as the local form of organisation most suited to the conditions of rural and urban China.

Report from the First Women's Congress in 1949, Documents of the Women's Movement in China. ACDWF, 1949.

The women's representative conference is the best form of organisation for uniting the women masses. Such organisations should be formed in every place and on all levels. A women's representative conference at the village level is the fundamental organisation of this kind of conference. The representatives should be democratically elected by the women masses, and should include women delegates to the people's representative conference, delegates from women's organisations (such as woman delegates from textile groups, cooperatives, literary classes, etc.), and delegates directly elected from among the vast woman masses (to be elected by a definite number of women according to their living districts).

The function of this kind of conference is to represent the opinion of the woman masses, to discuss the direction, tasks and important undertakings of the local women's work, to transmit the policies, orders or decisions of the democratic government and higher authorities, and to mobilise the vast masses of women to make common efforts to enforce these measures. Meanwhile, it is necessary to elect from the representative conference a committee to carry out its resolutions, to attend to daily routine and to convene conferences at regular intervals.

The name of this committee may be decided by public opinion. In the regions where the masses are well acquainted with women's federations, it may be called a 'committee of women's federation.' Furthermore, for the purpose of fortifying the mass basis, the committee of women's representative conference should adopt various forms of organisations – such as literacy classes, cooperatives, mutual-aid groups, etc., – to organise the woman masses with different demands. At the same time, the committee should keep contact with the vast masses of disorganised women and render them service.

In cities as well as in villages and in the county seats, women's representative conferences should also be convened and the committees of women's federations be elected in accordance with the above-mentioned principles to lead women's work . . . The concrete steps, the methods and the emphasis of work differ in cities and countrysides as well as in the new and old liberated areas.

The great majority of cities in the Liberated Areas have been newly liberated. Only in a few of them has preliminary work among women been started. Many more cities will be liberated in the near future. Therefore, our immediate new task is to organise urban women's work. We shall centre our work around urban women while not neglecting that of rural women. Woman

workers of the progressive class are our main targets. At the same time we will not forget to unite all other labouring women and to win over the support of women intellectuals and women of other strata.

In cities which have been liberated for a longer period of time and where preliminary work for women has been carried out our work is to further organise women into the work of productive reconstruction, to raise their cultural level and to expand the welfare undertakings for women and children. At the same time we actively organise women for democratic construction, help them to make use of their democratic rights. We shall, by means of education, let the women understand that men and women are born equal. We shall adequately criticise the feudal conception that women are inferior. Laws protecting the rights of women should be enforced so that the feudal tradition which holds women in bondage will be gradually abolished.

City women of all circles may join the various organisations according to their occupations, institutions and schools. These organisations, should, on the basis of their actual needs, set up bodies or appoint cadres to be responsible for women's work.

4. A Conference Report

Throughout China women's representative conferences meet periodically at various administrative levels such as those of the county, the city, the province, the municipality and finally at national levels. For example People's China noted in 1952 that some 80 per cent of the counties or equivalent administrative units had organised representative conferences with women delegates representing approximately 76 million members in factories, villages and residential areas. The role of the conference is to systematically sum up the past experience of the women's movement in that area and set forth new programmes of work. This reading is an extract from the report of the Third Kwangtung Provincial Women's Congress held in March 1962. The report, which follows a standardised pattern of presentation, first summed up the overall achievements for the five years that have elapsed since the last provincial conference before presenting the short-comings of its work during the same period. The latter became the basis for forthcoming programmes of the women's movement. In the following extract the general guidelines for the future work of the women's movement in Kwangtung are briefly outlined.

Report from the Third Kwangtung Provincial Women's Congress, March, 1962. Nanfang Ribao (Southern Daily) March 27, 1962.

For more than five years women's work in our province has made considerable headway in the fields of production, living and ideology... However, the work of the Provincial Women's Federation has not been without some shortcomings, due to the fact that we failed to study thoroughly the directives of the Party Central Committee and the Provincial Party Committee, and to the lack of experience. These shortcomings should be corrected in the future.

1. For the past several years, in the course of developing the women's movement rapidly under the leadership of the Provincial Party Committee and the higher women's federation, we have gained the following experiences...

Facts prove that the development of socialist undertakings has opened a broad avenue for the participation of women in socialist labour, making it possible for women to become an indispensable force in construction and make use of their wisdom and strength together with men in production, work and study. What is more important, the people's commune system has been conducive to the development of the special skills of women, to the gradual realisation of a reasonable division of work between men and women, and to the implementation of the principle of pay according to work and of equal pay for equal work between men and women, and to the creation of the most basic conditions for the gradual reduction and elimination of the inequality between women and men with respect to social production and life.

2. In the course of socialist construction, we must continuously conduct education in patriotism and collectivism among women and raise their political and ideological consciousness. As we are aware, old ideas are often reflected in the production work, life and thought of women. Hence we must gradually guide them to overcome the influence of bourgeois thought before we can gradually guide them to embark on the socialist path... careful and intensive ideological and educational work should be the regular work of basic-level women's organisations.

3. In mobilising women to take part in production, we must in consideration of the special conditions of women, adopt various appropriate measures... Generally speaking, owing to the influence left over from the old society, women's cultural standards were relatively low; they were haunted by an inferiority complex and seldom had an opportunity to participate in social activities. Consequently, they were faced with difficulties in the study of techniques. In this respect, therefore, their thoughts must first of all be liberated, while on the other hand, we must encourage them to proceed from reality, learn bit by bit and advance step by step. Secondly, when mobilising women to take part in social labour, we must take into consideration their physical ability, physiological characteristics, and household tasks, and work out rational arrangements for them so as to guarantee their health.

4. In sponsoring collective livelihood and welfare projects, we must take local conditions into account and meet the practical requirements of the women...

5. Under Party leadership, women's federations at various levels must keep their work in step with the central work of the Party. This is an important guarantee of close cooperation with related departments and the over-all development of work among women, which is part of the central work of the Party; the central work proposed by the Party during various periods is likewise the central work of women's federations. Women's work must be adapted to the demands of the Party, and Party policies should be implemented among the masses of women. The opinions and demands of women too should be reflected promptly and suggestions should be made for

the solution to relevant problems, and should be implemented in an over-all way among women through the unified leadership of Party committees. It is only in this way that women's work can be developed smoothly. For this reason, the work of women's federations must closely rely on the leadership of Party committees and be brought into step with that of the latter . . .

'... Strengthening the organisational work of basic-level women's congresses is a common aspiration of the broad masses of women, and will be of great significance to the development of democracy, the strengthening of unity among women . . . and promoting socialist construction. To perfect basic-level women congresses, it is necessary to elect women delegates properly. Women delegates elected must be made to maintain regular contacts with the masses of women they represent, publicise the Party's policies and principles, reflect the opinions and demands of the masses of women, and care for the personal interests of women and children. Cadres, committee members and delegates must learn to apply democratic methods, carry on their work on the basis of the demands of the masses, listen to the opinions of the masses, carry ideological and political work to the fields, to the homes and into the hearts of the people. They must earnestly play the role of 'intermediaries between those above and those below.'

At the present time, the task before the people of the whole province is extremely great and formidable. Women's work is concrete and heavy. In order to achieve this task, secure new victories, and not to fail the hopes of the broad masses of women, we must strengthen the study of Marxism-Leninism, the thought of Mao Tse-tung, the various policies of the Party and theoretical knowledge relating to women's movement. We must continuously raise our policy levels, professional and cultural levels and enhance our socialist ideological consciousness; implement the Party's work style of seeking truth from facts, promoting democracy, and following the mass line, so as to carry out work more realistically, intensively and meticulously.

5. A 'United Front' Organisation

The first National Congress of Women in 1949 stated clearly that the Women's Federation was a 'united front' organisation embracing women of all social strata and professions. Although it is an all-inclusive movement, it is also emphasised that urban and rural working women should be the main force of the movement. The first extract delineates the main categories of women who constitute its membership and the various tasks appropriate to work within each category. In 1949, when this report was published, one of the first priorities of the government was the economic recovery of the nation and a guaranteed food supply, hence women of all classes were firstly encouraged to participate in some form of production. The second extract, published seven years later, considers some of the problems arising from the broad-based membership of the Women's Federation.

Resolutions on the Present Task of the Women's Movement in China, 1949, Documents of the Women's Movement, ACDWF, 1949.

The urban women's movement should be based on woman workers, rallying other labouring women, winning over woman intellectuals, women of liberal professions and women of other social strata, and should strive . . . for the reconstruction of new cities of the people. Here, the first and foremost task is to organise all labouring women to participate in industrial and handicraft production.

In the city where a certain amount of groundwork has been laid the feudalistic ideology and traditions which had enchained women, and the particular difficulties which demand immediate attention should all be eliminated gradually. The productivity of women should be improved, and the welfare work for women and children promoted; nurseries, hygiene for mother and child, and midwifery classes should be organised, in the course of the main work of developing production. We should mobilise and organise all labouring women masses to participate actively in the democratic movement to exercise their democratic rights, to eradicate feudalistic oppression, to join in varied government work, so as to raise and guarantee their political and social position.

The urban and rural women intellectuals should endeavour to intimately link up with labouring women, to participate in productive work, to increase their scientific knowledge and technical ability and to plant the concept of serving the people. Girl students should study diligently and become useful in the construction of a new democratic nation.

As to woman workers and farmers, more opportunities for study should be provided so that a new intelligentsia of labour origins would be developed. Professional women should study hard, master their profession, perform well their duties in order to build and consolidate the road for women to participate in all professions of society through the achievements of their own work. It is necessary to encourage women intellectuals and labouring women to join all kinds of training classes, study groups, research institutes so as to train a great number of good teachers, office workers, economic workers, midwives, doctors, nursery workers etc., for the purpose of reconstructing a new society. It is necessary to overcome the intellectual women's old conception of looking down upon labour and to emphasise the link with workers and farmers. Women cadres should be organised to go to factories and farms to serve the broad masses of women and children in order to promote cultural development and exchange between the city and the country.

As to the work in the countryside of the Liberated Areas we concur with the "Decision on the Present Women's Work in the Rural Districts of the Liberated Areas" adopted by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in December 1948, which emphatically pointed out that women in the old Liberated Areas should regard the active participation in production as the central link of all work. In the process of organising women to participate in production it is necessary to combine it with the struggle against feudalistic remnants that enslaved them. Rural women can go one step further in their liberation through raising their political and cultural levels,

mobilising them to join actively in the democratic political reconstruction, and promoting hygienic work for women and children.

Report of the Vice-Chairman of the Women's Federation in 1956 from Report of the Eighth Party Congress, Foreign Languages Press (FLP) Peking, 1956.

United front work among women is an aspect of our work for the people's democratic united front. During the anti-Japanese war, our Party co-operated with the representatives of patriotic democratic women of various social strata and democratic parties, and those who had no party affiliations. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, this unity has become more extensive in scope. Working through all channels, with the help of the Federation of Democratic Women and other women's organisations, we have achieved a more widespread unity with the women of all nationalities, all social strata, all democratic parties and all religious faiths. In the upsurge of the socialist revolution in particular, the women's united front has been further consolidated and enlarged. Under the leadership of the Party, many women of the national bourgeoisie have become more patriotic as a result of the education they have received in the past few years. Heartened by our policy of peacefully transforming capitalist industry and commerce, they have come to see that socialism is already a general trend and that the people want it, and so they have accepted transformation. They have thus become a positive force within the bourgeoisie and played a considerable part in helping the capitalist industrialists and merchants to accept transformation.

However, some of our cadres engaged in the work among women have not fully appreciated the positive role which the people's democratic united front plays in our revolutionary cause or the significance and possibilities of uniting with and remoulding women of all strata to help them work for socialism. When they work with non-Party women, they have many scruples. They think working with them is too much bother, they are afraid of being contaminated with bourgeois ideas, or departing from their political stand and making mistakes. The result is, they are unable to unite with them and help them earnestly and patiently. On the other hand, there are also cadres of our Party who make unprincipled concessions and abandon their grave responsibility for helping these women to remould themselves. All this is wrong.

From now on, we must further consolidate and enlarge the women's united front. The Federation of Democratic Women is a women's united front organisation under the leadership of the Party, a mass organisation on the broadest possible basis. It should give constant attention to bringing into its activities new active elements from among the women of all nationalities, all social strata and all democratic parties. In the leading organs of the Federation, the proportion of non-Party women should be appropriately increased. Party cadres in the Federation should strengthen their unity and co-operation with non-Party leading cadres. They should take practical steps to rid themselves of sectarian ideas and styles of work. In daily work and study, they and the non-Party cadres should work together, learn from one

another, consult one another and treat one another with earnestness and sincerity. They should see to it that the non-Party cadres shall have the power their posts entitle them to. They should create conditions favourable to the latter's success in work and help them to play their role fully.

6. A Democratic Work-style

A practical subject which has constantly preoccupied the Women's Federation has been the improvement of its work-style. As this reading makes clear its method of work, like that of the other popular organisations, is based on the concept of the 'mass line'. The history of the movement is created by the actions of the participants themselves not by the directions of the handful of officers or cadres of the organisation. As a Central Committee directive written by Mao Tse-tung in 1943 noted:

*'However active the leading groups may be, its activity will be transformed into fruitless effort by a handful of people unless combined with the activity of the broad masses' . . . **

In practical terms this means that the problems, suggestions and the views of participants should be carefully investigated and incorporated into policies before these are again fully communicated and discussed with them prior to application. The first extract examines the practical working-style of the women's movement with special reference to strengthening its basic-level work. The success of a representative organisation and its work-methods is heavily dependent on the qualities of the local women representatives or cadres and their ability and will to establish sisterly relations with the women in their community. Large numbers of classes have consistently been held for the training of leaders in women's work. In the spirit of 'learning from each other', the second extract is from teaching materials which were compiled and published in Zhongguo Fu Nu (Women of China) in 1962 as an example of those used for training local women representatives in rural communes on the outskirts of Peking.

Conduct Work among Women in a more Patient, Thoroughgoing and Attentive Way Renmin Ribao (People's Daily), March 8, 1962.

To promote the working style on the basis of reality is a most important problem concerning the better fulfillment of work among women. In other words, we must properly conduct a survey and study of the major conditions regarding women, so that we can keep a firm grip on the policies related to work among women and adopt effective and applicable work plans and measures in a practical manner. When mobilising women to participate in socialist construction, promoting the women's welfare, making a decision on any single principle or policy, putting forward any single important plan for discussion, and when adopting any single important measure, it is not only necessary to make earnest efforts to conduct the survey and research work

** Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, III, pp. 117-22.*

and to gather as many opinions as possible from the broad masses of women, but also to take full account of the current local objective conditions and the actual conditions of women themselves.

It should be recognised that women have generally a more complex life and there are many peculiar problems in our work among women. The household burden, restricted physical condition, and the influence of many old habits and ideas all affect the production, work, livelihood, and thinking of women to various degrees. The purpose of promoting a practical working style is to understand these peculiar problems of women and, on this basis, to look after their actual difficulties.

What should be done? What should not be done? What should be done today or later? What should be done extensively or carried out in certain selected areas? What should be done this way or that way? These are some of the problems which must be carefully studied on the basis of reality. In the past several years, we have achieved immense results in mobilising women to take part in the various tasks of socialist construction and developing the welfare for the masses of women; meanwhile, many outstanding model units and advanced elements have emerged. They have accumulated an abundant experience which deserves our efforts to sum them up.

The promotion of the working style based on the mass line is aimed at closely uniting with the broad masses of women throughout the country and extensively carrying out the work on women among the women of all circles. It is not only necessary to extensively carry out work among women in industrial and agricultural fields, but also among women in other fields. Moreover, it is not only necessary to unite the women with a comparatively higher ideological consciousness, but also those whose ideological consciousness still remains in a middle-of-the-road situation or even in a backward state.

In order that work on women may be carried out thoroughly among the broad masses of women, one of the key factors is to further improve the system governing the meeting of basic-level representatives of women, fully expand the role of the conference of representatives of women, and consolidate the system for promoting closer relations between the representatives of women and the masses of people. Since representatives of women are elected democratically they are responsible for associating themselves with the people who elected them. It is through the representatives of women that the women's opinions, wishes, and voices are understood and reflected; it is through the conferences of representatives of women that women's problems are discussed and carefully studied; and it is again through the representatives that the spirit of the conference is brought to the people so that they may be assisted in solving their problems.

In the past few years, the conferences of representatives of women in many localities earnestly discussed and studied women's opinions and wishes, and many women representatives adopted various methods and forms to make friends with the masses of women, hold heart-to-heart talks with them, and to assist them in carrying out their work in a practical manner, particularly through joint labour practice and other effective methods. These representatives of women have truly developed their role of constantly and expeditiously associating themselves with the masses of women.

In carrying out work among women, the democratic working style must be fully developed, while attention must be paid constantly to the stimulation of democratic life. We must very humbly listen to the opinions of the broad masses of women and try our best to understand their wishes, plans, criticism, and suggestions. Problems concerning the interests of women should first be handed over to the masses of women for thorough discussion to enable them to express their opinions as much as possible.

In the course of discussion it is not only necessary to listen to the positive or negative opinions, but also to be skilful in taking into consideration all different opinions based on the spirit of humility and prudence. Especially with regard to women's opinions or criticism, no matter what kind of work, which department, or which cadres may be criticised, women should be allowed to speak up freely. The Party committees and women's organisation at all levels must unanimously respect the women's democratic right to air their opinions freely. They must constantly try to understand and study the various conditions of women and sincerely accept the women's beneficial opinions in order to improve the work on women in all fields.

The Party can only adopt the method of persuasion and education in guiding the women's organisations to enable them to accept the Party's policies and decisions. When a decision is made, women's organisations should mobilise the masses of women to discuss and support this decision so that it can be carried out consciously and enthusiastically by the masses of women. Responsible personnel of the Party organisation at all levels should never substitute the Party organisations for the public organisations at any time or in any place. Only by developing the role of public organisations in a practical manner can the superiority of our people's democratic system be fully developed and the relations between the Party and the people be consistently consolidated.

Today is a festival of all women. Let us review our work on women in the past several years, continue to develop the fine tradition of mass work, improve the working style, and conduct the work on women in a more practical, thoroughgoing, and attentive way, and march forward valiantly together with the rest of the people throughout the country under the leadership of the Party.

Teaching Materials on Duties Relating to Work with Rural Women,
Zhongguo Funu, February 1, 1962.

Zhongguo Funu editor's note: — Women's Federations in all areas are now actively training basic-level women cadres, and, in some areas, they have also compiled materials of instruction for this purpose. From the experience of various areas concerning such training work, the compilation of necessary materials of instruction has great significance for the insurance of the good quality of the work. We hope that women's federations in all areas will compile suitable materials of instruction with regard to the concrete local conditions and the thoughts of the local basic-level women cadres and compare notes with one another. Accordingly, we are publishing in the present issue the first draft of the materials of instruction for use in training.

basic-level women representatives and women production team leaders, compiled by the Peking Municipal Women's Federation, for the reference of all areas.

What work should rural basic-level congresses of women and women production team leaders do where women are concerned? How should they do this work?

Style of Work of Women Cadres

In our opinion, every woman cadre should fulfill the following four conditions:

1. *Being energetic and enjoying the work among women.* It must be realised first of all that every kind of work is part of the revolutionary work, and that the work among women is an indispensable part of the work of socialist revolution and socialist construction, is an important task assigned by the Party to women cadres, and is something which women cadres should do whole-heartedly and energetically . . . It is certainly not something of no importance or something which it is entirely up to oneself to do or not to do. The view that the work of women is tedious and troublesome, does not involve any policy, and does not have any political significance is wrong. The work among women, like any other kind of revolutionary and construction work, cannot be smooth sailing all the way. Difficulties cannot be avoided in it. Women cadres, as revolutionary cadres, must have the courage to overcome difficulties and, when a difficulty arises, should report it promptly to Party organisations and thus secure their support. In this way, all difficulties will eventually be overcome.

2. *Labouring well and sharing the pleasures and pains of commune members.* In this connection, women cadres should comply with the following four requirements:

First, every woman cadre must first of all take part in labour as an ordinary labourer and at the same time take the lead in production. There are many women production team leaders who labour diligently, sincerely, and well. If a woman production team leader does not labour during half of every month and goes to the fields only to give directions and orders without labouring herself, she will not be able to win the support of the masses.

While taking part in labour, women cadres should not only perform their function in connection with production, but also make use of the occasion for learning the conditions of women, for working in depth among them, and for chatting with them regularly. After discovering a problem present among women, they should try to solve it promptly and improve the work of production teams accordingly.

3. *Being public-spirited and selfless and working impartially.* What requirements must a woman cadre comply with before she can be considered as public-spirited, selfless, and impartial? The main requirements are as follows:

First, she must not consider herself special, must not take advantage of the commune in any way, and must not take a single tree or blade of grass from the commune. She must precede others in enduring hardships and follow others in enjoying life. In order to educate women so that they will be impartial and selfless, she herself must be impartial and selfless first.

Secondly, when working with women, she must consider all to be equal,

do what is right, and be impartial, and must not consider personal relations.

Thirdly, she must be bold enough to overcome personal feelings and scruples and to criticise all acts detrimental to the interests of women.

4. *Showing concern for women and implementing the mass line.*

First they must show concern for the livelihood of the women everywhere . . .

Secondly, they must pay attention to the opinions of women . . .

Thirdly, they must take the initiative in consulting them when a matter arises. As the saying goes, "Three ordinary persons together are as good as a genius." One person's consideration is always limited. If everybody thinks of something and the interests of the public are considered by all, then more and better methods can be found.

7. 'Separate but not Autonomous'

'The women's movement is a component part of the proletarian revolution'. In China it has not been allowed to exist in isolation for it is considered that if the women's movement is to be successful it must be an integral part of the general programme of continuing revolution and socialist construction. It is an important Marxist principle that the Communist Party, which is the party of the proletariat, has an overall leadership role. Article 7 of the Party Constitution adopted at the Party's Tenth National Congress in August 1973 states that the Women's Federation along with other popular organisations must remain within the general guidelines set by the Party. Within these guidelines each has a responsibility to the other. In the first extract, the Central Committee of the Communist Party outlined its responsibilities to the women's movement. In the second extract, an address presented to the Eighth Party Congress in 1956, one of the leaders of the women's movement reminds the Party of these responsibilities. She criticises the Party and other organisations for not paying sufficient attention to women's work and emphasises the continuing task of the Women's Federation to protect the interests of women.

On the Present Women's Work in the Rural Districts of the Liberated Areas, 1948, Documents of the Women's Movement, ACDWF, 1949.

From now on, the whole Party must have an overall understanding that the mobilisation of the vast numbers of women to participate in revolutionary struggles is an indispensable force for the winning of nationwide victory in the revolution. We must pay attention to the direction of women's work and to achieve the aim of the Party concerning woman's work. The Party committee members should list this as an integral part of the overall work of the Party. When mapping out, reviewing and summarising various work, they should include the women's work. Party newspapers and news agencies of all levels should publicise and report women's work. Party committee members above the county level should establish and enhance the organisation of women's committees and give them direction and assistance

constantly. Below the district level, the leadership of women's work should be the responsibility of the Party branch and special personnel should be appointed to assume the responsibility.

The tasks and responsibilities of women's committees of various levels are to study women's problems and policies and to review women's work under the leadership of the Party committee members of the same level. They must also make proposals to the latter for directing and promoting women's work.

The Party should continue to correct, inside and outside the Party, the remnant feudal ideology of preferring men to women, the thought of excluding women's work from the overall work and the inclination of carrying it out all alone. Party organisations of various levels should intensify the study and practice of Marxism-Leninism and the ideology of Mao Tse-tung in directing women's work in training personnel and accurately grasping the policy of the women's movement.

Speech by Comrade Teng Ying-chao, Vice-Chairman of the All-China Democratic Women's Federation, 1956 from *Report of the Eighth Party Congress*, FLP, Peking, 1956.

In the past few years many Party committees have included the work among women as part of their over-all plans, and have charged the various units concerned to devise practical ways of carrying out this part of the plan according to an agreed division of labour. Moreover, they have periodically examined the progress of the work, summed up and popularised their experiences. In this way they have been able to develop the work among women on a widespread scale, which in turn has made it possible for them to push their work ahead in every field. But there are also Party committees which have not exercised a constant or practical leadership over the work among women; they have adopted the attitude of "I'll attend to it when it is brought to my notice," thus neglecting to bring the function of women's organisations into full play. This state of affairs must be improved. At the same time, it has now become more necessary than ever to establish and strengthen the departments in charge of the work among women in the Party, to make them improve their work and successfully carry out their duties and functions.

In addition, the Party, Youth League and trade union organisations in the state organs, factories and mines, state farms and co-operatives must strengthen their leadership of the work among women, because more and more women have to come to work in these organisations and the number of the womenfolk of workers and employees is always on the increase. All these women have their special demands, which will have to be satisfied as our work advances from day to day. I should like to propose that the Party, Youth League and trade union organisations (including primary organisations) in various units should set up specific organs or appoint specific personnel to take charge of the work among women in the light of the needs and actual possibilities.

In such circumstances, do we still need women's organisations? Yes, we think we still need them. Women's organisations are the products of definite

social and historical conditions. Their historic mission is to carry on specific work among women in connection with their special problems. Therefore, whether or not they are to exist depends on the stage of social development and on the needs of women themselves, and not on our subjective wishes. At present women still have their special problems. A section of them have not yet joined any organisation. They don't know yet how to exercise their own rights. Hence, they are still in need of organisations of their own which will unite their forces, give expression to their aspirations, protect their rights and interests and those of their children, and supervise the implementation of the policy and decrees regarding the equality of men and women. As for the work of maintaining friendly relationships with the women of other countries, this is still a long-term and very necessary task. So our Party should continue to strengthen its leadership in the democratic women's federations at all levels (including women's congresses at the primary level) and help them to play their role fully as organisations. It should also help them to improve their working method in the light of the new situation and needs of the present moment. In the high tide of the socialist revolution, some cadres in charge of the work among women proposed that women's primary organisations should be abolished. They under-estimated the role of the democratic women's federations at various levels. Obviously, their view is incorrect.

8. Struggle: How the Problem of Women should be Viewed

In China the use of the term 'revolution' continues long after the 1949 victory, for it implies a constant struggle against individual and private interest, open criticism and if necessary the public assessment of problems. This open criticism is a manifestation of struggle between two classes (the proletariat and the bourgeoisie); the two roads (socialism and capitalism); and the two lines (revolutionary and revisionist). The first series of letters were published in Zhongguo Funu (Women of China) in 1963. They are typical of a number of letters and articles which appeared under the titles of 'What do Women Live for?' and 'What is the Standard in the choice of one's spouse?' Some correspondents contended that a woman can only have a rich and colourful life if she chooses a husband who can provide material comforts, good food and clothing. Others disagree. The articles and letters often tended to debate personal choices and priorities in domestic life as if they were peculiar to 'abstract' and 'above-class' women. The second reading published in 1964 in Hongqi (Red Flag - the Party magazine), was written in response to these discussions. It is an important article for it lays the foundation for the struggle between two lines of development within the women's movement - the proletariat and the bourgeois. In the latter there is a tendency to look at the question of women merely as a sex distinction and neglect a class analysis. The author emphasises the importance of a person's viewpoint or 'world outlook', that is his or her's general view of the world, society and life in determining priorities and actions. It is not peculiar to men or women, but primarily determined by class. Therefore:

We must . . . make a clear class analysis of the ideological viewpoints of the women of different periods and different class position, and not raise questions of conception of life . . . as abstract, general questions of the 'female' or the 'male'.

The article warns that if a class analysis is neglected then women become caught in a web of entangled 'blessings' and 'natural duties'.

'What Do Women Live For?' *Zhongguo Funu* (Women of China) No. 9, Sept. 1, 1963.

Chang Lien-ying has said: "Women live for revolution as well as for their husbands and children. As to work and housekeeping, it is not necessary to distinguish one from the other, that is which one should come first." I think this way of putting it is not right, for the matter is not as simple as that. In dealing with revolutionary work and household affairs, we must distinguish between the primary and the secondary, and should put work in the primary position. Doing things half-heartedly must not be tolerated. We should handle household chores only after we have done our work, and must not delay work on account of household matters. When work is busy and tasks are urgent, household jobs should be put aside for the time being. We, therefore, must never treat revolutionary work and household work equally. — *Hui Ming of Chekiang.*

I disagree with the way Chang Lien-ying has put it. Is it possible to put revolutionary work and housekeeping on an equal footing? In my opinion, people upholding this concept, in essence, have not liberated themselves from the confining circle of the small family. Since liberated women of China have the right to take part in various kinds of social work, we should treasure this right and exert our utmost in doing well first of all revolutionary work. Only by putting revolutionary work in the first place at all times will one not be bogged down in the confining circle of the small family and fall behind the times. — *Li Ching of Sian.*

I think the saying that women live for revolution as well as for their husbands and children does not make much sense. If this is so, then I shall ask: What are you going to do when contradictions develop between the cause of revolution on the one side and your husband and children on the other?

Although husband and children are part of life, they are not the main purpose for which we live. It is impossible to hold the scales even in the case of, for instance, weighing equally revolutionary work on the one side and husband and children on the other. Whether in the years of struggle in the past, or at the present stage of peaceful reconstruction many women comrades have left their husbands and children for the purpose of serving the needs of the revolutionary undertaking. They have cherished far-reaching ideals and they have done so correctly — in line with the spirit of serving the needs of revolution. I hope Chang Lien-ying will learn from this. — *Wang Cheng of Soochow.*

Women's peculiar physiological structure determines their role of taking up the natural and sacred duty towards society, that is, bringing up the next generation. No matter in what work women are engaged, they all are charged

with this inescapable obligation. The superior socialist system has today provided our children with very bright future prospects. Only today have women been provided with such favourable conditions for bearing and bringing up children. Instead of worrying about the future of our children, which is unnecessary, we shall feel proud of the upbringing of the next generation in our hands. From leading such a life, we shall still be able to have family warmth and the infinite joy of family kinship. Moreover, we can also say without feeling conscience-stricken that I have fulfilled my own obligation. Hence, any discussion of the question "What Do Women Live For?" will be meaningless if divorced from this special social obligation of women. — *Hsiu Feng of Shansi.*

I think a woman will find her life the happiest, the most joyous and the most amusing if she can find a husband who works in the city, if she lives in a modern, industrial city, does a little light social work, and leads a rich, diversified urban life with her husband. — *Ts'ai Yin of Heilungkiang.*

I think Comrade Ai Chū-an's view on the happiness of living well materially is in a way quite correct. Material conditions, whether good or bad, not only have a direct bearing on a man's life, but also will directly affect his work and study. It would not be possible for one who carries a heavy family burden all day long to work and study well. In choosing a husband, it is therefore my opinion that consideration should also be given to the other party's pay and income, apart from his political conditions, age and cultural level. — *Kang Hua of Peking.*

I strongly disagree with Comrade Ai Chū-an's view that if a woman can find a husband in a comparatively high position and if she lives very well materially, that is happiness. I think real happiness can only be attained if the husband and wife care and help one another in their married life, and if family life is satisfactory and harmonious. — *Wang Shih-ying of Tientsin.*

'How the Problem of Women should be Viewed' by Wan Mu-chun, *Hongqi* (Red Flag) October 28, 1964.

The problem of women always presents itself as a social problem . . . The replacement of capitalist society by socialist society is a tremendous leap in the history of development of human society. In a socialist society, the proletariat has changed from the oppressed class into the ruling class, and a basic change has taken place in the social position of the labouring people as well as in the social position of women. But one cannot but realise that class struggle in socialist society is present in all realms of social life, and it is present similarly in the problem of women.

Marxism-Leninism tells that thorough emancipation of the broad masses of the labouring women is an extremely important component part of the integral revolutionary cause of the proletariat, and the raising and settlement of the question of women must be subordinated to the interests of the integral class struggle of the proletariat. This is still the basic principle from which we must not deviate in the least in observing the question of women in socialist society. It is the so-called 'women's viewpoint' of the bourgeoisie which deviates from the principle, looks at the question of women merely as

a matter of sex distinction, obliterates the class distinction of women, and servers the ties between the emancipation of women and the integral cause of the proletariat.

The question of women is very often covered by a veil of sentiment, and people very often deviate from the class viewpoint over this question so that the spread of bourgeois thought is facilitated. For this reason, the implementation of the historical materialist viewpoint and of the method of class analysis in this realm to enable the question to be correctly understood and handled, has great significance for our socialist and communist work.

It should be pointed out that in some of our publications at present some erroneous viewpoints are still in evidence over the question of women: these viewpoints deviate from historical materialism and from class analysis. An example is that some publications raise for discussion questions without a class nature, such as "What do women live for?" and "What is the standard in the choice of one's spouse?"

It can be seen in such discussions that the authors of some articles try to raise ideological consciousness in readers through explanations of these kinds of problems, and that the contents of some other articles are passable. But, generally speaking, the positive significance of such articles is not great, and some erroneous thoughts and confused conceptions are spread instead.

Take, for instance, the questions "What do women live for?" and "What is the standard in the choice of one's spouse?" People can see that the question of "reason for living" is a question of conception of life and conception of the world. The question of standard in the choice of one's spouse is determined directly by one's conception of life and conception of the world. One's conception of life and conception of the world can be distinguished only according to class, and they are either the conception of life and conception of the world of the advanced, revolutionary class, or the conception of life and conception of the world of the declining, reactionary class. They certainly cannot be distinguished according to sex, into "man's" or "woman's" conception of life and conception of the world. To raise the question "What do women live for?" is the same as to admit that women can have a special conception of life and conception of the world of their own not because of class but because of their sex. Such a raising of the question is improper and not in accordance with the Marxist-Leninist class viewpoint.

Since the first division of mankind into classes, history in its entirety has developed in the course of class opposition and class struggle. All people, men or women, exist as people in relation to class and are the products of the economic relations of specific society. Women, like men, are divided into exploiters and the exploited. Though women of the exploiting class are in the position of "domestic slaves" in the families of the exploiting class, yet, together with men of their own class, they oppress the labouring people and lead a corrupt parasitic life. As for the broad masses of the women of the exploited class, they are under twofold oppression.

In different societies, the women of different classes, because they are under different social historical conditions and in different class positions, have completely different purposes and ideals of life and viewpoints of marriage and love.

Take the so-called "civilised" capitalist society for instance. There,

bourgeois women, like bourgeois men, are members of the bourgeoisie. They found their own pleasure on the suffering of the exploited. Like a commodity, they are also their husband's private property. Their standard in the choice of spouses consists of money, capital, position, and status. In a word, their choice of spouses is a transaction in which pros and cons are weighed: it becomes a "cash deal".

In contrast, the broad masses of the women of the proletariat and of the poor and suffering peasants barely manage to survive on utterly destitute families. Some of them, in order to earn a bit of income for themselves and their families, have to do some extremely ill paid work for the property-owning class. Their purpose of life and their wish are to free themselves thoroughly from this state of being exploited, oppressed, impoverished and humiliated and to become the masters of their own fate. They want to liberate themselves from the material and spiritual fetters of authorities represented by the government, the clan, the god, and the husband, and to realise a matrimonial system in which men and women are really equal.

The socialist society has brought an end to the history of discrimination against, and oppression of, women during the three past periods. Following the change of the private ownership of means of production into public ownership, the individual family has ceased to be society's economic unit. In their families and in society, women's explicit or implicit position as slaves has changed. But class, class contradiction, and class struggle are still present in the socialist society. Women are still not a unified whole. Class distinction is still present among them. The women of different classes still have different conceptions of life and conceptions of the world.

In the socialist society, the broad masses of the labouring women are beginning to realise their wish. Together with the men, they have become the masters of the country, the group, and their own fate. Millions of women are carrying out specific work on different fronts shoulder to shoulder with men, thus fully bringing out and developing their strength and ability. Struggle for the thorough victory of socialism and communism — this is the most basic purpose of life of all women with real revolutionary consciousness. Following changes in their economic positions and following the continuous deepening of the Party's ideological education work, the labouring women's viewpoints of marriage and love have gradually freed themselves from influences left behind by the old society. The women are taking (as the standard in the choice of spouses) love founded on common revolutionary will, common struggle, and common labour. As for the women of landlords and rich peasants and the bourgeois women, some of them are in the process of a reform. The conception of life and conception of the world of the exploiting class, which have taken deep roots in their heads, cannot be changed in a short time. Before their basic viewpoints have changed, their answers to such questions as "What do women live for?" and "What is the standard in the choice of one's spouse?" are sure to be swayed by these basic viewpoints . . .

Abstract, above-class women, like abstract, above-class men, do not exist in this world. Nor do there exist the special conception of life and standard in the choice of spouses of abstract, above-class women. What do exist are only concrete women and men with a specific class nature and concrete

conceptions of life and standards in the choice of spouses with a specific class nature. What requirement does this minimum common knowledge of Marxism-Leninism set for us? The requirement is that, when discussing questions related to women, we must have a clear historical materialist viewpoint and make a clear class analysis of the ideological viewpoints of the women of different periods and different class positions, and not raise questions of conception of life and viewpoint of love, which have a strict class nature, as abstract, general questions of the "female" or the "male" . . .

In either their work or their necessary household labour, women comrades with true proletarian revolutionary consciousness will show a revolutionary spirit fully and make correct arrangements in accordance with revolutionary principles. Conversely, if a woman comrade's problem of proletarian revolutionary consciousness has not been solved, then she may, on account of personal indulgence or for other kinds of selfish pursuits, neglect necessary household work and fail to discharge her responsibility for the education of her children, or she may enjoy herself by spending a great deal of her mental effort on narrow "domestic bliss". So the question here is primarily a question of whether or not the woman comrade has the firm will and determination to dedicate herself to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat.

In order to become a real proletarian revolutionist, a revolutionary woman cadre must first of all solve a problem of basic understanding and, through long revolutionary practice, set up a consolidated proletarian, communist world outlook. A world outlook means a general view of the whole world, the whole society, and the whole life. It decides one's attitude toward all kinds of concrete problems in work and livelihood. A revolutionary woman cadre who has the proletarian, communist world outlook, will offer all her energy to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat, correctly handle the relations between revolutionary work and personal problems, and exert effort in the direction of self-training into a real communist

How can it be imagined that a revolutionary woman cadre does not even know what she lives for, and is puzzled all day long as to whether she should put her husband, her children, and her family in the first place or her revolutionary work in the first place? Again, how can it be imagined that a revolutionary woman cadre, in the choice of her spouse, is perplexed by the consideration of whether she should put political conditions or financial conditions in the first place?

To our women cadres and our women comrades, the most important thing is still how to arm their heads with proletarian thought and raise their revolutionary consciousness, not to study assiduously such questions as "What do women live for?"

To raise the revolutionary consciousness of women comrades, it is of course necessary to conduct education among them with regard for their concrete state of thought. Women comrades of course also have some special problems of their own which must be studied and solved. We do not mean to neglect this. But if one does not grasp the substance of the question from the class viewpoint but becomes entangled with what some people call the "blessings" of "women," the "happiness" of "women," the "natural duties" of "women," and "women's three hurdles - love, marriage and childbirth,"

and with the assertion that women cadres are cadres and "also women," then one will fall into the quagmire of the bourgeois theory of human nature, become more confused over the question, and be unable to achieve the objective of educating the broad masses of the labouring women with proletarian thought.

Quite obviously, if the raising of the question of women deviates from the class viewpoint and from class analysis, then the substance of the question cannot be revealed, a line of distinction cannot be drawn clearly from the bourgeois viewpoint over the question of women, and the sure result will be that some people will become ideologically confused and some bad influences will be exerted. It would be harmful to the revolutionary cause to draw the attention of some comrades, especially women comrades, to such things as domestic bliss, the salary level of husbands, and the question of why women live, thus making them neglect the current political task and class struggle.

Lenin pointed out: 'Our task is to turn politics into something in which every labouring woman can take part'. ('On Tasks of the Women Workers Movement,' *Complete Works of Lenin*, Vol. 30, People's Publishing House, p. 26).

Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out: 'Not having a correct political viewpoint is the same as not having a soul.' (*On Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People*, People's Publishing House, 1957, p. 23).

To our women, the most important thing is, through propaganda and education, to encourage them to study Marxism-Leninism, the thought of Mao Tse-tung, and the Party's policies, and to raise their consciousness and determination in taking part in revolutionary struggles, not to draw their attention to so-called "domestic bliss" . . .

Lenin pointed out in 1920 that it was wrong to regard the questions of marriage and love as the principal questions for discussion by women and youth. The utmost should be done to concentrate all proletarian, revolutionary forces for defeating counter-revolution. Women comrades and the labouring women should be made to show concern over the proletarian revolution. Women should be encouraged to take part in all aspects of social life and all social activities. Only thus would they be able to discard their narrow individualist family life and mental limitations. Only thus would a truly revolutionary foundation be laid for marriage and for relations between the two sexes.

To be sure, we are today in circumstances which differ from those of Russia and Germany at the time. But the principles advanced by Lenin still have profound, practical guiding significance for us.

We are today faced with acute, profound struggles between the two classes and between the two roads. All anti-socialist capitalist forces are doing everything possible to spread bourgeois thought and concepts. They are the best accustomed to employing the magic weapon which is the theory of human nature, cause confusion deliberately, spread individualism and Epicureanism to women, constantly divert their attention with such questions as 'domestic bliss', corrupt their socialist sense, harm their revolutionary will, and make them degenerate in the direction of capitalism and revisionism. Our women comrades should guard against such ideological poisons, study the thought of Mao Tse-tung learn to observe and handle questions of women and

family from the viewpoint of class analysis, and struggle firmly against all bourgeois thought in this field.

9. Criticism: An Isolated Movement

During the Cultural Revolution the struggle between the two lines culminated in the criticism and virtual disbandment of the Women's Federation as a functioning national organisation. First its publication Zhongguo Funu (Women of China) was suspended. The staff of the women's magazine, in particular its chief editor, Tung Pien, were criticised for encouraging women to dwell on their personal problems to the exclusion of wider social and political interests and applying false standards of excellence in writing thereby discriminating against the publication of contributions from peasant and working women. These first extracts consist of a number of letters written by readers of the magazine criticising its view that women should tie themselves to 'the small circle of their families' at the expense of other political and social activities. The second reading is an editorial which sums up more generally the state of the Women's Federation on the eve of the Cultural Revolution and sets forth new ideals for the women's movement: it should include more peasant and working women, be more concerned with public and political questions and reform its organisation.

Letters to Zhongguo Funu, (Women of China), 1966

Liu Li-wen (reader of Hupeh). The Secretariat of the National Federation of Women has decided to relieve the black gang element Tung Pien, who is opposed to the Party, socialism, and the thought of Mao Tse-tung, of her duties as director and chief editor of Zhongguo Funu and to dissolve the former editorial committee of the magazine. This is a very gladdening thing. We firmly support the correct decision of the National Federation of Women.

While the broad masses of labouring women all over the country were zealously studying Chairman Mao's writings and learning from Lei Feng and other revolutionary heroes' noble quality of wholeheartedly serving the people, Zhongguo Funu devoted a great deal of space of publication of such articles as 'Whom to Love?' and *A Good Material Life is Happiness*. What was this for? Was it an assumption that a revolutionary cadre did not know for what she was living? Actually, Tung Pien was opposing the giving of prominence to politics, opposing regarding class struggle as the key link, and opposing working for the sake of the revolution. In short, she was opposing the thought of Mao Tse-tung. She sold revisionist contraband goods to the broad masses of women in a vain attempt to dampen people's enthusiasm in studying Chairman Mao's writings, to drag people into the quagmire of indifference to politics and indifference to class struggle, and to let bourgeois thought rampage freely in the heads of the broad masses of women. For this reason, the discussions of the two topics were two big poisonous weeds opposed to the Party, socialism, and the thought of Mao Tse-tung.

Chung Hui-fang (typist of Yungning hsien People's Council, Ninghsia Hui autonomous region). In the discussions on 'For What Do Women Live?' the

black gang element Tung Pien viciously spread words around to the effect that 'a woman's having a career is like flying a kite under the bed.' That was an extremely serious slander against and disparagement of us revolutionary women. How similar in tune it was to the words 'Chicken feathers cannot fly to the sky' with which the class enemies attack us! Hear this, Tung Pien. *In the socialist society, the labouring people have an extremely great creative power. As the chicken feathers praised by Chairman Mao, we may fly to the sky.* Since the liberation 16 years ago, the women of new China have become masters of the country. They are working, labouring, and studying shoulder to shoulder with the men on the political front, the economic front, and the cultural front. Not only are they able to do revolutionary work on land, in the sea, and under the ground, but they have actually flown to the sky. The black gang element Tung Pien's smear of the revolutionary women is an attack on the new society and an attempt to weaken the revolutionary will of the women. We will never let your plot succeed.

The black gang element Tung Pien viciously spread such views as that 'the physiological conditions of women decide that only they can give birth to and raise children to serve men.' This was explicit opposition to Chairman Mao's thought of 'serving the people'. Lei Feng, Wang Chieh, Liu Ying-chün, Mai Hsien-te and Chiao Yü-lu are examples for all the people in the nation to follow. Li Su-wen and Feng Yü-p'ing are representative persons of us revolutionary women. They single-mindedly serve the revolution and have set up the idea of completely and thoroughly serving the people. They are glorious examples for us to follow. In enthusiastically advocating 'serving the husband,' the black gang element Tung Pien tried vainly to make us forget the revolution, do away with the revolution, and return once more to the kitchen. Tung Pien, you are wasting your effort.

Chang Kuei-jung (Chairman of Women's Congress of Tahanon Brigade, Hsinglung hsien Hopei province). In the magazine, the black gang element Tung Pien stated that 'women live for the purpose of giving birth to and raising children.' This is a very reactionary viewpoint of the bourgeoisie and the landlord class. You dreamed of putting successive yokes on us labouring women once more, and would not allow us labouring women to take part in revolution. You will not succeed! Comrade Lei Feng said, 'We live so that more people may live better.' Comrade Lü Yü-lan said, 'A life of struggle for the Communist cause is the most glorious life. Only doing revolutionary work is my life-long major undertaking'. We live for the purpose of making contributions to the Chinese revolution and the revolution of the world, and so that others may live better.

Chung Chin (of Linwu hsien broadcasting station, Ninghsia Hui autonomous region). We the women of new China have stood up under the leadership of the Communist Party and Chairman Mao. But for the Communist Party, there would have been no new China, and we women would have had none of the things we now have. Separated from class struggle and from the liberation of society as a whole, there would basically be no "domestic bliss" to talk about. The black gang element Tung Pien

wanted us to give up the revolutionary cause, to give up proletarian dictatorship, and to get ourselves entangled in the small circle of "domestic bliss." She wanted to lead us to the capitalist, revisionist road. She would never succeed. We are revolutionary women armed with the thought of Mao Tse-tung. With the thought of Mao Tse-tung as our weapon, we can distinguish quite clearly between the fragrant flower and the poisonous weed.

Chang Yü-p'ing (Chairman of Women's Congress of Miaoying Brigade, Hsiat'aitzu Commune, Hsinglung *hsien*, Hopei province). The black gang element Tung Pien viciously slandered us women. I am nearly bursting with anger. Tung Pien said that "a good material life means happiness", and that "children, husband, and a nice little family constitute happiness." These are nonsense, complete absurdity. Tung Pien, take a look at what we labouring women live for! My husband Liu Ching-hai was the leader of an armed squad during the War of Resistance against Japan. He had six brothers. Three of them were betrayed by national traitors and arrested by devils [Japanese troops] and spies. They were beaten and hung up, but the enemy could elicit no information from them. In despair, the enemy killed all three of them. The head spy saw that I was young, and he formed an evil design on me. On the one hand, he proclaimed that "whoever produces one tael of Chang Yu-p'ing's flesh will be awarded with one dollar," while on the other he sent a lackey to my family to express his wish to marry me. If I consented, my whole family would be assured of safety and happiness ever afterwards. What did a woman live for? Did she live for money? Did she live for the "happiness" of betrayal of the people and self-betrayal? No. I was owed a debt of blood and tears. I bore class hatred. For the sake of National Liberation I would go on struggling against the enemy. The national traitors and spies could not get me. So they arrested my elder brother instead and killed him by cutting him into two at the waist. I knew that the days of the Japanese devils were numbered, and that all reactionaries were bound to be destroyed by us. I had no husband, no children, and no family. But I would rather wander about all by myself than go to enjoy the "happiness" that was a good material life! Then liberation came. All the poor peasants and lower-middle peasants in the country stood up under the leadership of the Party and Chairman Mao. It was not until then that I began to have real happiness.

Editorial in *Zhongguo Funu* (Women of China), July 10, 1966.

The Women's Federation should be an organisation of the masses of the women. Its task should be to give prominence to politics In order to complete this great task, the Federation of women's organisations at all levels must, under the leadership of the Party, extensively and penetratingly organise and mobilise the masses of the women and the Federation of women cadres . . . should take the lead at their respective levels in seriously studying and in applying the powerful weapon of the thought of Mao Tse-tung to the transformation of the subjective and objective world We must sweep away the corrupt bourgeois and feudal thoughts deep in our souls and wage struggles in our heads for building proletarian thought and demolishing bourgeois thought [such as] . . . 'feminism', 'individualist career-mindedness', 'maternal love' and 'happiness of individual families [which] try vainly to

corrupt the women among workers, peasants and servicemen and the revolutionary women cadres . . .

As an organisation, the Federation of Women, must, through training become a revolutionised, more proletarianised and more disciplined revolutionary organisation. As an organisation, the Federation of Women is one which does political and ideological work among people. It must advance the revolutionisation of the thought of women. Alike in mobilising women to take part in labour and production, in showing concern for the livelihood of women, in training reliable women cadres, and in readjusting its organisation, it must give prominence to politics . . . To succeed in revolutionising the thought of individuals, it is necessary to carry out demolition and building on a large scale. When demolition is paramount, this in itself implies building. Demolition means criticism, struggle and transformation . . . women must be the critics of old thoughts, old customs, and old habits and creatively set up proletarian new thoughts, customs and habits. We must liberate ourselves from the fetters of bourgeois and feudal ideologies . . . Displaying the signboard of solving so-called personal problems of women, *Zhongguo Funu* publicised revisionism and tried to make the women's class viewpoint blurred and lead women to show no concern over major state affairs but merely to show concern over the life of their individual families and go after so-called happiness of husbands and children. It tried to dissolve the women's revolutionary fighting spirit and make a breach in China for the comeback of capitalism . . . the individual and the private.

10. Transformation: The New Women's Federation

At present the Women's Federation is emerging from a period of struggle and criticism. What will be the characteristics of the reformed women's movement? The first extract, written in March 1973 when many counties, communes and urban districts were holding women's conferences, reiterates the role of class struggle within the women's movement and recommends an improvement in work-style and continued criticism of revisionist thoughts and action. During the summer months of 1973 a number of provinces and the municipalities have held their Congresses in preparation for the Sixth National Congress of Women. The second reading, dated July 1973, is a brief report of the first significant women's conference to be held at this level in China since the Cultural Revolution.

Working Women are a Great Revolutionary Force *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily), editorial, March 8, 1973. Published in *Peking Review*, March 16, 1973.

The fundamental tasks of the women's movement are to grasp class struggle and the struggle between the two lines, use Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought to educate the masses of women, eliminate the remaining influence of the revisionist line . . . and mobilise women to take an active part in the struggle between the two classes, the two roads and the two lines. It is

wrong to look at and handle women's work without taking into consideration class struggle between the two lines, for that will make it impossible to lead the women's movement on to a correct path. At present, criticism of revisionism and rectification of the style of work is the task of prime importance to the whole Party and the country. Doing a good job of it is the key to doing the work well in every department or place. In women's work, too, it should be given priority . . . While carrying out criticism of revisionism and rectification of the style of work . . . women's organisations at all levels should be consolidated and their work improved so that they can act as capable assistants to Party Committees in carrying out women's work and as militant organisations in mobilising the masses of women. It is necessary to assign a certain number of cadres to take charge of work concerning women, educate them to foster the idea of doing it well for the revolution and overcome the erroneous idea of disdaining such work. In planning the central work, it is necessary to take into account women's specific characteristics, make proper arrangements and implement the policy of mobilising both men and women.

Chairman Mao has said: 'Times have changed, and today men and women are equal. Whatever men comrades can accomplish, women comrades can too'. Chairman Mao has always given great encouragement to women. The women of our country must live up to our great leader's expectations.

Tientsin holds Women's Congress, *Hsinhua News*, July 5, 1973.

Tientsin's Sixth Congress of Women at which the Sixth Committee of the Tientsin Municipal Women's Federation composed of 115 members was elected, took place from June 27 to July 1.

There were 1,204 delegates to the congress in which workers, peasants and other working women had a larger representation than at any of the city's previous congresses. Among the delegates were model and outstanding workers, cadres in charge of work concerning women, cultural, educational and health workers, engineers and technicians, women fighters in the People's Liberation Army, educated youth who have settled in the countryside, patriotic personages, women from national minorities and returned overseas Chinese.

Hsieh Hsueh-kung, First Secretary of the Tientsin Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China spoke at the congress. Wang Man-tien, Secretary of the CPC Tientsin Municipal Committee, gave the congress a report entitled "Bring Into Full Play the Great Strength of Women Under the Guidance of Chairman Mao's Revolutionary Line".

In her report, Comrade Wang Man-tien stressed that Party organisations at all levels should strengthen their leadership over work regarding women, be concerned about the vital problems of women and solve them, and oppose exploiting-class ideas of esteeming and respecting men while considering women inferior and discriminating against them. Women's organisations at various levels should consciously accept the Party's leadership and unite with and lead the masses of women, who constitute half the population, to play their role in socialist revolution and construction.

During the congress delegates talked about the women's movement in Tientsin. They pointed out that women there had taken an active part in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the movement to criticise revisionism and rectify the style of work. This had given them a deep-going education in ideology and politics and greatly changed their outlook. In the past few years more than 6,500 outstanding women had joined the Chinese Communist Party, 100,000 young women had become members of the Chinese Communist Youth League, and over 1,700 new women cadres had been promoted to leading posts in neighbourhood committees, communes and at higher levels. More than 100,000 educated young women had settled in the rural areas and were contributing their share in building a new socialist countryside.

A resolution adopted at the congress calls on the city's women organisations at every level to take the movement of criticising revisionism and rectifying the style of work as the key link, earnestly study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought, penetratingly criticise the revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi and other political swindlers and implement Chairman Mao's revolutionary line more consciously. The resolution calls on women of all circles to implement the principle of "grasping revolution, promoting production and other work and preparedness against war," achieve greater, faster, better and more economical results in building socialism, and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The resolution points out that it is necessary to make great efforts to train women cadres, pay attention to women's well-being and implement the principle of equal pay for equal work between men and women. Women should regard love, marriage, family and the education of children from the proletarian point of view; late marriage and family planning should be encouraged, husbands and wives should be encouraged to share household chores, and work to protect the health of mothers and children should be strengthened so that women can take a better part in political activities, in production and other work and in study. The resolution stresses that women should be concerned with the revolutionary struggle of the people and women of other countries in the spirit of proletarian internationalism and contribute their share to the emancipation of humanity.

SECTION II

THEIR ROLE IN THE FAMILY

'The reform of the system of marriage and the family is closely connected with the emancipation of women'.

Renmin Ribao (People's Daily), 13 Dec. 1963.

The traditional position of women in the family, identified as one of the main vehicles of the perpetuation of their inferior position, has come under wide attack. The limitations of law alone in effecting change in this sphere were all too evident in Kuomintang China, hence the first concern of the women's movement was the consolidation of constitutional gains made in the new laws which provided for the social, political and economic equality of women. Foremost among these was the Marriage Law, which, published in May 1950, forms the basis for new intra-family relations. Overall the aim is not to abolish the family, but to change its structure and reduce its central position in society by removing certain of the family's former social and economic functions. This section considers first the content of family relationships and then the form of the family and its role in society.

11. Breaking the Yoke of the Feudal Marriage System

Within the patrilineal and patriarchal family structure women had been subject to the three authorities of father, husband and son. The superior position of the man over the woman in law ended with the passing of the new Marriage Law in 1950. It was jointly formulated and popularised by the Women's Federation and the Government. This Marriage Law (see Appendix) provided for the free choice of marriage partner, secured monogamy, divorce rights and ended the practices of concubinage, child betrothal and other attendant evils. The first reading was published in 1953 as a prelude to an intensive campaign in which the Women's Federation advertised the provisions of the Marriage Law and played a supportive role in counselling and practically assisting women to exercise their rights. It gives some idea of the traditional position of women within the household and the direction of change to be brought about by the implementation of the new law. The second reading was published more than ten years after the passing of the Marriage Law. It illustrates that despite alterations in economic relations the process of social change is long and not without struggle. It has been found that marriage and family life form the most sensitive of areas and old thoughts and old habits in this sphere have often proved to be more difficult to eliminate than the 'old things' in other realms. As this reading states change of social institutions cannot be achieved until old ideals have been discarded.

Breaking the Yoke of the Feudal Marriage System, People's China, March 1, 1953.

The women of China have waged a long and courageous struggle to break the yoke of the feudal marriage system — a legacy of two thousand years of oppression of women, of untold tragedy and tears.

The special feature of the feudal marriage system in China was that marriages were arbitrarily arranged by parents and forced on their children. Marriage was a sort of bargain. Girls were usually betrothed in their early childhood by arrangement of their parents who would receive money and gifts as a betrothal, or marriage present. Not only was this kind of marriage not free, it was also contracted on the basis of the idea of the superiority of men over women. Many were the victims of this system; many were the unhappy couples forced to share the same roof while their hearts were far apart. This was one of the forms of oppression suffered by the whole people, but women were its special victims. They were required to "follow their husbands no matter what their lot," as the saying went. Under the patriarchal system of old China, a woman was required to wear widow's weeds for the rest of her life when her husband died — "to die faithful to one husband and not to remarry." A woman divorced by her husband was an object of social contempt.

Old Chinese sayings like "noodles are not rice and women are not human beings"; "a wife married is like a pony bought; I'll ride her and whip her as I like" vividly describe the position of women in old China. They were not

only denied political and economic rights and held in servitude but were also stripped of the right even to manage daily domestic affairs. At home their husbands could and did beat them and curse them, and their parents-in-law were free to insult them with impunity. The sufferings endured by luckless daughters-in-law were proverbial. Such miseries resulted in unhappy family life filled with sorrow and hatred. And this in turn had its direct adverse effects on the physical and mental health of the younger generation.

Women's Struggle

In their struggle against these evils the women of China learnt through bitter personal experience, that the feudal marriage system, deeply rooted in the past, and the feudal outlook of men towards marriage and women, were inseparable from the whole system of feudalism in China. They realised that the ending of the feudal marriage system and the establishment of a marriage system based on freedom of choice and contracted in the spirit of democracy in which men and women enjoy equal rights — marriages which make possible the rearing of happy families — are possible only when the political rule of feudalism is overthrown; and that the destruction of the economic foundations of feudalism can be brought about only through a people's democratic revolutionary struggle, a struggle in which the entire population of the country must be mobilised.

The women of China waged that long and bitterly contested struggle together with all their progressive fellow countrymen. They have won a spectacular victory. The rule of the reactionaries has been overthrown, and the people's democratic republic has been founded. Today the new people's state places the interests of the people — and this includes the interests of women — in the first place. It was to answer the needs of the people and especially that of the toiling women that the Central People's Government promulgated the Marriage Law in May, 1950 . . .

The Marriage Law

The Marriage Law unequivocally provides that the arbitrary and compulsory feudal marriage system which is based on the idea of the superiority of man over woman and which ignores the interests of the children shall be abolished; that bigamy, concubinage, child betrothal, interference with the remarriage of widows and the exaction of money or gifts in connection with marriage shall be prohibited; that the free choice of partners, monogamy, equal rights for both sexes and protection of the lawful interests of women and children shall be put into effect, so that husbands and wives may live in harmony, participate to the fullest extent in productive labour and rear united, democratic families.

The land reform carried out after liberation in the countryside throughout China (with the exception of the regions inhabited by national minorities) and the democratic reforms in the factories and mines have, on the one hand, destroyed the economic foundations of feudalism which gave rise to the feudal marriage system, and, on the other, created the objective conditions for the elimination of such a marriage system and for the introduction of marriage based on freedom of choice.

The People's Government also encourages women to participate as actively as possible in production and in all kinds of social reform movements. It has shown that women can be fully freed from the bondage of the remnants of feudalism only by such participation. More and more women are in fact taking part in and playing a leading role in many branches of productive work and various social and political activities, and in this way they have gradually enhanced their political consciousness and abilities. By their own efforts, aided by the new society, they have attained an equal status with men politically, economically and in family life. Thereby the necessary conditions have been attained for the realisation of marriages based on freedom of choice.

Following on the promulgation of the Marriage Law, the people's government at all levels and the various people's organisations such as women's federations and trade unions immediately launched a mass propaganda and educational campaign to popularise its provisions. They gave active leadership and support to the people as a whole, and particularly to the women, in breaking the shackles of feudal bondage and in realising freedom of choice in marriage. Regular reviews and checks have been made on the way the Marriage Law has been implemented . . .

The Marriage Law also stipulates freedom of divorce. Those couples whose marriages were "arranged" in the old arbitrary way and who suffer from strained relations, are as a rule encouraged to try and make a fresh start by gaining a new understanding of each other's rights and duties, but if there is clearly no way of repairing the marriage, then they may obtain a divorce if they wish according to the Marriage Law. Divorce in such cases is a reasonable step and proves of advantage to both parties as well as to the community . . .

The numerous couples who are married according to their parents' orders and not according to their own choice are not of course encouraged to get divorced if there is the possibility of remaking their marriages. They are urged to try to remould their old family relations on a new basis of harmony and co-operation in creative activities . . .

As a result of the social changes brought about in the new China and the general raising of political consciousness, families of the people have in general become more harmonious and co-operative . . .

It can be seen that the thorough enforcement of the Marriage Law can develop co-operation and harmony between members of a family, improve the care given to the children, and by strengthening the family, facilitate the healthy development of society. It is precisely for this reason that the broad masses of the labouring people in general, and women in particular, call the Marriage Law a "life-saving law" and "a law that increases both the family's manpower and wealth."

A nation-wide check-up

During the past three years considerable success has been achieved in carrying out the Marriage Law, but judged on a nation-wide scale, much of course still remains to be done. The remnants of a feudal outlook, the legacy of the two thousand years old feudal system in China which has exerted a profound and far-reaching influence among the people and which finds its

expression in the feudal attitude to marriage and in the attitude of contempt for women which is its complement, could naturally not be eliminated completely in so short a time. In addition to this general difficulty the Marriage Law has been unevenly carried out in various places on account of the vast size of the country and the differences in the times at which each part was liberated and of the differences in the scope and success attending work in the various localities. Thus even at the present time compulsory "arranged marriages" on the feudal model are still being made, the exchange of "gifts" on marriage is still current, the feudal attitude of despising women still exists and freedom of marriage is often violently interfered with.

At a time when our national construction is advancing by leaps and bounds, the feudal marriage system and the remnants of feudal ideology relating to the question of marriage is a stumbling block in the way of that advance.

It is to remove that hindrance to our progress that a great publicity campaign will be undertaken for the full operation of the Marriage Law. This will be launched in the month of March on a nation-wide scale except for those areas inhabited by the national minorities or where the land reform has not been fully completed. This movement will be directed against the remnants of feudal thinking in regard to marriage and women and for the democratic reform of marriage. It differs in character from the land reform movement which aims at the elimination of the landlords as a class. It is essentially a movement to remould backward outlooks, a movement for "ideological remoulding" to eliminate the influence of reactionary social customs within the consciousness of the people. Its purpose is to end the feudal system of marriage with its attendant evils handed down from the old society and to replace it by a system of free and happy marriages; to overcome the remnants of feudal ideology in relation to marriage and to institute the democratic idea of equality between men and women, bringing about the thorough emancipation of Chinese women, ensuring that every Chinese has a chance of a happy family life and can in consequence participate more actively in the large-scale planned economic construction as well as other fields of activity now going forward in the country.

During the course of this campaign, wide-spread educational work will be conducted among the people about the Marriage Law. The aim will be to bring home the importance of the law to every person so that he or she will fully understand the defects of the feudal system of marriage and the merits of the Marriage Law. Thus a sound foundation will be laid for the thorough carrying out of the new Marriage Law in the future.

China's women have fought long and courageously to emancipate themselves, win equality between men and women; gain freedom of marriage and break the fetters of feudalism. They are confident that under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, the Central People's Government and the All-China Democratic Women's Federation, they will achieve still greater successes in their struggle for freedom of marriage, and that by means of this campaign the number of free marriages and harmonious and mutually helpful families will increase.

On the Reform of our Country's System of Marriage and Family by Yang Ta-we and Liu Su-ping, *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily), Dec. 13, 1963.

The tremendous success in the reform of our country's system of marriage and family does not signify the conclusion of this process of reform. The evil fruits of all kinds produced by the system of private ownership and the system of class exploitation over the past milleniums will not vanish immediately following the elimination of these systems. In the socialist society, while there are continuously growing communist factors, there are also continuously vanishing vestiges of the old society. These vestiges must inevitably still be reflected in the position of women and marriage and family relationships and in the thinking and understanding of people. Though our country's women have won equal rights with men in society and family life, yet, because a portion of them are still not taking part in social production, have not yet won an independent economic position, or are still influenced by traditions and customs, *de facto* differences are in evidence when they exercise these rights . . .

In the socialist society which has just been given birth from the old society, class and class struggle are still present, and the old thoughts and old habits over the question of marriage and family still have their social and class roots. The institution and development of the socialist system of marriage and family are the requirement of the revolutionary class. They are sure to be opposed and resisted by the reactionary class. Though the old economic basis has been eliminated, yet old thinking and understanding will continue to obstruct the development of new marriage and family relationships. At the same time, for various historical reasons, the old thoughts and old habits in marriage and family life are often more difficult to eliminate than the old things in the other realms. It is only through long self-education that the ideological influence of the exploiting class can be shaken off. We must take adequate account of the length and difficulty of this struggle over the question of marriage and family.

Under these circumstances, it is not at all surprising that erroneous thoughts and acts of different kinds are present to different extents among some people over the question of marriage and family. While we must clearly know the social and class roots of such thoughts and act and realise that they are inevitable historical phenomena during the period of transition, we must bring out fully the huge reforming effect of revolutionary thoughts and revolutionary policies and weaken these negative things as much as possible. That is why, in the process of further consolidating and developing the socialist system of marriage and family, we should put ideological work in the most important position. We must arm the broad masses of the people with revolutionary proletarian thoughts and enable them to handle in a socialist, communist spirit the problems in such realms of life as love, marriage, and family.

The development of the struggle between new and the old thoughts and between new and the old habits over the question of marriage and family is closely connected with the development of the situation in the class struggle as a whole. Practice shows that wherever and whenever close attention is paid to the struggle against the exploiting class and all work is done well, it will

not be easy for the old thoughts and old habits in respect of marriage and family to rise and it will be possible for the Party's policies in respect of marriage and family to be implemented more smoothly. If this struggle is slackened, then the old thoughts and old habits, even though they may have already vanished, will appear again like a flame from cold ashes.

Before the elimination of class and class struggle, there is not any method which can settle once and for all the struggles of all kinds over the question of marriage and family. It must not be expected that the old things will be eradicated within a short time. In close conjunction with the class struggle and production struggle, we must regularly conduct propaganda and education in respect of marriage and family and regard such propaganda and education as an important content of socialist education.

The overwhelming majority of the contradictions in the realms of marriage and family life are contradictions among the people. The struggle against the bourgeois thoughts and feudal thoughts in these realms is a very demanding and complex task. While we must see the class substance of these bourgeois thoughts and feudal thoughts and realise that the struggle against them is another side of the class struggle on the ideological front, we must also see that these struggles occur within the ranks of the people and are matters of right and wrong among the people. For this reason, we must settle the contradictions by means of democratic persuasive education.

12. Between Husband and wife

In 1962 the Women's Federation published a collection of several true stories illustrating ways of handling the relationship between a husband and his wife. The stories cite 'vivid and concrete' instances of revolutionary comradeship while the introduction particularly raises the question: 'What attitude should a husband take toward his wife?' To mark the occasion of the publication of this book, the national newspaper, Renmin Ribao (People's Daily), reprinted the following extract from its Introduction.

What Attitude Should a Husband take towards his Wife? Renmin Ribao (People's Daily), October 14, 1964.

In a socialist society, love between husband and wife is built on the identity of political beliefs and on the foundation of struggling together for the revolutionary cause. The relationship between husband and wife is first of all comradesly relations and the feelings between husband and wife are primarily revolutionary sentiments. For this reason, a husband should take the attitude of a revolutionary comrade toward his wife. This is reflected in the attitude of regarding one's wife as a revolutionary comrade-in-arms in the common struggle in the political sphere, as a class sister with whom one labours together in production or work, and as a companion with whom one lives together at home, respecting and loving each other, helping each other, and encouraging each other in making progress together. This is the communist standard, morally and ideologically speaking, by which a revolutionary deals with the question of love, marriage and family. Only by

conforming to this standard can one handle correctly all problems that may arise in the life between husband and wife . . .

Although the old economic foundation has been destroyed, the influence of bourgeois and feudal ideas and the force of habit left by the old society cannot be completely eliminated overnight. In varying degrees, these ideas and force of habit still influence the mind of a certain number of people. Have we not noticed that certain men, in the first few years of their marriage, showered affections upon their wives and pledged to stay married with them until old age? However, with the lapse of time in later years their marriage, they began to cool off in their feelings for their wives until eventually they got so tired of their wives that they would seek the end in the tragedy of divorce. Have we not also noticed that some men in doing their work have treated others on equal terms and performed their duties with industry? However, once back in their homes, they will put on the airs of the "master of the house," letting their wives do all the housework, while they themselves move about here and there, waiting for meals to be served and clothes to be cleaned and pressed. If the wives are slightly negligent or disobedient and protesting, they will think that the dignity and self-respect of being husband is hurt and will then start a big quarrel . . .

We must take note of the fact that some men are very often inclined to take a superior attitude toward their wives under the guise of "affection." On the surface, at least, they may appear to be very fond of their young wives and take good care of them in every possible way. However, in their mind, they seldom regard their wives as class sisters and revolutionary comrades with whom they labour and struggle together. Rather, they regard their wives as cherished piece of private property for their own appreciation. Instead of regarding their wives as revolutionary companions, helping each other and seeking progress together in the life they are sharing together, they regard their wives merely as "nurses" keeping them company and serving them. Although in this case there is the love of husband for his wife, this kind of love is not real love, class love and comradesly love, which is built on the foundation of political ideology. This kind of love cannot be strengthened and cannot last long. If the wife loses the bloom of youth, if she is stricken with this or that ailment, and becomes physically disabled one way or other, the husband, finding that she is no longer his object of appreciation and can no longer keep him company and do housework for him, may turn his attention to other women and find his new object of affection, disregarding the suffering of his wife. This is a reflection of bourgeois thought on the question of marriage and family during the transition period. This is the root-cause of the unfortunate tragedy that has befallen many husbands and wives and families.

Everybody is now striving for the revolutionisation of his own thought. This means that in handling all kinds of problems, one should adhere steadfastly to the proletarian stand, point of view, and method, including the attitude toward love, marriage and family according to communist principles. Revolutionisation of the thought of man should find expression not only in work but also in everyday life, in love, marriage and family, and between husband and wife. This is because when a man and a woman become husband and wife, it is not merely a private affair in the life of an individual but that

on the day they are married, both have certain responsibilities to society in that they may struggle together, labour together, live together, and bring up and educate their children together. Whether the relations between husband and wife are handled well or poorly has a bearing not only on the happiness of family life and on the growth of the next generation of successors, but also, in an equally important way, on the development of the socialist revolution and socialist construction. It is in line with the communist moral standard that one should take the revolutionary attitude toward love, marriage and family. This standard demands that the husband should never take a fickle, reckless and irresponsible attitude toward his wife and children in the pursuit of his own so-called "romantic desires".

It cannot be denied that youth and good looks are indeed factors that make men and women fall for each other. This is because when a man is young, his physical and intellectual growth in many aspects exudes fresh vigour and vitality that draws admiration. However, man is a rational creature and, therefore, he should realise that apart from the natural attractions of the sexes, the main concern for a man and a woman to become husband and wife should be whether or not their political ideas are identical, instead of regarding youth and good looks as the only condition for choosing a wife. Since all things tend to grow and change, it is impossible for any mortal being to preserve its youth forever. This is also so with man. It is the unalterable law of nature that man will slowly grow old and change his looks with the increase in age. If young people are merely after youth and good looks when choosing their life-mates without taking heed of the political qualities of the other party, the result will not necessarily be true happiness. Just look at those young people, who become man and wife on the impulse of the moment and on the basis of good looks and love at first sight disregarding compatibility based on identical political ideas and mutual understanding. See how in most cases they cannot get along well with one another in everyday life, quarrel with each other constantly, and suffer greatly. They find it difficult to live together or apart after discovering the difference in political ideas and each other's defects in manners and moral qualities. Then, look at those who become man and wife after they have built their true revolutionary feelings on the basis of labouring and struggling together. Although they are not necessarily attractive in their looks, they have a common ideological foundation and fine moral qualities. Because they respect and love each other, help each other, care for each other in everyday life and seek progress together, are they not very happy in their married life? This shows that whether life between husband and wife is happy or not is determined by whether their moral qualities are good or bad, and not by their looks. This is because good looks do not mean inner beauty. True and lasting beauty can only be found in political qualities, inner feelings, good thought and fine style of doing things, and only love built on this foundation is forever green.

Attention to housework is an important part of the life between husband and wife. Mishandling of this part of married life may also affect marital harmony and happiness. By suggesting that a husband should take the revolutionary attitude of equality toward his wife, do we mean that both husband and wife should divide housework equally between themselves, or that the husband should devote more of his time and efforts to housekeeping

and attend to his wife's other needs? No, it is not so. If housework is divided in this way, it cannot be considered as true equality, for the key to this question does not lie in the form of sharing household chores, but rather in the attitude of the husband toward the wife after he is back home. Will he regard her as a revolutionary comrade and companion or a "slave" and a "servant" at his beck and call and who is around in the house to attend to his needs? Will he regard housekeeping as the common obligation of both husband and wife or as the "natural duties" of a woman in her lifetime? If both husband and wife take the correct attitude, then this problem will of course be solved without any difficulty. Just look at many couples around us, who help each other regardless of the nature and amount of housework when they are back home every day and who talk and laugh freely, bring up and teach their children together and keep their house in order. Sometimes when the husband's regular work is heavy, the wife will of her own accord do a little more housework, so that the husband may concentrate his efforts on the completion of his task. Or sometimes when the wife is a little indisposed, the husband will also of his own accord do more things in the house, so that the wife may have proper rest. How pleasant and happy is the life of these couples! This shows that whether the life between husband and wife is happy or not depends on the attitude of revolutionary comradeship toward each other by caring for each other and helping each other, and not on the question of who obeys whom, who attends to whose needs, who does more household chores and who does less housework.

13. Planned parenthood

Family planning programmes to limit births by advocating later marriage and promoting contraception began to appear in China in the late 1950's. The first reading is an extract from a speech given by Yu Wang to the United Nations Population Commission on November 1973. In it he outlines the main benefits of planned parenthood: the building up of the country, the thorough liberation of women, the protection of mothers, women and children, the bringing up of the younger generation and the improvement of the people's health and national prosperity. The second reading is from an interview with a gynaecologist and obstetrician in 1957. She writes of the need for birth control and the practical steps that are being taken to encourage the use of contraception. Family planning services are now provided free of charge and a wide range of birth control methods, including oral contraceptives and intra-uterine devices are available. Abortion has been practised since 1957 and vacuum aspiration equipment (the method originated in China) is to be seen in most commune hospitals. Both male and female sterilisation is available. The third reading relates one of the difficulties to be overcome in education programmes – the prejudice and fear that contraception will hinder good sexual relations and impair bodily health. In the fourth extract a woman textile worker briefly describes the facilities available in Peking Number 2 Cotton Mill and her attitude towards planned parenthood.

Chinese Observer on Population Question. *Peking Review*, December 7, 1973.

Of all things in the world, people are the most precious. Once the people become masters of their own destiny, every miracle can be performed . . . Man should control himself as well as nature. In order to realise planned population growth, what we are doing is, on the basis of energetically developing production and improving the people's living standards, to develop medical and health services throughout the rural and urban areas and strengthen our work in maternity and child-care, so as to reduce the mortality rate on the one hand and regulate the birth rate by birth planning on the other.

What we mean by birth planning is not just practising birth control, but taking different measures in the light of different circumstances. In densely populated areas where the birth rate is high, marriage at later age and birth control are advocated. However, active medical treatment is provided for those suffering from sterility. In the national minority areas and other sparsely populated areas, appropriate measures are taken to facilitate population growth and promote production. However, proper guidance and assistance are also made available to those who have too many children and desire birth control. All those who voluntarily ask for birth control are provided by the state with contraceptive drugs and relevant medical service free of charge.

Our policy benefits the building up of the country, the thorough liberation of women, the protection of mothers, women and children, the bringing up of the younger generation, and the improvement of the people's health and national prosperity. This policy is in the interests of the broad masses of the people.

In carrying out the policy of birth planning, we combine state guidance with the initiative on the part of the masses themselves. As a result of publicity and education by governments and social organisations at all levels, more and more people have come to realise the importance of birth planning, and they are now practising it of their own free will. Since birth planning is a matter of immediate concern to the broad masses, it is essential to rely on them in order to ensure success. At present we have achieved some preliminary success in this field, but progress has not been even and we have to continue our efforts.

Birth Control in China by Dr. Chou Ngo-fen, *People's China*, June 1, 1957.

. . . nowadays practically every expectant mother knows she will have her child safely and that her baby has every chance of growing up safely.

Safe deliveries and bonny babies naturally please everyone. But there are problems, and knotty problems too. In the past, the age for marriage was too low. This is being slowly altered through the Marriage Law, which, for a start, allows marriage at the age of 18 for girls and 20 for lads. It is only in the big cities that there is any practicable knowledge of birth control. But the Marriage Law is comparatively recent, so that we still frequently come across young women still in their early twenties who have four or five children, and

women in their thirties who have seven or eight. Some women have had a second child before they are twenty. This is a heavy burden on them. It is from such considerations that the question of birth control arises. Whenever I met such women they always crowded round me and asked me to tell them how they could either space out their babies or refrain from having them. My colleagues in the medical world, the people I got to know in the course of my work — people connected with the women's federations, the trade unions the New Democratic Youth League and the Red Cross — all tell me they have been pelted with the same kind of questions. Members of the Peking Women's Federation, for instance, told me that a survey they made showed that a great number of people urgently demanded information on birth control . . .

As a woman I know from personal experience that to make the equality between women and men, which we won at the liberation, a real, living thing, women must work and study hard. This means that they must be able to plan their families so that they are not tied down by the household drudgery which too many children entails. I am a mother myself and I know how difficult it all is. The children of New China are future builders of socialism and communism, and if they are to be equal to their task they must be brought up in a proper way. If you have too many children you simply cannot give them all the care and training that will fit them for their future work. My experience as an obstetrician tells me that women who have too many children or who have them too close together cannot get enough rest after pregnancies. That ruins their health and increases the incidence of diseases. Besides, children born under such conditions are frequently weakly themselves. All these evils can be got rid of if births can be properly spaced. There is nothing wrong, nothing immoral about birth control . . .

Our work of propagating birth control began in 1955, and ever since, the newspapers and magazines have had constant articles on the subject. The government departments concerned have issued pamphlets and posters, used lantern slides, held exhibitions, meetings and lectures to spread the knowledge of birth control. The aim is to explain both the technique and significance of birth control, to show that it is a matter which concerns both husband and wife, and that both must co-operate for successful family planning, and to strike a blow at feudal and obscurantist ideas. The various contraceptive methods and devices are explained and people are told where they can be bought and what places to go to or get in touch with for advice . . .

Practical steps

In popularizing and promoting birth control we are now working on the following lines:

1. Contraception. We consider this the most important method of family planning. There are large quantities of contraceptive devices, both mechanical and chemical, manufactured and put on sale at reasonable prices. The Ministry of Public Health has also urged the medical schools and colleges to see what both Chinese and Western medicine can provide in the way of simple and effective methods. Many hospitals have opened birth control clinics and organised teams which visit government offices, schools, factories and

countryside to give practical advice. The Chinese Medical Association has set up a committee on practical birth control which studies and gives advice on contraceptive methods.

2. Later marriage. The Marriage Law sets the lowest age for marriage as 18 for women and 20 for men. That, as I said above, is largely a compromise with folk custom. Some medical scientists hold that women should marry at around twenty-five and men around thirty. They will then also be financially and intellectually better placed to bring up a family. Some people propose that the legal marriageable age for men and women should be raised by several years. The disadvantages and advantages of marrying later are now being explained to the young people . . .

3. Clinical abortion. Strictly speaking any outside interference with a normal pregnancy holds risks to a woman's health and has in the past been strictly prohibited. We are now spreading the knowledge of how harmful abortion is, while somewhat relaxing the ban. People are not encouraged to regard abortion as a contraceptive method.

4. Sterilisation. We consider this a method to be sparingly used and only in exceptional circumstances. No application is accepted unless it has the unqualified agreement of both husband and wife . . .

This, then, is why we have spread the knowledge of birth control and how we are carrying it out. In the course of our work to spread a knowledge of birth control, to wipe out the remaining traces of the feudal outlook, to show people that it is better to work for the happiness of society at large than to raise over-large families, to provide great quantities of cheap contraceptives and to train the experts needed will all take time, and problems and difficulties are bound to crop up. But for the sake of mothers and children, for the sake of the younger generation, for the welfare and prosperity of our people we shall not shirk our responsibilities.

Contraception Will Not Impair One's Health, *Zhongguo Qingnian* (Youth of China), July 28, 1963.

Comrade Lin Shan:

Your understanding of planned childbirth is correct. You should continue to persist in practicing contraception and refrain from believing in hearsay or offhand assertions that are often not credible. Taking, for instance, the two ways of putting it you have heard, let me give a simple explanation. First, someone has said that contraception may induce "sexual discord" between the man and the woman and prevent both from "invigorating" one another. This practice, it is also said, is "against nature" and is "harmful to bodily health". Is this way of putting it correct? Since contraception neither affects the love one has for the other nor affects the normal sexual life of the husband and the wife, how can we say that the practice of contraception will induce "sexual discord"? As to the saying that the practice of contraception may prevent the male and female from "invigorating" one another, and that the practice is "against nature", it has even less factual basis . . .

Second, someone said, "If a woman comrade uses contraceptives for a long

period of time, she may easily contract diseases such as inflammation of the uterus." This saying also has no scientific basis . . .

As a matter of fact, the available supply of scientific contraceptives, such as rubber sheaths, uterine rings, and medicinal preparations in the form of jelly or tablets, etc., if prepared according to specifications and used properly, will not impair bodily health even if contraception is practised over a long period of time. You therefore should dispel your misgivings and worries, and persist in the practice of contraception until you have achieved the object of planned childbirth.

An Interview with a woman textile worker, *China Reconstructs* March 1972.

Great attention is paid to the health of women and their families. The mill has a 30-bed clinic and health stations in the workshops, nursery, kindergarten and dormitories. This is time saving and convenient for women workers, their children and other family members. Medical charges for workers and cadres are free. Family members pay at half cost and the rest is provided by the state. All women workers have regular physical examinations. In addition, those over 35 years of age have a special medical check so as to detect in time diseases common to this age group . . .

Most of us in the mill have two or three children. The comrades responsible for the well-being of women workers and the clinic medical workers explain the benefits of planned parenthood to the women and tell them how to do it. Now that women workers are independent economically, they have equal rights in deciding family affairs — a thing that didn't exist in the old society. Workers in our mill pay attention to planned parenthood because it ensures the health of mothers and children, gives mothers more time for study and for educating their children better. The state also helps us women in other ways such as making the contraceptive pill, abortions and planned-parenthood operations available. This is all free of charge and the women have the right of decision in these matters.

14. Combining work, children and household chores

The integration of individual married family life with collective economic, social and political life has been regarded as a constant and serious political task. The relationship between work, children and household chores is typical of the type of question which was widely discussed in the women's magazine in the early 1960's. Zhongguo Funu (Women of China) provided a forum for the expression of reader's views and for the exchange of ideas, and this reading, following on from a number of readers' letters, was published in 1963. This special commentary stresses that after marriage and children there are many ways and means by which women can continue to remain active in society provided they have first revolutionised their thinking.

Treat the Relationship between Work, Children and Household Chores in a Revolutionary Spirit, *Zhongguo Funu*, (Women of China), Nov. 1, 1963.

... readers have showed deep concern and interest in how a revolutionary woman cadre should treat the relationship between work, children and household chores. Numerous articles have been sent in expressing divergent opinions. Summed up, they may be grouped into two principal points:

1. Which should come first: work or household chores? Many think that work should come first but some hold that they are equal in importance. A few people think that as soon as a woman cadre gets married, she will have children and it is natural that she will not be able to catch up with men and the unmarried women cadres either in study or in work, and therefore, a lower standard should be set for them.

2. Is there any contradiction between work and household chores? Can it be solved, and how? Many people said that the contradiction, though it exists, can be solved. They put forward their own previous experience as to how they have correctly handled the problem of children, household chores and work. Someone said that it is easy to give reasons but the practical difficulty still remains. If you want to make a greater success of your work, you cannot possibly handle the household chores well. On the other hand, if attention is given to household chores it will eventually affect work. Many young mothers who are willing to do a better job of their work do not know how to handle children and household chores well, and therefore they are very miserable. They asked: Is this an ideological problem or a practical one?

In what way should we regard the above questions and how should we handle them?

The question regarding the making of arrangements for work, children and household chores and how to handle the contradiction among the three is interrelated. Furthermore, whether the position has been put in a correct order is a precondition to solving the contradiction correctly.

In what order should we place the three things – work, children and household chores? In touching upon this question, let us recall what we had in the past. In the long feudal society of the past, the ruling class held that men should dominate outside affairs while women manage domestic chores. They put women in the position of a slave in the family. Thus in general women under oppression led a miserable and dark life. At that time, many women, though full of enthusiasm, were like “a hero having no opportunity to show his strength,” unable to serve the country no matter how patriotic they were. In many dramas, we have seen many talented women who, only by disguising themselves as men, succeeded in going to the capital to sit at the imperial examination or go to the battlefield. But as soon as they were discovered they would be charged with deceiving the “king”. In a word, women in those days were deprived of the right to work or participate in any social activities. In the semi-feudal and semi-colonial old China, many labouring women, though they worked all day long like a “cow or horse”, could not get enough to eat and wear. They were forced to sell their children and thus break up their families. Under the circumstances, how could they talk about any happiness in their family and what would be the proper way of handling the problem of children and family? Many intellectual women

could not find job and were perturbed. Sometimes if they were lucky enough to have found a job they suffered discrimination and insult. Women staff and manual workers, as soon as they were married and having children, were forced to resign. In other words, marriage and giving birth to children means unemployment and starvation. From the three articles appearing in this issue: “My Forty Years”, “Don’t Forget the Pain When You See the Scar”, and “You Must Appreciate the Happiness While You Live in Happiness”, we may see that the labouring women in the past had their bodies stained all over with blood and tears and realise the miserable life women employees lived under oppression and insult.

The overthrow of the irrational social system, the elimination of class oppression, the emancipation of women, and the equality of men and women – such are the ideals the women of our country have long dreamed of. Today, these ideals are being realised. Women have been liberated from shackles and come out from the small confines of the family. The slavery and oppression of the past have come to an end. Now under the socialist system, the Party and the State have created excellent conditions for us to participate in social labour with men on an equal footing and to share with them the great task of building socialism at different posts. How fortunate we are! Our life has been improved day by day. Many people have built happy homes and have lovable children. This has been made possible only after long and arduous struggle of the whole people under the leadership of the Party and has also come as a result of the bloodshed and the sacrifice made by our forerunners. As we enjoy the happy days today, how should we treat our work and living? Should we put work in the first position, or should we give our “little healthy baby and our sweet little home” priority? Or may we put them on the same level without distinguishing their importance? In other words, are we satisfied with what we are without moving forward or should we continue with the revolution and keep on going ahead?

Thinking of the past and looking at the present, we naturally can give a clear answer: that is, we should put the revolutionary work in the first position; we should carry on the revolution and march forward. The reason is simple and clear: none of us wants to repeat the kind of life we lived in the past under oppression, insult and slavery. If we want to treasure and defend this happy life today, we must continue with the revolution and struggle. Without the victory of our revolutionary cause it would not be possible for us to have what we are having now, much less for us to think what we may have in the future. Nor would it be possible to talk about the emancipation of women and family happiness... One should not rest content with one’s present happiness but should see the greater happiness lying ahead and that of the general masses as well.

We must realise that our country has not been able completely to rid herself of its backward, “poor and blank” aspect. In the world there are still many oppressed people not yet liberated and many sisters who are under oppression and sufferings. At present, the whole nation is working on the unprecedentedly colossal socialist enterprise: we must turn this “poor and blank” country into a socialist strong country with modern agriculture, modern industry, modern national defence and modern science and technology. At the same time, we must also shoulder the great international

responsibility of opposing imperialism, opposing reactionaries of all countries, opposing modern revisionism, supporting all oppressed people and oppressed nations in their struggle.

As revolutionary cadres, men and women comrades, whether married or unmarried, mother or otherwise, irrespective of their ability and their posts, must, in face of this great and difficult undertaking, press ahead energetically, work amid hardships and play the role the way they should. Have we not often paid tribute and felt grateful to the revolutionary forefathers for their hard struggles to establish their revolutionary enterprise for us? Then we must inherit this spirit, develop it and create better conditions for the realisation of a communist society and the beautiful life of our next generation. None of us would like to speak to our children like this: "Just because of you, Mama has lagged behind others!" We must feel proud when saying to them: "In this great historical era we feel no shame as we have done our part".

Does putting the revolutionary enterprise in the first place mean that we need not or cannot take care of our children and family affairs? Or does it mean that we cannot do our work well when we take care of children and household chores? No, it is entirely not the case. A revolutionary woman cadre must first of all do revolutionary work well, but she is by no means deprived of her chance of becoming a good mother and wife. In our socialist society the interests of the individual and those of the collective are unified. The development of the socialist enterprise will favour bringing happiness to the children and the family. To educate children is to cultivate revolutionary successors, and to handle family affairs well is to support the revolutionary enterprise. However, we must admit that there is a certain amount of difficulty as well as some contradictions for a woman cadre if she wants to do work well, on the one hand, and care for the children and family affairs, on the other. The problem lies in how to treat these difficulties, how to overcome them, how to handle the contradictions and solve them.

In the course of our advance, we always encounter this or that kind of difficulty. Furthermore, old problems are solved only to be followed by new ones. That is, as we march forward we solve these contradictions incessantly. Any difficulty to us is a kind of test. When a woman cadre gets married and has children, she is bound to have new problems in daily life. The encountering of all these life problems, as far as a woman cadre is concerned, is a practical test and tempering. Shall we take the handling of children and household chores as an extra burden, knit our brows and complain about this and that? Or shall we regard this as a responsibility and work actively in order to solve the problem?

To complain of and fear troublesome matters will not help things. It cannot solve difficulty but will only increase it and affect work. Only if we start from the practical viewpoint, face the contradiction and analyse it, can we solve it. We are both revolutionary cadres and women. As a revolutionary cadre we have to take up the responsibility entrusted to us by the contemporary era, though it is a heavy, glorious and proud responsibility. As women, due to physiological conditions we have to shoulder the natural duty of giving birth to children and looking after them. There is no shirking of the responsibility which is glorious, too. We must bravely take up the responsibility and be proud of being both a cadre and a mother in this great

era. Meanwhile, ideologically, we must be fully prepared to overcome difficulties and to persist in our work. This will require of us untiring efforts and firm revolutionary will. Only when we possess this kind of ideological consciousness and are spiritually prepared, can we consciously and happily shoulder this burden, actively overcome difficulties, and continue to move forward full of vitality.

Furthermore, as to the handling of children and household chores, although there exists a certain amount of difficulty, yet compared with those of the revolutionary fighting period, the conditions provided for us now are far better. During that time, some of the women cadres participating in revolution also had children but they joined in combat and production as well. In Yen-an, many of the women cadres who had children did their work, studied on the one hand and spun and looked after the youngsters on the other. At that time, there were no home-helpers, and nurseries were scarce and, what is worse, there were no old folks to help in them. They, with an optimistic spirit and persevering will, overcame difficulties and did well in work, production and care for the children. Model cadres emerged continuously, good in work, good in study, and good in production. At present, many organisations, factory and enterprises and streets have established nurseries, kindergartens, mess halls, and other servicing stations. This will provide favourable conditions for the women cadres in solving their problems of handling children and household chores. As in the old difficult days when women cadres who participated in the revolution could still possess vigor and vitality to overcome difficulties and persist in the revolution, there is no reason why today when we are having such improved conditions we cannot better overcome our difficulties and persist in progress and work.

To be sure, at present the overwhelming majority of woman cadres not only have to do their revolutionary work well but also educate their children and manage their family affairs. Since they handle children and family affairs correctly, they can concentrate more of their efforts in revolutionary work. Many readers wrote to prove this by their own personal experience. Many mothers become advanced workers, labour models, study models, good cadres and good communist Party members. In our own unit and factory enterprises we can also see these facts. This furnishes an eloquent proof that under the superior conditions of today's socialist system, if only we develop our revolutionary spirit, the contradiction between work and household chores can be solved. A woman cadre after marriage having children can still do well revolutionary work and progress continuously.

Nevertheless, why under the same circumstances and same conditions do some women cadres find a multiplicity of contradictions in work, handling of children and family affairs and can not find a solution for them, thus involving themselves in household chores with no way out? This is because they fail to recognise correctly how they should cultivate their children and what kind of family life they should pursue. They spoil the children and are particular about comforts and enjoyments of life, do not realise or pay sufficient attention to the objective favourable conditions but emphasise on individual difficulties and spend more time and energy on children and household chores. This will not only affect their own work, study, political

progress but also will have adverse influences on the young which does not conform with the interests of socialism. The status of family in our socialist country is different from that of the feudal system, and women are not confined to the household to be the so-called "good wife and good mother". It is also different from that of the capitalist country where women are only chasing after food and pleasure and material enjoyment. Our family is in effect a revolutionary family. In this revolutionary family, life should be assiduous and plain. Husband and wife help one another, encourage one another and strive together for revolutionary enterprises.

A husband with political consciousness will definitely not ask his wife to wait upon him or push all family affairs onto her but is one who will help his wife to shoulder the responsibility together in educating the children as well as in doing the household chores. Parents of a revolutionary family should not cultivate their children to be "hot house flowers", but they should train them to be seabirds or eagles which can stand the strong storm. Only when the parents have established themselves in the revolutionary viewpoint with full enthusiasm for revolutionary undertakings, can they use their exemplary deeds and communist ideology to influence and educate their children to be their successors in revolutionary enterprises.

Many readers wrote and reflected that they had gone through a winding path in this respect. They have not many children or family affairs to attend to and the practical difficulties are not great, but since they love their children too much or care too much about their little family life, they bring great distress on themselves. Later when they have corrected their thoughts they change their incorrect attitude toward the children and family affairs. The difficulties which were considered not conquerable before have now been solved in various ways. Formerly they came in with knitted brows but now they are in high mood doing a better job. Comrade Fu Sui who works in the university wrote and said: In the past she spent so much time on children that she always lagged behind in study and work. She thought then: Women are after all women, it is true that a chicken feather could never fly to the sky. After that, when she recognised that she should not confine herself to a small family but should take the responsibility entrusted her by the people, she made a good arrangement for the children so that she would be in a position to work without having to worry about anything and as a result she had more time to study and was very happy. As to the children, due to her change in attitude, not spoiling them any more, they grow stronger and stronger. She felt that her way of thinking in the past was wrong.

Women, after giving birth to children can also carry on revolutionary work and can also make progress. A certain chief of women's federation wrote: before her marriage she worked actively, but as soon as she got married, since both her husband and she herself had a good income and they had a lovable kid, their little family led a very wealthy, comfortable and pleasant life. She indulged in this little sweet home, and although they had a home-help to look after the child, she did not have confidence in her and spoiled the kid in every possible way. She spent a lot of time in thinking about her husband's clothes, she normally was working in the office, physically, but engaged at home, mentally. As the situation developed she began to be afraid of hardships and was unwilling to go to the countryside, unwilling to do women's work.

Under the circumstances, her comrades as well as her husband were not satisfied with her and she herself felt very miserable. Soon after assistance was given by her comrades, she began to change her ways. She realised then that what she was thinking before was not in conformity with the revolutionary interests. Therefore, she stood up again and plunged herself into work. It was the same person, and the problems were the same, but owing to the raising of consciousness, coupled with the correct thinking, the way of managing work as well as the child and household chores became correct and the differences showed in her work.

In the final analysis, the handling of work, children and household chores, just like any other problem, must be done with politics in command and, moreover, the thinking must march first. If we have a profound understanding toward the great significance of revolutionary undertakings and their difficulties and are conscious of our revolutionary responsibility and can also use the revolutionary spirit to reform the world and reform ourselves, then our thinking and our vision will be broadened. In such a way we will consciously take up heavy responsibility and will put in correct order the relationship between work, children and household chores. But this does not mean that once the ideological issue is solved, it will naturally bring a solution of all other practical questions.

In handling the question of children and household chores, conditions vary with each individual. Some have better conditions; others, inferior. Some have no experience. Those who have more children but less income and are without the help of old people surely will meet with more practical difficulties. Therefore, concrete procedures should be adopted actively in accordance with individuals and localities. In this connection, many women cadres and women workers have rich experience. For example, in the knitting department of a department store in Shanghai, most of the 58 women comrades who have children without engaging a home-help at home still do a better job in taking care of the children as well as the household chores. Some of them have been rated as advanced workers and others have persisted in reading the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*.

Their way of handling children and household chores is: first, they know how to arrange time. Each day before and after work they clearly divide their work according to an orderly plan. In this way they can concentrate on their work. Outside of working hours they use their time in study and handling household chores. Second, all family members cooperate closely. If there is an elderly person among them, then they persuade him or her to look after the children and household chores. In general, the husband shares the household duties with the wife after work or on holidays. Third, they cultivate the children to have a habit of labour in order to help their mother. Fourth, they use all service organisations such as office and street kindergartens and mess halls so as to lighten a part of the household work. Apart from this, many women cadres who work among the masses in the countryside generally have more practical chores very well. Besides sending their children to the nurseries and getting their family members to help, they also ask their relatives or neighbours to assist. Some of the comrades who have earned the profound affection of the masses just leave their children to their care. They treat the youngsters just like their own flesh and blood. In a

word, there are many ways and means, but only when we have correct thinking can we find the suitable method.

15. The family: abolishing the old, establishing the new

The first reading was written in 1960 in response to the criticism that China had 'abolished the family'. It traces the history of the institution of the family and explains the nature and values of feudal patriarchy as exemplified in traditional China. The article concludes with a short examination of the decisive role of the socialist revolution in reducing the function of the family as a socio-economic unit. The second extract makes it clear that the aim is not to abolish the family as an institution but to create new family relations based on the principles of 'democratic unity'. It discusses the effect of the rural people's communes on the breaking-down of unequal relations within the family. Traditionally these were based on the power of the family unit to organise production and consumption and to primarily control the process of socialisation. The timing of these articles is important. They were written during the Great Leap Forward which was a period of tremendous enthusiasm and utopian excitement and some of the policies outlined here reflect ideals rather than actual achievements. For instance many areas experimented with public dining rooms during the Great Leap Forward, but these were not always popular and were often dropped within a few months.

'Why We have Abolished the Feudal Patriarchal Family System' by Fan Jo-yu, *Hongqi (Red Flag)*, No. 5, 1960. See *Peking Review*, March 8, 1960.

With the profound changes in Chinese society, the family in China has also undergone profound change. We have transformed our semi-colonial, semi-feudal society into a socialist society. Accordingly, we have transformed the feudal patriarchal family, left over by history, into a democratic united family. The Chinese people firmly hail this change, though the imperialists and their hangers-on slander it maliciously.

So far as abolishing the feudal patriarchal system is concerned, this was, in general, done in capitalist countries long long ago. But there it was replaced by the capitalist family. We, on the other hand, have replaced it with the socialist, democratic united family.

Opposing the progress of human society, opposing socialism and the people's communes in our country, the imperialists and their followers keep slandering the changes in the Chinese family. But, when they do this, they have not the courage to mention the historical fact that the bourgeoisie abolished the feudal patriarchal system elsewhere. Nor do they brag any more of the "magnificence" of the bourgeois family which is rotten to the core. They just brazenly gild the mummy of the feudal patriarchal system. This, they say, is a most wonderful family system; its abolition, they say, is "uprooting the basic values of family life" and "discarding all family relations".

Let us, therefore, look into whether the feudal patriarchal system is in fact

such a wonderful thing as they allege and what is meant by its "basic values of family life" and what are its "family relations".

The emergence of the family

The family, as we know, came into being in the last years of primitive society. At that time, the cultivated land hitherto belonging to the communes became the private property of small groups based on blood relationships. And common tillage by the communes was replaced by tillage of these scattered, small units. Composed of members with blood relationship, these small units of private economy were called families. The family appeared with the birth of private ownership. From the start, it had blood relationship as its natural basis and private property as its economic basis; thus it was an economic unit of society.

Chinese feudal society lasted for some 3,000 years, and under it the family was an economic unit of that society. In the economic conditions of small production under feudalism, people carried on production with the family as a unit by combining farming, which was the main economic undertaking, with handicraft, which was a side line.

Of course, in the sense that some toil and some do not, some exploit and others are exploited under feudalism, there is an essential difference between the families of landlords and those of peasants. But, so far as private ownership and the organisational form of production are concerned, both the landlord family which owns feudal estates and the peasant family which runs a small-producer economy are economic units of society.

The economic basis of a landlord family, as an economic unit of the feudal society, is feudal land ownership. Such families meet their needs through the possession of land and exploitation of the surplus labour or even a party of the necessary labour of the peasants. Where land rent is collected, the surplus products created by the peasant in his own economy are snatched away, in this form, to become the income of the landlord family. On landed estates, another form, the holder virtually turns the peasants working on them into his household slaves, producing for him and turning out the things he needs. The landlord-class family, therefore, is a socio-economic unit which holds the land and exploits the labour of the peasants.

The peasant family too is an economic unit in feudal society. Small plots of land and tools of production, a small-scale private economy in which he himself toils — such is the economic basis of the peasant family. The small-producer's economy of the peasant is an organic part of the feudal mode of production. The greatest part of the output of a peasant family, is an economic unit of feudal society, goes to the landlord class and the feudal state. Such a peasant family, therefore, is a socio-economic unit of small, private ownership, based on individual labour and subjected to exploitation by the landlord class.

The feudal society, however, also allows the peasant family to produce some necessary means of consumption for itself. The reason why the feudal mode of production tolerates this is "not to 'provide' the peasant with the means of livelihood, but to 'provide' the landlord with labourers."*

* Lenin, *Development of Capitalism in Russia*.

To ensure a supply of labour power for itself, the landlord class also uses the family links of the peasants as one way of tying them to the land. If a feudal state, said Chao Tso (2nd Century BC – tr.), did not make farming the principal branch of its economy, it could not tie the peasants to the land and the peasants would leave their native soil and think little of their families. In other words, not to tie the peasants to the land is to the disadvantage of the landlords. And in order to tie the peasants to the land, it is necessary to make use of the peasants' family links. Chin Hsueh-yen of the Ming Dynasty suggested to the emperor that the best way to govern the peasant would be "to provide relief to him so that his family stay together" and "to hold his flesh and blood together in order to capture his heart." Quite obviously, it is through making use of the family ties of the peasant, i.e., making use of this socio-economic unit which "holds his flesh and blood together," that feudal society subordinates the peasant family to its needs.

In the conditions of the small-producer economy of feudal society, the family, as its socio-economic unit, must necessarily have its own system in keeping with its role as such a unit. Such is the patriarchal system. "Paternalism is a product of small-producer economy."* The feudal patriarchal system is the family system in feudal society.

As Comrade Mao Tse-tung has pointed out, old China was "a country of small-scale production and dominated by the patriarchal system."** In such a system, the patriarch was responsible for seeing that the burdens imposed by the state and society were shouldered by the family. All feudal laws, moral teachings and customs stood guard over this patriarchal system. The laws of past feudal monarchies made the patriarch the sole person responsible for paying rents and taxes. In addition, there were laws and customs providing that "the father is to be detained when the son violates the law"; when other members of the family violated the law, the head of family was often held responsible for it. It is precisely because the landlord class and the feudal states want to ensure, through the patriarch, that their economic and political demands are met by the family, that they especially strengthen his authority over the family and make him its absolute lord.

"In family affairs the patriarch is the sole head." This was stipulated in the laws of past feudal dynasties. The "Family Law" of the Kuomintang still provided: "Family affairs are to be governed by the head of the family". Feudalism demands that the members of a family subject themselves absolutely to the patriarch's rule.

Prerogatives of the patriarch

What are the prerogatives of the patriarch? And how are they connected, directly or indirectly, with the fact that the family is a socio-economic unit?

The patriarch has authority to govern and supervise the family members in production. This is precisely because the family is the economic unit of the society.

The patriarch is also vested with the authority to dispose of family property. This has two reasons. On the one hand, within the family, private

* *On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.*

** *The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War.*

ownership is embodied in "ownership by the patriarch"; thus the patriarch who is vested with the masculine authority of a husband and with the paternal authority is the "bourgeois" within the family while its other members are its "proletariat."* On the other hand, to preserve a small amount of means of production and labour power indispensable to the family as a socio-economic unit, it is necessary to prevent the dispersal of the family's property and thus of its labour power. Since the family property belongs to the patriarch and since there is a need to preserve the financial resources and labour power necessary for the family as a socio-economic unit, it is a logical necessity that the right of disposing of the family property belongs solely to him.

Under the feudal system, the patriarch is given authority to decide the marriages of his children and enforce his will. According to feudalist ideas, wedlock is not a union of man and wife based on love. Such wedlock, as Engels pointed out, is "definitely decided . . . not by individual inclination, but by family interest."** From the point of the economic interest of the family, when a man took a wife, his family got a working unit for household chores. In feudal union when a daughter was married off, her family got *pingli* (gifts of betrothal). The so-called "*nacai*" and "*nazheng*" of the series of feudal ceremonies from betrothal to wedding could in fact be considered the price of the woman paid by the family of the groom to the family of the bride in the form of *pingli*. Since feudal marriage is an economic act, the right to arrange for it, as for all other economic matters of the household, is naturally vested in the patriarch.

Certainly, marriage, at all times, has the natural aim of begetting children. But under the system of private ownership, this natural aim is intertwined with economic ones. Feudalism in China declared that the purpose of taking a wife and begetting children was to "worship in the ancestral temple and continue the family line" ("Wedding Ceremony" from the *Book of Rites*). The aim of "continuing the family line" is the inheritance of private property. As Engels put it:

. . . its express aim is the begetting of children of undisputed paternity, this paternity being required in order that these children may in due time inherit their father's wealth as his natural heirs.***

Parents, at all times, have the duty to educate their children. But under the system of private property, this duty of parents towards their children becomes a prerogative. One of the aims of marriage is to beget children who can inherit the wealth of the family. And one of the aims of family education is to train children who can hold on to this wealth. Since to educate the children is a necessary means of holding wealth in the family, the right to

* In his book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels pointed out that under the patriarchal system, the patriarch "had under him wife and children and a number of slaves," that "the wife became the first domestic servant"; and that in a bourgeois family, "he [the man] is the bourgeois; the wife represents the proletariat."

** F. Engels, *ibid.*

*** F. Engels, *ibid.*

control this means, like the control of the family wealth itself, is vested in the patriarch.

The patriarch has the right to punish members of the family. Any family member who offends him is liable to punishment. What is meant by this? A Kuomintang book called *The Law of Family in China's Civil Code* (Hu Chang-ching) offers an explanation:

By punishment is meant those actions on the part of the parents that cause bodily or spiritual pain to their children with the aim of making the latter mend their ways. The forms of punishment are not specified in our Civil Code. The parents may interpret it with reference to the actual situation and they may choose such appropriate methods as *scolding, corporal punishment, locking-in or reducing the food* as the case may call for.

As we see, almost every penalty except decapitation is included here.

Whether they deserve it or not, members of feudal families are required to bear all punishment meted out by the family head. Why should he go so far as to take such measures against his wife and children? In the last analysis, it is because the landlord class wants to safeguard its own system of exploitation by means of such feudal order. Like slave society, the feudal society maintains the discipline of labour – with the whip and the stick, even within the family.

In the feudal patriarchal system, there is a whole system of vexing “family rituals” and stern “rules of the house.” Even more inhuman and vexing are the “family rituals” specially set forth for women.

These complicated and vexing feudal “rules of the house” and “family rituals” stem naturally from the ideas of the landlord class and are advocated by it. Furthermore, the ways in which they have been carried out in peasant and landlord families are different. As Comrade Mao Tse-tung has pointed out:

as to the authority of the husband, it has always been comparatively weak among the poor peasants, because the poor-peasant women, compelled for financial reasons to take more part in manual work than women of the wealthier classes, have obtained more right to speak and more power to make decisions in family affairs.*

However, because feudal ideology is the ruling ideology in feudal society which needs it for upholding the family as its socio-economic unit, even the peasant families are not free from the influence of such “rules of the home” and “family rituals”.

To maintain the feudal order, it is of course necessary to maintain the feudal order in the family which is its socio-economic unit. This is because so long as the feudal order in the family, the socio-economic unit, is consolidated, the feudal order in the entire society can also be consolidated thereby. All feudal “rules of the home” are in fact a supplement to the laws of the feudal state; and the powers of the feudal patriarch are actually part of the function he performs for the feudal state.

* *Report of an Investigation into the Peasant Movement.*

Antagonisms and family tragedies

Marx pointed out that:

The modern family contains in embryo not only slavery (*servitus*) but serfdom also, since from the very beginning it is connected with agricultural services. It contains within itself in *miniature* all the antagonisms which later develop on a wide scale within society and its state.*

Hence, no matter how feudalism uses law and moral teachings to intervene in family life, and no matter how great the power of the feudal patriarch in the family, such contradictions cannot be resolved within the framework of the feudal society. Although feudalism has laid down many “rules of the home” and “family rituals,” they have never, in fact, been thoroughly observed. Even in the families of landlords who advocate these “rules” and “rituals”, family tragedies are enacted and re-enacted behind the thin curtain of “happy family life.”

Outside its closed gates, there is a serene peace; inside are feuds and bitter feelings. This is true of every family throughout China, from those on top which have representatives in official life and well-versed in learning from generation to generation, to those of commoners, of ordinary men . . . The greater its fame for filial piety, the worse the discords and evils in its inner apartments. The country may have periods of peace. But the family can never pass a single day in peace. Quarrelling tongues are even sharper than arms in war. Feelings are as antagonistic as water and fire . . . All the wise maxims and proverbs in all the Confucian classics cannot save the situation. All the stories about rewards in heaven and punishments in hell are unable to change it. (From *Universal Harmony*, by the philosopher Kang Yu-wei, 1913).

This is a true picture of the family as it was under the feudal patriarchal system for thousands of years past, also of the “basic values of the family life” and “family relations” which the imperialists and their followers extol to the heavens.

After the feudal society of old China turned into a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, and especially after the May Fourth Movement of 1919, the feudal patriarchal system was shaken and began to disintegrate – both in fact and in the hearts of the people.

Changes since liberation

After the liberation in 1949, Chinese women in the countryside, like their menfolk, received land in the agrarian reform. The Marriage Law, promulgated and enforced, gives protection to the legitimate interests of women. It has emancipated young men and women, especially women, from the feudal marriage system.

But most important of all is the socialist revolution on the economic front in our countryside which has played a decisive role in changing the peasant family. This revolution brought about the abolition of private ownership of the means of production and set up socialist collective ownership. It turned the former individual way of production, which had the family as a unit, into collective production, with the advanced agricultural co-operative as a unit.

* Quoted by Engels, *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State.*

Henceforth, the peasant family was basically no longer a unit of production but a unit of consumption — it was still the unit in which all members of the family consumed the payment for their work in the collective economy.

In 1958, people's communes were set up throughout the rural areas of China. This further reduced the function of the family as a socio-economic unit. Thanks to the numerous collective welfare services, the universal establishment of public dining-rooms, nurseries, and sewing services, household work is being gradually socialised. Women are being freed from the shackles of domestic chores. Like men, they take part in social production on a large scale.

As the system of distribution adopted by the commune combines the wage system with the free supply system, and wages are paid directly to the earners irrespective of sex, every working member of the family, man or woman, can take his place independently and with equal status in social distribution. At the same time, precisely because of the collective welfare services run by the communes and the system of distribution in the communes, a large part or much of the consumption by the peasants does not take place through the family as before.

Thus the family is basically no longer an economic unit of production, nor entirely one of consumption and in consequence the power once vested in the patriarch to manage and supervise production and dispose of domestic property, has lost its sense and utility. With this power of the patriarch ceasing to exist, all survivals of the feudal patriarchal system are bound to vanish. At this point the survivals of the feudal patriarchal system left behind by history, have finally become things that must be and in fact have been abolished. In his *Report of an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan*, Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out long ago that the abolition of the clan system "will follow as a natural consequence of victory in political and economic struggles." Precisely this is the theoretical and historical ground on which we have abolished the feudal patriarchal system.

Democratic, united families

What we already know for certain today is that, following the disappearance of private ownership and of the small producer economy, the family is no longer a socio-economic unit. Ended too is the patriarchal family relation under which, for thousands of years, the man oppressed the woman and the woman relied on the man for her means of life, in which the patriarch oppressed all other members of the family and they relied on him for their living. A family life of democracy and unity is being fostered genuinely realising the old saying: "Father and son are true to each other; husband and wife are in harmony and brothers are congenial."

Yes, we have "uprooted" those "values of family life" which spring from the family as a socio-economic unit and "discarded" the "family relations" of the feudal patriarchal system. Not only this. We have already avoided, once for all, the setting up of capitalist family relations which are based "on capital, on private gain" and are "a mere money relation."* The bourgeois

insists that "Cash Payment is the only nexus between man and man. Even the relation between himself and his wife is in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, mere 'Cash Payment'."*

The family system of capitalist society is not much superior to the feudal patriarchal system. Having abolished the feudal patriarchal system, we do not in the least fancy the capitalist family relation.

The imperialists may lament the change in the family system of our country if they like. As for ourselves, men and women, young and old, this change has brought us family happiness which we have never before experienced.

The Breaking Down of the System of Feudal Patriarchy by Chen Chien-wei, *Hebei Ribao*, (Hebei Daily) Tientsin, April 8, 1959.

... under the system of patriarchy the division of labour with man doing outdoor work and woman doing indoor work tied woman to the home. With large numbers of nurseries, kindergartens, public mess halls and homes for the aged established, the people's communes have collectivised and socialised the household labour and helped woman masses to free themselves 'from household chores and to contribute to the socialist construction in the same way as men. The traditional division of labour between man and woman has been broken, and from now on families shall no longer constitute the economic units of the society and shall no longer serve as a cage to imprison women. The people's communes encourage a distribution system in which wages are combined with free supplies and provide free meals. Thus, the economic authority of the family head is gradually being weakened *vis-à-vis* not only women but other members of the family as well. That the head of the family enjoyed a special position in the family in the past was precisely because the whole family depended on him for living... [Now] the special position of the head of the family will gradually be changed and the unequal relations between members of the family will gradually become equal.

It is significant that under the "to each according to his work" system the people's commune issues wages, not to the head of the family, but to the labourers direct. Each member of the family (women in particular) receives wages direct: this precisely explains her economic independence. The people's commune will also develop education. In the past, the task of educating the younger generation fell mainly on the family; from now on, the task will gradually be assumed by the society. This change will completely eradicate the ideological remnant of patriarchy. Educated and fostered by the Party, the younger generation will grow as new men of Communism who dare to think, speak and act and who do not worship idols. They will remove the "halo" that surrounds the head of the family and retain their true solicitude and love for their fathers and elder brothers.

The breaking down of the system of patriarchy is of far-reaching significance. The existence of the system of patriarchy is a reflex of class oppression in the family relations and is a side-view of the old relationship of

* Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

* F. Engels, *On Conditions of the Working Class in England*.

production. These relations, while having been weakened to a certain degree during the period of democratic revolution and socialist revolution, did not completely withdraw from the battlefield; they were destroyed only by the commune movement. New family relations based on democratic unity compatible with the socialist relationship of production have been established on this basis . . .

Viewed from the angle of the relations between man and woman, the only difference between man and woman in the new family relations is a physiological one, for they will assume joint obligations and enjoy joint rights. Therefore, the breaking down of the system of patriarchy signifies a real and complete emancipation of women.

The breaking down of the system of patriarchy will not and cannot lead to "destruction" or "elimination" of the family. Simultaneous with this change in the family relations, certain social functions of the family (like the economic function of organising production and consumption and the function of imparting the knowledge of life to the new generation) will gradually weaken or completely disappear along with the development of the society. However, such changes in the family relations or functions will have no bearing on the fate of the family itself. The family, as a form of joint life of two sexes united in marriage, we may definitely say, will never be eliminated. The existence of this form of joint life is dictated not only by the physiological difference of sexes but also by the perpetuation of the race. Even in the Communist society we cannot conceive any objective basis and necessity for the "elimination of the family." There is no cause for worry that the "family will be eliminated" or "one will no longer enjoy the bliss of a family life".

Under the social conditions of our country, the breaking down of the system of patriarchy will directly lead to the establishment of new family relations based on democratic unity. The head of the family under the system of patriarchy exercised the economic authority while other members of the family depended on him for living; the relationship of economic reliance formed a transmission belt for this type of family. The transmission belt is removed from the new-type family based on democratic unity. Both husband and wife are economically independent; with "free meals provided" and collective welfare undertaken by the people's commune, the principal means of subsistence for each member of the family are supplied by the commune and not by the head of the family. Only in such a type of family can husband and wife achieve a union of equality based on pure love. One shall no longer witness a situation in which man buys the affections of a woman with money or other social rights under the system of private property, a woman gives herself to a man not for love but for other motives, or a woman, fearful of economic consequences, rejects the man she loves. The relations between husband and wife built on this basis of pure love and devotion are bound to be stable. To respect and love each other and "grow old together" is essential to this kind of union. If their affections reach a breaking point without any hope of restoration, either side need not maintain the bitter life out of consideration of the economic consequences. Of course, cases like this will be rare. In an old-type family, whether an old man, who becomes physically unfit to work, will enjoy the respect of his children often depends on whether

he has any property; if he has a large property, his children may give delight to him; how much natural affection is contained in this "delight given to parents" is quite doubtful. In an old-type family, parents could not but make their financial calculations in bringing up their children. "Store up grain in anticipation of famine and bring up children in anticipation of old age." Thus, bringing up children represents a sort of long-term investment so that the investor might enjoy his "dividend" when he is old. The affections of parents and children inevitably gave out a "smell of brass". In the new-type family established under people's communes, money considerations that distorted and blasphemed the true affections between parents and children are stamped out. The relationship between parents and children will present a "higher form" and the blissfulness of family life will grow instead of "disappearing" as some people worry.

On account of freedom from economic subordination, no room is left for "making man superior and woman inferior" under the system of patriarchy. The equality between man and woman laid down in the Constitution is finally realised within the family. Parents still assume responsibility for bringing up their children and instructing them before they reach school age and that children are still to obey their parents, but such obedience is not a blind one, still less a subordination of personality. Children are also "independent persons" instead of the private property of their parents . . . This is an essential characteristic that determines the new family relations.

SECTION III

THEIR ROLE IN SOCIETY

'Unite and take part in production and political activity to improve the economic and political status of woman'.

Mao Tse-tung, *Women of New China*,
20 July 1949.

Women have increasingly been encouraged to play a wider political and economic role in the transformation and modernisation of Chinese society. In the tradition of Marx, Engels and Lenin, the involvement of women in social production has been viewed as a precondition of their liberation. Land Reform, the collectivisation of agriculture and the expansion of the urban and rural economy during the Great Leap Forward (1958-60) provided new opportunities for women to take a full and wide-ranging role in the agricultural communes and factory or street industries (Readings 15, 16, 17). Industrial and agricultural production has always been given a top priority in government planning, but as *Peking Review* reiterated on Woman's Day this year (1973):

The guiding thought behind the women's movement in China was never just to get women to take part in revolutionary struggle and production and neglect solving problems peculiar to women.

These problems included those of labour protection, equal payment for equal work and a number of welfare services have been implemented to gradually eliminate the contradiction between women's work in social production and in the home (Readings 19-22).

From earliest times women had been taught that they should not concern themselves with public affairs and they were excluded from the public and political affairs of the community and the state (Reading 23). Since 1949 the Party and the Women's Federation have repeatedly encouraged women to fully participate in the political institutions of the Party, the Young Communist League and revolutionary committees (Readings 24-26). This campaign has intensified in recent years. An editorial published in *People's Daily* in March of 1973 noted that, although many new women cadres had emerged since the Cultural Revolution, their number was 'still far from meeting the needs of the developing situation in China today'.

16. Chinese women stand up

The right to own land and property in their own name was the key to the liberation of women – thus reported cadres at a conference on women's work in the Liberated Areas in 1948. The redistribution of land, based on the principles outlined in the Agrarian Reform laws, was largely completed throughout the country by 1952. Land Reform had real and symbolic implications for the position of women. The first extract examines the relationship of the overturning of the landlord class to the women's movement, while the second and third extracts indicate its far-reaching effects on the domestic and public status of women.

Women's Liberation in China, *Peking Review*, Feb. 11, 1972.

What has the overturning of the landlord class to do with the Women's Liberation Movement? In the spring of 1927, our great leader Chairman Mao Tsetung clearly gave us the correct explanation: 'The political authority of the landlords is the backbone of all the other systems of authority. With that overturned, the clan authority, the religious authority and the authority of the husband all begin to totter. . . . As to the authority of the husband, this has always been weaker among the poor peasants because, out of economic necessity, their womenfolk have to do more manual labour than the women of the richer classes and therefore have more say and greater power of decision in family matters. With the increasing bankruptcy of the rural economy in recent years, the basis for men's domination over women has already been weakened. With the rise of the peasant movement, the women in many places have now begun to organise rural women's associations; the opportunity has come for them to lift up their heads, and the authority of the husband is getting shakier every day. In a word, the whole feudal-patriarchal system and ideology is tottering with the growth of the peasant's power.'

Women's Liberation through Struggle, *China Reconstructs*, March 1973.

In Chaochia village [in Chih sien country] a number of women said, 'Let the Peasant's Association work on the land reform, the women's federation should concentrate on women's problems'. Through discussion, we in the federation came to the agreement that while we must, of course, solve the particular problems of women – otherwise we would be divorcing ourselves from the masses and neglecting our duty – at the same time the most important of our duties was to carry out the main task of the revolution. The feudal landlord class oppressed men and women alike. Without overthrowing the landlords the working women could not really stand up either politically and economically. There would be no solution to their problems to speak of. The strength of both men and women must be concentrated on carrying out the land reform. . . .

Every poor peasant, man or woman was allotted a piece of land in the land reform. To emphasise the fact that women had economic equality with men,

we gave each woman a land certificate in her own name or wrote her name alongside her husband's on one certificate. Before, women had always been referred to by others as 'so-and-so's wife' or 'so-and-so's mother'. Now for the first time in their lives many women heard their own names spoken in public. . . .

The Women's Movement in China, *People's China*, March 1, 1952.

. . . the land reform has had a most far-reaching effect on the political, economic, social and domestic status of women and, of course, on their outlook as well. . . .

The *Agrarian Reform Law* has given women the right of ownership of land — a right they never enjoyed in all China's history. The right to own land is naturally changing the whole status of women in the rural communities. Formerly, the birth of a daughter was considered bad luck for a family. A daughter-in-law was placed on the same level as a horse for her usefulness and hard work, with husband and mother-in-law at liberty to revile, beat, and even kill her. Nowadays, a woman is being listened to with respect because of her changed status.

To throw off the shackles of the past, tens of thousands of peasant women have passionately thrown themselves into the great land reform movement for the abolition of feudalism. They have taken an active part in all the phases of destroying the hated feudal system. They have come forward in public trials with accusations against the landlords, helped determine the class origin of rural community members and participated in the actual distribution of land.

A large number of women have been elected to responsible positions in peasant associations or as the people's representatives in their area. The land reform has raised their political consciousness tremendously; their practical patriotism shown by their enthusiastic participation in increasing agricultural production is, in turn, benefiting the country as a whole.

17. Co-operatives and communes

From 1955 rural people's co-operatives and communes, both steps in the socialist transformation of agriculture, offered women employment opportunities in a wide variety of enterprises and construction projects. Each of these new forms of rural social and economic organisation are discussed in the first reading. With the establishment of communes, collective service and welfare facilities were to be expanded and women were to directly receive their own wages. In the second extract a correspondent of Peking Review visits Tungting People's Commune and reports on the role of women there in 1973.

The People's Commune is an Excellent Form of Organisation for the Complete Emancipation of Women, *Hongqi* (Red Flag) No. 5. 1960. See also *Peking Review*, March 8 1960.

The people's commune is a product of China's political and economic

development, a product of the Communist Party's general line for building socialism and the big leap forward of socialist construction. The emergence of this new social organisation marks a change in our society of great historical significance: its influence in every sphere of the political, economic and cultural life of our society is far-reaching. The people's commune enables Chinese women to advance on the road of their complete emancipation; it is an excellent form of social organisation for their emancipation.

The victory of China's democratic revolution and the founding of the Chinese People's Republic brought to an end the thousands of years during which Chinese women were enslaved and oppressed. The mass of women, together with all the working people have become masters of New China. Chinese law gives women equal rights with men in every sphere of life: political, economic, cultural, social and domestic. Successful completion of the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts and capitalist industry and commerce eliminated the social root cause of the oppression of women down the centuries — private ownership of the means of production. The realisation of agricultural co-operation transformed rural individual economy into socialist collective economy and the women of our rural areas took another step forwards towards their goal of emancipation.

After the completion of agricultural co-operative movement, women, like their menfolk, became members of the agricultural producers' co-operatives. With their greatly increased opportunities to take part in productive work and other social activities, more than half of those who were able to work took part in social collective labour. This greatly raised women's social position compared with the days of individual economy. But the former farm co-ops were generally limited in scale; they engaged only in agriculture and some small-scale side-occupations: this limited the extent to which the labour power of women could be fully absorbed and their participation in production arranged rationally in accordance with specifically female requirements. The farm co-ops are still unable to provide collective welfare facilities on a large scale and household affairs in peasant families had to be taken care of by their women. Many women found it impossible under such conditions to take part in production regularly: some, with a heavy burden of housework were completely tied by family cares. Though social and political activities and opportunities for cultural and technical education were all equally open to women, their preoccupation with household affairs gave them, compared with their menfolk, less chance of joining such activities. This could not but affect their efforts to advance politically and raise their cultural and technical levels. Before housework was socialised, women's household labour was something society could not do without. Though women did this diligently, the work done by men was the main source of a family's income. This inevitably affected women's position in the family and left some foundation for the remaining elements of the patriarchal system. . . .

The people's commune, characterised by its large size and its public nature, is able to take up the building of farm water conservancy projects on a big scale, to develop a diversified economy including agriculture, forestry animal husbandry, side-occupations and fishery; and to carry out gradually the simultaneous development of industry and agriculture. This creates

unprecedentedly favourable conditions for the participation of women in labour on a wide scale, and it permits them to play their full part through more rational arrangements to utilise their strength. The establishment of people's communes will speed up semi-mechanisation, mechanisation and electrification in agriculture. This will gradually lessen or end labour-consuming manual work and make it more convenient for women to take part in various kinds of productive labour.

The people's commune is not only an organiser of collective production but of collective life. To satisfy the needs of rapidly growing production and the urgent demands of the masses particularly the mass of women, the people's communes have all set up community dining-rooms*, nurseries, kindergartens and other collective welfare services, and basically solved the contradiction between women's participation in social production and household work. This further freed the labour power of women and enabled them to engage regularly in social and political activities and advance their cultural and technical education.

Distribution in the people's commune now mainly follows a wage system based on the work done, but it also operates a partial supply system that contains the shoots of a system of distribution according to needs. This supply system is a most important and dependable form of social insurance to every peasant man and woman. At the same time, wages are paid directly to every worker and women receive their own wages. Hence, women gain their economic independence and end completely their dependent status in the family — this strikes another shattering blow against the last vestiges of the patriarchal system.

The brief period of less than two years since its birth has shown clearly that the people's commune has played a great role in promoting the complete emancipation of women in China. Since 1958 women in the countryside have joined in the work on the various production and construction fronts on an unprecedentedly large scale; they have become a major force on the agricultural production front; these things are inseparable from the emergence of the people's commune. The broad mass of women in the countryside advanced from doing mainly subsidiary work to general participation in the main work.

This participation of the broad mass of women in social labour and collective social life led to profound changes in their spiritual outlook and greatly enhanced their social position. When their activities were limited to the small circles of the family, their thinking, in general was comparatively speaking, restricted and backward. After taking part in social labour and various social activities, their thinking will broaden out, they will advance politically fairly rapidly and make very rapid progress in raising their cultural and technical levels.

It is thanks to the existence of this new form of social organisation, the people's commune, that women in our country have been able to score such great achievements in the advance to their complete emancipation; this is a clear sign of the deep-going development of our socialist revolution. However, China's present industrial and agricultural productions and the level of our

* See p. 50

science and culture are still, as a whole, backward: a start has only just been made in mechanisation and electrification in agriculture; labour-consuming manual work still limits the area of production open to women: women in general are still at a relatively low level of the technical and cultural development, lagging behind the demands of progress in socialist construction; existing collective welfare facilities still do not fully meet the needs of the mass of women. Under these circumstances, it still cannot be said that our women have achieved complete emancipation.

A Visit to the Tungting People's Commune, *Peking Review*, May 4, 1973.

Chin Chih-fang, a vice-chairman of the commune's revolutionary committee in charge of work among women, talked to us about the commune's women members. A cadre who had been chairman of the women's organisation during the land reform in the early post-liberation days, she had the conditions of the peasant families, especially those of women members, at her finger-tips. She impressed us as being a good talker, intelligent and capable.

Speaking of today's women and men being politically and economically equal, she said with real feeling: "This was hard-won after many, many struggles!" She recounted the past sufferings of women in the Tungting area.

'Women are always busy, either beside the kitchen stove or at the far-off riverside' was a saying in the old days. It aptly described how the labouring women were tied down from morning to night with household chores, such as cooking, fetching water and washing.

Like their sisters in other parts of the country, the women of Tungting suffered multiple oppression — they were inferior to men, had very little say in the family and were dependent on their husbands economically. Besides heavy housework, they sometimes rowed boats, fished and collected firewood and even worked as maids in the homes of landlords and capitalists in order to earn some money for their families. Landlord-capitalist Chin Hsueh-chih for instance, had more than 20 maids. Some women were so poor that they had to leave six-month-old babies at home and become wet nurses for capitalists' children.

Liberation brought Tungting's women political emancipation. The vestiges of feudal ideas, however, still existed and exerted their influence. Women had to carry on their battle against old conventions and ideas to achieve complete equality with men.

'For instance,' Chin Chih-fang recalled, 'when I first took part in land reform work some people chattered: 'How can a woman do it? Everything will be all right so long as we men do a little more work''.

It's a different story now. Nearly 500 women, she said, hold leading posts at the commune, brigade and team levels and in the militia organisations, the Communist Party and Communist Youth League branches. There are always women among the cadres at commune, brigade or team meetings to discuss various fields of work. Women are also playing a bigger and bigger part in production. Each of the commune's 237 production teams has a woman

leader or deputy leader, and women account for 46 per cent of the commune's total labour force.

Many lines of production, she continued, such as picking and curing tea, picking fruit and raising silk worms, are mostly done by women. In some production teams, more and more young women have taken over the work of growing rice and wheat and doing other farm work formerly done by men only. In this way, more able-bodied men have been transferred to heavier jobs, like scooping mud from the rivers and ponds to make compost and quarrying rocks to build terraced fields. Compared with the men, young women can do a better and faster job of weeding, harvesting rice and other similar farm work.

Chairman Mao has called upon Chinese women to "unite and take part in production and political activity to improve the economic and political status of women." This is exactly what Tungting's women are doing. . . .

Their constant efforts to study and temper themselves in class struggle resulted in a marked rise in political consciousness and ability to work. During the Great Cultural Revolution, in particular, they courageously defended Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and thus raised their consciousness of class struggle and the struggle between the two lines to a new high. . . .

Both men and women members take part in productive labour and political activities on an equal footing. How then do the women arrange their household affairs and children? For an answer to this question Comrade Chin Chih-fang took us to the Weitung Production Brigade which has 850 women members, more than half its population.

Taking into consideration women's physiological conditions, the production teams always see to it that they are given lighter jobs. Also, they are allowed to knock off one hour earlier than men. To help lessen the women's burden the brigade runs all-year-round canteens with additional ones set up during the busy farming seasons. When there is rush work during harvesting or sowing time, canteens are set up in the fields far from the villages. As to payment for work, even when women did the same work as men, they received about 20 per cent less in the past. Now all men and women get equal pay for equal work.

The Weitung Brigade has a creche in each of its eight production teams. And the brigade runs four kindergartens with 99 children under the care of a staff of 25.

We visited several creches. The No. 3 team's creche was in a clean, spacious room with small wooden beds and cradles made by the team members. Two middle-aged women looked after eight two- or three-year-olds. When we arrived at the No. 4 team's creche, two young women were teaching the tots to sing songs. Seeing us, the 12 lovely children, from three to seven, lined up and performed for us.

18. The organisation of street production

Towards the end of the 1950's, small neighbourhood factories, known as

street industries, were organised in the cities of China. These small-scale undertakings were based on low capital investment, operated with much labour, often utilised waste materials and many undertook simple manufacturing work for larger factories. Many of the neighbourhood production units which were established by a few housewives have today developed into collectively-owned factories employing more than 200 workers to produce sophisticated manufactured goods. The first reading, an address delivered to the second National People's Congress in 1959, reports on the establishment and development of street industries in Peking which involved the labour power of more than 190,000 housewives. The second reading gives an example from Fengsheng Neighbourhood in Peking. For many women like Cheng Hsiu-lan, participation in street production marked the first step in social, economic and political activities outside the home.

The Broad Masses of the Housewives take up Posts of Social Labour, Renmin Ribao, (People's Daily), May 5, 1959.

. . . housewives, mobilised by the large-scale mass movement, established more than 400 street factories and organised more than 2,900 street production units involving scores of trades and more than 200 kinds of products. The trades which engaged more persons were such special handicraft works as embroidery, lacquer-coating, and cloisonne, tailoring, showmaking, book-binding, paper box, toys, spinning of yarns, spinning of wool, glassware, etc. . . .

Many such products were made of materials discarded by factories or of waste and obsolete articles. For instance, odd parts of leather were used to make leather belts, the residue of limestone used to make calcium carbonate, and leftovers of various materials used to make studs, buckles, shoe laces, springs, keys, etc. All these are now urgently required in industrial and agricultural production or in the people's daily life. . . .

Through practice in production their ideological consciousness was further heightened. Prompted by the big leap forward in all sorts of work, they, like the peasants and the functionaries and workers on various fronts, made a full play of their spirit of daring to think, daring to act, tenacity and hard work, and are in good fighting spirits. At the beginning, while they had no ready factory houses, equipment and funds to work with, many women built their own factory houses, made their own equipment and established many factories starting with poor means on hand. In the course of production they studied diligently and practiced hard. So they mastered the rudimentary technique of how to run production units. They also made contributions toward technical innovations, tool improvements and the raising of labour productivity. In the first six months of its operation, for instance, the Red Flag Leather Shoes Factory at Tienchiao in Peking have semi-mechanised more than a half of their work.

Now the production units established by these streets are consolidated gradually, and their labour productivity is raised continually. The participants in production also have a more or less stable income. Besides, the majority of these production units have a certain amount of reserves.

From the practice of more than six months, we have gained some experiences in the organisation of street production. There are yet many problems. In the future we will have to further improve upon these experiences. At present some of the street production units are hooking up with the state-operated factories, handicraft cooperatives and commercial departments through contracts concluded to process goods, thus they need to meet the needs of these organisations, to stabilise and incorporate their own production tasks into the state plan, and to properly solve the problem of supply of technical equipment and raw materials. The production units must improve their management, introduce and improve some necessary systems. And their workers must be subject to training to improve their skill, raise labour productivity and ensure a good quality of work. As to the allocation of manpower, I am of the opinion that we must give consideration to the particularities of these housewives by adopting a variety of forms of production such as centralised production, decentralised production, full-time work and part-time work. In this way some women with heavier household chores but physically weak may also take part in production. Attention should also be given to the special problems of women in pregnancy, in natal period, or nursing children.

Street Factories, *China Reconstructs*, August 1973.

In 1958 housewives in the neighbourhood were inspired by the Communist Party's general line for building socialism. "The whole country is taking a big leap forward", one of them said in a discussion about it, "can't we do anything but bend over our stoves all day? We want to do our part to build socialism too!"

When they heard there was an urgent demand for springs, Cheng Hsiu-lan and 20 other women organised a production group and started making small ones for mouse traps and eyeglass cases. They made their first batch by turning them on hand winders and heating them in a kitchen stove.

They have not forgotten their second year. The Great Hall of the People was being built in Peking, for China's tenth National Day. They were given the job of making 250,000 sofa springs for its furniture. Now 68 women, they sent representatives to learn the technique from large plants and studied hard. In spite of their primitive conditions, they delivered high-quality springs 14 days ahead of schedule.

When the hall was finished, the women were invited to tour it. Entering the splendid main hall and sitting on the sofas, these mothers were as happy as children. "Our work went into these!"

"For the first time," Cheng Hsiu-lan said, "we really realised that money can't buy the happiness that comes from taking part in helping our country."

"Build socialism!" is the slogan that keeps them advancing. After 15 years of hard struggle, they have automated or semi-automated most of the production process. They have built new shops and their number has grown to 270. Using wire from 0.2 mm. to 8 mm. in diameter, they produce over 1,100 specifications of springs for dozens of models of automobiles.

Now 39, Cheng Hsiu-lan is a member of the Communist Party. She learned

how to read and write in a night class shortly after the factory was started. Though she had never touched a machine in her life, she is now an experienced manager responsible for the factory's production. She reads blueprints and makes innovations.

When the Fengsheng Neighbourhood Revolutionary Committee was set up during the cultural revolution, Cheng Hsiu-lan was elected to its standing committee.

The other factories in the Fengsheng neighbourhood developed in much the same way. Like Cheng Hsiu-lan, other housewives found their horizons broadening after they came out of their homes to join in building socialism. . . .

These factories are collectively owned. The neighbourhood revolutionary committee gives them unified leadership in political and ideological work and the realisation of their production plans and provides a unified accounting system. Their profits are used to cover the cost of benefits for the workers and are invested in new buildings and equipment for the expansion of local production.

The development of production has improved the workers' situation. An adjustment of the wages of neighbourhood factory workers last year brought them basically in line with those in state enterprises. Women who started to work at the same time as Cheng Hsiu-lan earn about 40 yuan a month.

They receive free medical treatment. A woman can send her child to a neighbourhood nursery from the time her 56-day maternity leave ends until her child begins primary school. Her factory pays half the cost of care. Neighbourhood household-service shops do washing, mending and other repairs. This helps liberate the women from time-consuming chores.

About 30 per cent of the local women work in the neighbourhood's factories.

Fengsheng's neighbourhood factories complement state-run plants and there are various residents' committee production groups which process things for these factories. Some production is concentrated, some dispersed. Through these channels all the housewives in the neighbourhood who can work have a chance to make their contribution to building socialism. Through political study in the factories, learning techniques as they work, increasing their general knowledge in night school classes the women of the Fengsheng neighbourhood have developed into an energetic corps for building socialism.

19. Labour protection in rural communes

During the period of rapid economic expansion and increase in productivity in the Great Leap Forward many production teams tended to neglect women's special problems. From the early 1960's more attention was paid to the rational arrangements for women's labour and concrete measures for the protection of their labour. This Zhongguo Funu (Women of China) editorial recommends certain steps to improve their practical conditions of work in rural communes, and repudiates the view that the protection of women's labour reflects the delicacy or weakness of women.

Further Improve the Labour Protection Work for Members in Rural Communes, *Zhongguo Funu* (Women of China), Aug. 1, 1961.

According to our understanding, there are some team leaders who do not pay enough attention to the protection of women's labour. . . The key to making a greater success of the protection of women's labour lies in the leadership of the production brigades and the attention of the team leaders. . . The teamleaders are in direct charge of production and are in close contact with the masses of the commune members. The women team leaders are especially in a better position to get in touch with the female commune members, and to show consideration for their pressing demands. As a consequence, provided the brigade cadres and the team leaders know the importance of according protection to women labour and pay attention to it, they can make rational work arrangements on their own initiative to take care of the women members at the time of their menstrual period, pregnancy, child-birth and breast-feeding. . . The male team leader should listen humbly to the opinion of the female team leader on his own initiative. He should respect the right of the female team leader in the distribution of women labour. The two should cooperate and share responsibility to make a success of labour protection work. . . .

In agricultural production, distribution of work and practice of cooperation between men and women follow the traditional custom of "assigning work in the fields to men and the tending of cotton crop to women, heavy work to men and lighter work to women". . .

The division of work between men and women in this way is compatible with the physical conditions of men and women. It gives men and women work which they are best fit to carry out, and conforms with the needs of production. It helps to increase labour efficiency, safeguards the health of the women, and is welcomed by the masses. Even at the time when farm work is extraordinarily busy, rational arrangement of labour for men and women can also be made. As the veteran peasants say, 'In all seasons throughout the year, even at time when work is extremely busy, there is always a difference between heavy and light work, and wet and dry work. . . .'

In productive work, some young female commune members challenge the male commune members in emulation as to their work zeal. They think that women can carry what men can carry and do what men can do. This kind of spirit in emulation is good, but it is improper to indulge, in an over-simple manner, in physical contest. . . .

Both male and female team leaders should satisfy themselves as to the circumstances of women members during the "four periods" and pay attention to making a success of protection work. When according protection to them during these "four periods", particular attention is necessary during their menstrual period and pregnant period. In order to give successful protection during the menstrual period, the chief thing to do is to exempt the women from heavy work and from work carried out in icy water or deep water. . . It is stipulated that during the period of menstruation, pregnancy or breast-feeding, the female commune members can be assigned only "to a place nearby but not far away, to the dry field but not the paddy field, and to lighter work, but not heavy work. . . ."

When a woman gives birth to a child, the chief form of protection that can be given is to give her the necessary rest and proper nourishment. The lying-in women in the countryside can generally rest from 30 to 56 days. In accordance with the production and economic conditions of the different production brigades, they are given a commensurate number of work points as subsidy, so that they can feel at ease when taking rest. At the same time, the lying-in women themselves must see to it that they take enough rest, and not do too much housework.

In order to give better protection to maternity cases, it is also necessary to further popularise modern midwifery. Most women in the countryside accept modern midwifery nowadays, but still a small number of them prefer the old form of midwifery. This is one of the causes of puerperal diseases. In view of this, in all production teams or physical villages, there should be full-time midwives for checking up expectant mothers and handling midwifery work to enable all lying-in women to acquire the aid of modern midwifery at child-birth at home or in a maternity home, thus protecting the health of the women.

In order to enable the labour protection policy of the Party to make its way deep into the hearts of the people, to be translated into action self-consciously on the part of the male and female members, and to become a standing practice of society, the team leaders should also organise the midwives and the relevant medical personnel to give constant publicity to labour protection and hygiene for women and infants among the male and female commune members. Some male commune members think that the protection of women labour reflects the delicacy of women. Some female commune members themselves, particularly young women, still retain the feudal way of thinking as they do not like to tell other people when they suffer from menstruation or become pregnant. Others care only for production, and simply ignore these special problems. It is, therefore, necessary for the production teams to publicise over and over again this labour protection policy. . . .

20. Equal work, equal pay

National policy stipulates that women should receive the same rating and remuneration as men for the same work. On the people's communes, where the great majority of women live and work, wages are based on the number of work points accorded per day which are based on strength, skill, training and experience. This reading, a report from a rural work symposium discusses the principle of equal pay for women and the problems involved in evaluating labour power, distributing work points and eradicating feudal thought - all of which have tended to restrict the implementation of this policy.

Seriously Carry out the 'Equal Work, Equal Pay' Policy between Men and Women, *Qian Xian* (Front Line), May 25, 1964.

Organisations at various levels of the people's communes should, while

strengthening socialist education, implement the policy of "equal pay for equal work" between men and women.

"Equal pay for equal work" means that all labourers, whether they are men or women, are entitled to the same rating and same remuneration when they have completed the same job of the same quality. This policy is in accordance with the socialist principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work." Only the rating and pay based on this principle is beneficial to the development of the collective economy and the summoning of the activism of commune members in production.

At present, some production teams take an incorrect view. They consider that if they could call on the activism of man labourers and those with strong labour-power, they would be able to do well in production. As to women labourers and those with weak labour-power, it would not matter much if their work-points were lower, if they did less labour and if they did less work. This way of handling things is incorrect and is contrary to the Party's policy and requirement.

The method of "equal work and equal pay for man and woman, rating according to one's labour and distributing according to one's work-points," has been adopted since the higher agricultural cooperatives and by the time of communes a set of experience has been acquired. Systems like the appraisal of work and recording of work points, and small-scale contract could insure rational recording of jobs and rational distribution if they were seriously enforced. But why could they not be carried through in some cases? Mainly because there was something wrong with the thought of some cadres. In their mind there existed a relatively serious feudal thought of paying more attention to men than women, laying stress on men labour-power rather than women labour-power. They even thought that women labour-power was not very important. With this remnant feudal thought of discriminating against women, there appeared some wrongful methods running counter to the Party's policy of "equal work, equal pay" for men and women. For instance, some production teams stipulated: No matter how poor the labour-power of man was, the work-points recorded each day should not be less than 6 points, while no matter how strong the labour-power of woman was, her work-points should not exceed 5.5 points. Still some other teams stipulated that although man labour-power and woman labour-power participated in the same kind of labour and completed jobs of the same quantity and quality, they should not be given the same ratings. Their "reason" was: Although woman labour-power could reach the same standard of quantity and quality in a certain farming job as man labour-power did, yet in the case of many other farming jobs man labour-power could do them and women labour-power could not do them. This argument is untenable. The principle of distribution in the socialist society is to distribute according to labour – more labour will get more pay, less labour less pay. So, in some farming jobs, when woman labourers could not reach the norm of man labour-power, they should be given less points, but once they have reached the norm they should be given the same work-points as man labourers. These two problems should not be confused. This kind of viewpoint reflects the feudal thought of despising women. This way of thinking has hampered the correct implementation of the Party's principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according

to his work." Consequently it has restricted the enthusiasm of woman labourers for collective labour, prevented women from playing their corresponding role in the development of collective production and in the creation of material wealth for society. As a result, it would inevitably affect the income and livelihood of those households having more woman labour-power than man labour-power and thus increase man-made contradictions among the communes members. With unequal pay for equal work between men and women, man labourers will unreasonably take the fruits of labour of women who did the same kind of work. This is virtually an exploitation.

Some people are afraid that equal pay for equal work would affect the activism of man labourers. We must know that to mobilise the labour activism it is necessary to carry out, on the premise of political leadership, the Party's policy of distribution according to labour and more pay for more labour. We must stress socialist ideological education among the general commune members and made them realise that labour is the source of wealth. Only when we have developed fully the commune members' labour potentiality can we improve production and change the rural outlook. At the same time, we must let all understand that it would be extremely difficult to develop production so as to change the appearance of the countryside, if we had only a handful of man labourers or of those with strong labour-power. With the correct ideological understanding as a foundation, we should rate the work points according to the quantity and quality of labour, in order to enable those who labour more and labour well to get more points, and those who do less and inferior labour to get less points. In this way, it would, on the one hand, enable the commune members to acquire a correct ideological foundation for their activism and, on the other, give them proper material incentive, thus mobilising the activism of the commune members as a whole. As regards labour-power, in particular man labour-power, or strong labour-power, if we only use high labour points to buy their "activism" and do not conduct socialist education for them, this kind of "activism" would not last. The reason is that this kind of "activism" is not built on the foundation of common wealth but exclusively on the narrow immediate interests of individuals.

To implement the policy of "equal work and equal pay" does not call for any special system or methods. The failure of some of our teams to carry this through has something to do with their thinking, especially the cadres' thinking. If cadres think in correct terms, then it is easier for the commune members to follow suit. Therefore, at a certain suitable moment, these teams may discuss thoroughly whether it is good to carry out the policy of "equal pay for equal work". Once we have a correct way of thinking, then the principle of "equal pay for equal work" will be easily implemented.

21. The problem of housework

The rapid expansion of women's role beyond the confines of the individual family unit raised the possibility of women having to bear a double burden –

of having to cope with not one job as before, but two. During the Great Leap Forward (1958-60) much attention was paid to the freeing of women from the drudgeries of household work. An article published in Peking Review on November 18, 1968, drew attention to the far-reaching political and economic significance of the establishment of collective community services:

'Politically speaking, the importance of freeing women from household drudgery and drawing them into active participation in public life cannot be over-emphasised. Engels pointed out 'that the first premise for the emancipation of women is the introduction of the entire female sex into public industry and that this again demands that the quality possessed by the individual family of being the economic unity of society be abolished.' He further predicted that 'with the passage of the means of production into common property, the individual family ceases to be the economic unit of society. Private housekeeping is transformed into a social industry. The care and education of children becomes a social matter.' Lenin also stressed the importance of the setting up of community service centres for the emancipation of women. 'The real emancipation of women, real communism', he wrote, 'will begin only where and when — its (petty domestic economy) wholesale transformation into large-scale socialist economy begins.

Within the framework of the rural communes and urban neighbourhoods, individual responsibilities and household practices began to be replaced by collective eating, nursery, sewing, laundry and other enterprises. Not all the community services introduced during the Great Leap Forward were established with equal success. For instance, although work canteens operate in factories and some communes, public dining rooms for the evening meal in community centres are not widespread. The following reading, published in March 1973 outlines the main services available to the women textile workers at the cotton mills in Peking.

Welfare Services for Peking Women Textile Workers, Xinhua (New China News Agency), March 9, 1973.

To ensure the women workers good welfare services, a vice-chairman of the revolutionary committee in each of Peking's three cotton mills is in charge of the work in this field. Two thirds of the 17,000 workers in these mills in the eastern suburbs of Peking are women.

The vice-chairman of the Number 2 Cotton Mill says: 'Chairman Mao instructed us to be concerned at all times with the well-being of the masses. Attention to the life of the workers is a principle of our socialist system.' A sum equal to 5.5 per cent of the annual payroll of each mill is appropriated to cover welfare costs. The fund is used to run canteens, creches, kindergartens, bath houses and barber shops and to subsidise the workers' housing rent and other welfare expenditure. This is apart from the medical expenditure covered by the state.

The welfare services release the women workers from many domestic chores and enable a growing number of women to take part in production on a large scale. Most of the workers live in housing estates built by the mills. Stores, groceries, restaurants, a bank, a post office, canteens, clinics, schools, creches and other services are nearby. A worker only takes a few minutes to go from her or his home to the place of work, to the nearest canteen, or to send the children to the nearest creche or kindergarten.

The whole place is a well-organised community. Since production goes on round the clock in three shifts, the canteens, creches and other services arrange their hours for the convenience of the workers. The canteens are open a total of eight hours a day and serve four hot meals in the course of 24 hours. Apart from the central canteen in each mill, there are four smaller ones close to the workshops so the workers on all shifts are ensured hot food during work breaks. The menu always includes rice; around twelve flour-based dishes and several hot kinds of food. Everything is sold at the costs of the raw material, the wages of the kitchen staff and maintenance covered by subsidies. A worker can eat well for 12 to 15 yuan a month.*

Each mill has its own creche and kindergarten. Together the three mills care for more than 1,000 children. The creches and kindergartens have neat, clean large rooms. A woman can put her baby in the creche as soon as her 56-day maternity leave ends. She has the option of putting the baby in for the day, by the work week, or varying the schedule as her work shift changes. She is given time to nurse her baby twice in every eight-hour shift until the baby reaches one year old.

The nursery fee, apart from the cost of the child's food, ranges from 1.5 to 2.5 yuan per child per month. After kindergartens, the child can go to the nearby primary school. Last year hundreds of women textile workers had babies. During the maternity leave of 56 days, they drew full pay. Many women who worked in capitalist mills before liberation recall that in those days a woman worker lost her job if she was away from work just a few days after giving birth.

22. Community service centres

One of the most successful and widespread of community facilities which have been established are those for child care. These include 'nursing rooms' for the youngest babies, nurseries for children from eighteen months and kindergartens for ages three and a half to seven years. Details in their organisation vary. Some of them are run by neighbourhood organisations, factories, shops or communes on a daily basis, a weekly basis or on a seasonal basis in some communes. Sometimes grandparents look after the very young children. In the first reading, a saleswoman in a Peking Department Store describes how she combines family life, a job and minimal household tasks. Local neighbourhood service shops are a common feature in urban China. They were established to serve working housewives by city neighbourhood or resident's organisations and the Women's Federation. Their services, which are various, include laundry, tailoring, mending, household repairs and other odd jobs. This second reading gives an account of the work of one such neighbourhood service shop in the western district of the capital city of Peking.

* A yuan is the unit of currency in China. A worker's wage averages 60 yuan a month.

A Saleswomen's Home Life by Tsui Hsiu-mei, *China Reconstructs*, Jan. 1973.

Both my husband and I work in the Peking Department Store, the city's largest. My husband, Wang Chun-chaun, is on the management staff. I work behind the counter. We have three daughters. The older two, aged 10 and 8, are in primary school. The youngest, 4, goes to the nursery run by the store. Although both of us work and we have children, we have all along been able to work with our minds free from domestic worries and have never needed to let housework and having children affect our progress. . . .

Several months after our marriage I became pregnant. As a worker in a state enterprise I am covered by National Labour Insurance. Once a month, later once every two weeks, I could take time out from work for a checkup. From my seventh month of pregnancy I worked seven instead of eight hours, with no cut in pay. My baby was born in the hospital with which our company has a contract, with all expenses for delivery and hospitalisation, except for meals, paid by the Labour Insurance Fund. I had 56 days of maternity leave with pay.

Life became more complicated after I became a mother, but the main problem of child care was solved by the creche of the nursery run by our store, which is not very far from where we live. There are four classes in the nursery: At 56 days infants can enter the nursing class. When a child is one and a half years old he goes on to the lower class; at three he goes on to the middle class; and at five he goes on to the higher class. When the child is seven years old he leaves to go on to primary school.

Either Chun-chuan or I took the baby to the nursery on our way to the store and picked her up after work every day. According to the regulations I was permitted to take half an hour off twice a day, in the morning and afternoon, to run over to the creche to nurse the baby. This went on until she was weaned. When our daughter was one and a half years old, we put her in the full-time nursery, that is, she lived there all week and came home to us for Saturday night and Sunday. We could go and visit her any time we wanted. In this way I needed to worry even less about the child.

Chun-chuan earns 68 yuan a month and I get 55. When our daughter was in the day creche we paid 6 yuan a month for her care and an additional sum for food, which included milk and fruit. When she started going full time we paid 15 yuan a month which covered everything, including food. The rather low fee is possible because the company subsidises the nursery out of its workers' welfare fund.

When my first child entered the nursery I worried about this and that. But after I learned all about the nursery I felt that my worries were unnecessary. The nurses are patient and affectionate. The children get regular health checkups and all the necessary preventive inoculations. Clothes and bedding are washed and changed regularly. During the hot summer days the children are given baths every day. Particularly after the age of three attention is paid to various aspects of character education, such as honesty, love of labour and an attitude of caring for public property.

All three of my daughters grew up in the nursery. Beginning collective life at a very early stage, they have developed good habits and are all in good

health. While they were in the nursery I did not have to be bothered when they had light illnesses, as these were attended to by the nursery health worker. When the trouble was more serious, they called me at the store and I would be given time off to take the child to the clinic. Sometimes if we happened to be very busy the nursery staff would do this for me. Last autumn I was sent to the far outskirts of the city to interview job applicants. A few days after I left, my youngest daughter suddenly ran a high fever. A member of the nursery staff immediately took her to the clinic and called my husband to say that she had done so.

Since Chun-chuan and I both work, we don't want to spend much time cooking. Usually we have breakfast and supper at home and eat our lunch in the staff dining room. Quite often we buy cooked rice or steamed bread at the dining room and come home and cook one or two vegetable or meat dishes that we like. This saves much time and enables us to eat in a home atmosphere more often. When we are busy we sometimes eat all three meals in the dining room, and our two older daughters come to join us.

On Sunday when the whole family gets together we usually have some special dishes, Chun-chuan and the children go to the market and select some fish, a family favourite, or we all pitch in and make jiaozi (filled dumplings), a treat for the children. Since Chun-chuan is a good cook he frequently prepares the food while I do the laundry or mending. After lunch the children usually clamour to go to the park or to see a film. We generally follow their wishes and take them out.

Chun-chuan and I share the daily housework. . . .

In the evening we like to look through the day's People's Daily to keep up with important international and domestic affairs. Sometimes we turn on the radio and listen to music or operas. I spend some of the time studying Marxist-Leninist classics and Chairman Mao's writings. All my colleagues are making a serious study of these and I have to work extra hard to keep up because I did not have as many years of schooling as most of them. Chun-chuan helps me a good deal. When we were studying the Communist Manifesto, he found some background material for me to read and discussed the more difficult points with me. He often recommended newspaper articles in which people who had studied the Manifesto told what they had got out of it.

The Service House — A Friend in the Neighbourhood, *China Reconstructs*, December, 1959.

Neighbourhood Service House, reads the sign beside the door of a small rough brick building on Erh Lung Street in the West City district of Peking. Beside it stands a postbox, while bulletin boards on the left give the day's weather forecast, the film at the local cinema and a list of services which can be rendered there. The Service House is one of many set up during the past two years in cities all over the country. Their chief aim is to help working housewives, but they have gradually expanded to serve entire neighbourhoods, workers in local factories and passers-by.

The atmosphere at the Erh Lung Service House is homelike. Both big and

small affairs are handled quickly and efficiently by its staff of eight housewives and two elderly men. A middle-aged woman drops in to rest her feet and have a cup of hot water between shopping errands. An old woman asks help in writing a letter to her daughter in another province. A housewife brings a bundle of socks and children's clothes for washing and mending. A newly-married couple asks help in cleaning and moving into their new apartment. A boy wants a ticket for the evening show at the local cinema. A man wants to call a taxi to take his pregnant wife to the hospital.

In 1958, when many housewives went out to work for the first time, nurseries, public dining rooms, laundries and tailoring shops were set up in every residential area to lighten their household burdens. "Ninety per cent of the women on Erh Lung Street were soon working outside their homes," says Li Shu-fang, the 30-year-old mother of two children who heads the staff. They found many odd jobs still left to be done at either end of the working day; a trip to the bank, to the tailor on one street and the laundry on another. To help out, the Service House was set up by the residents' committee with the help of the district Women's Federation and local government.

The Service House maintains 24-hour duty, handling about 300 people a day from the area's one thousand families. Most of its sixty different types of work are done without charge, but to pay salaries and small maintenance expenses, the Service House receives a monthly subsidy from the organisations for which it acts as agent. These include the bank, the cinema and the post office — for which it handles sales and subscriptions to newspapers and periodicals. Also acting as a distributor for the local Hsinhua Bookstore, the Service House makes part of its income from books which its staff sells at schools, offices and factories during lunch hours. From its office it sells paper, pencils, common medicines and other necessities for unexpected needs after the regular stores are closed.

If he is busy during banking hours, the Service House staff will make a client's deposit or withdrawals, or take his rent to the bank which acts as a collection agency for city-owned houses. It will take bundles of mending, simple tailoring jobs or everyday and urgent laundry and assign them to one of the local housewives who does this work in her spare time at home. The Service House charges ten per cent. From its surplus it has purchased two sewing machines for the menders to use.

Even more important than the staff's many helpful services however, is the feeling created throughout the neighbourhood that it is a friend to depend upon whenever there is need.

23. Women and political participation

Before the Cultural Revolution women constituted approximately one fifth of the elected deputies both at local people's congresses held at various administrative levels and at the National People's Congress held in March 1966. Extracts from this article, published six months after the occasion of the First National People's Congress in 1954, indicate the degree of prejudice and number of obstacles which women like Liang Kuo-ying have had to

overcome in order to participate in political affairs. They could be summed up in the old Chinese saying quoted here: 'A mare can't go to the front, a woman can't take up a post'.

New China's Women in State Affairs, *People's China*, March 1, 1955.

For ages, Chinese working women shared the fate of their men under political and economic oppression; but they were tied by yet another chain: sex discrimination . . . Women take part in government? One wouldn't even dream of it . . . But Chinese women have now shown what they can do. They joined the people's revolution which has at least brought them to a new life — equality with men in economic, political, cultural, social and domestic life . . . This new status as masters of their country has stimulated political activity among Chinese women. Those who were rarely allowed to step out of doors now pay close attention to current affairs and participate in various social activities. During the nation-wide elections in 1953, the women of China were given the opportunity to take a real part in democratic government . . .

The Communist Party and the People's Government make special efforts to bring out and develop the talents of women and encourage them to take part in the government of their country . . . This rise in the political status of Chinese women is inseparable from their own efforts. Since liberation, many of them have taken part in various fields of construction and social activity. They have shown their ability in many different posts, and many have distinguished themselves as model workers . . . But needless to say, in the course of their duties, women have often met with many obstacles. Not least of these are the remnants of the age-old feudal outlook of looking down on women. Though reactionary rule and the feudal system have been overthrown the idea of men's superiority to women, so strong in feudal society, cannot be eliminated in a few short years. The Communist Party and the People's Government have continuously led the women and people of China in an indefatigable struggle against the remains of this feudal outlook. Besides constantly educating the people, they have taken definite steps to wipe out such ideas . . .

Another difficulty women come up against when they begin to take part in the work of the government is their lack of experience and training. Under reactionary rule in old China, labouring people, and especially women, were deprived of their right to education and prevented from taking part in any social activity. This situation is rapidly changing. All schools — technical schools, part-time schools, village schools for adults, continuation schools and training classes are open to women . . . Women now not only have many opportunities for formal education, but by actually taking part in work, are also able to reveal and develop their latent capabilities.

In spite of the many difficulties they have to overcome the women are not dejected. Take for example, Liang Kuo-ying. Born of a peasant family she had only two years in a primary school during childhood. Later, for a long period, she worked on women's welfare and in 1952 became head of Huailai County, Hopei province. The Chinese have an old saying: 'A mare can't go to the

front, a woman can't take up a post'. So the people doubted her ability; and with her lack of experience she also had no confidence in herself. But she was not so easily daunted. She carefully studied all documents connected with her work; she discussed things with others; she went to the villages to check the results of her work; she kept in constant touch with the people and carefully listened to their opinions. Slowly but surely she got the feel of the work . . .

24. Responsibility and leadership

Large, but not sufficient numbers of women cadres have been trained for positions of responsibility in the Party, the Young Communist League and the popular organisations. The Women's Federation has always been particularly anxious that women should not confine their activities to their own movement, but play a full part in the joint organisations of both sexes. They fear that unless women are well-represented in the leading bodies of these organisations they will remain second-class members unable to forward and protect their interests in these organisations. In the first reading, Teng Ying-chao, Vice-chairman of the Women's Federation, speaks out against the inadequacies of the training programme for women cadres or leaders and certain discriminatory practices which still remain within the Party organisation. The second extract describes the training of women cadres in the model commune of Tachai.

The Report of the Vice-Chairman of the Women's Federation in 1956, Report of the Eighth Party Congress, FLP, Peking, 1956.

I should now like to give my views on the question of the training and promotion of women cadres.

With regard to women cadres, it is our Party's policy to train them with patience, to have confidence in their employment, and to promote boldly those who deserve promotion. As the Party's Central Committee particularly points out in its report on revision of the Party Constitution, "Our Party must be very firmly resolved to train and promote women cadres and help and encourage them to advance unceasingly since women form one of the greatest reservoirs of Party cadres" . . . This directive must be thoroughly carried out in actual practice.

In the various stages of our revolution, our Party has trained and promoted large numbers of women cadres from among women workers and peasants as well as from women intellectuals.

Even the present increase in the number of women cadres cannot keep pace with the demands which the rapid development of socialist construction makes on us.

Three problems have to be considered at the present time.

1. Though the number of women cadres is increasing, they still constitute a relatively small proportion of the total number of cadres.

2. While the ability of women cadres is much higher than before, in most cases their cultural, scientific, and theoretical levels are relatively low.

3. In present-day conditions of peaceful construction, the overwhelming majority of women cadres are now rearing more children, and have many household tasks to look after.

There has, it is true, been a great change in this respect since the liberation, but a fundamental change cannot, after all, be brought about in a short time. Nor have we made a sufficiently big effort on our own part. Take the question of leadership. Certain leading organs and leading personnel tend to underestimate the strength of, and the positive contributions made by, women cadres in revolutionary and construction work. They have not planned the training and promotion of women cadres in a purposeful and systematic manner suited to the special abilities of women cadres. Nor have they made use of every possibility for the practical solution of problems peculiar to women cadres. Instead, they have left these problems to be solved by the women cadres themselves. We have even found that a few organs and a few leading cadres tolerate ideas and attitudes which lead to actual discrimination against, and contempt for, women cadres. They think that "even three women are not the equal of one man." When it comes to the question of promoting women cadres, they are troubled by endless misgivings. They are afraid that women cadres, if promoted to a higher position, will not prove equal to the tasks assigned them, that they cannot work perseveringly, that they will be burdened with looking after their children and will themselves be a "burden" to the organisations they work in. So they tend to promote more men cadres than women cadres even when choosing between men and women of equal competence. It has even been found in a few cases that although there have been more women than men among the model cadres elected by the masses, extremely few women are among those promoted. All this reflects the attitude of valuing men and belittling women, an attitude which has survived from the old society and which can still be seen in the implementation of our cadre policy. Apart from this, there are a few women cadres themselves who do not work hard enough, or do not have a sufficient urge for progress under present conditions of peaceful construction. They tend to be satisfied with things as they are; they have no desire for advancement; they hesitate when faced with new tasks and fresh difficulties. These are the major reasons why they have not made sufficient progress.

In order to train and promote more and better women cadres and to give full play to their initiative and creativeness in socialist construction, I would like to make three proposals.:

1. We must systematically train Party and non-Party women cadres; steadily raise their level of socialist consciousness; help them study Marxism-Leninism and acquire professional knowledge and skills . . .

2. Our policy is to make cadres of "those who are of good character and show real ability." We should continue to follow this policy and on this basis boldly promote women cadres, Party members and non-Party members alike, to all kinds of work and to posts of leadership at all levels. In doing this, it is important at all times to see to it that we have no reservations about employing them and give them constant training and education . . .

3. What troubles many of our women cadres is the contradiction between work and study on the one hand, and the rearing of children and care for the

home on the other. We Communists must take a sympathetic and solicitous attitude in dealing with these difficulties and try to remove them step by step

I propose that all departments concerned make every effort to set up various types of nurseries according to needs and possibilities

Some Party committees have already made over-all arrangements for cadres of both sexes. They have worked out concrete plans and practical measures for the training and promotion of women cadres as an integral part of their over-all plan, taking into consideration the special abilities of women cadres and the special difficulties they face. They have called upon each of the departments concerned to assume its special responsibilities and make joint efforts to carry these arrangements through. Wherever such efforts have been made, the latent capabilities of women cadres have been given full play, large numbers of women cadres have been trained and promoted, and the question of lack of women cadres has been solved. Efforts should therefore be made to correct the situation in those cases where no leadership is given to the work of training and promoting women cadres and where women cadres are discriminated against.

Training Women Cadres — how the Tachai Party Branch does it, Peking Review, March 30, 1973.

As it has in much of its other work, the Tachai Production Brigade in Shansi Province, national pacesetter in agricultural production, has done a fine job of training women cadres. The brigade's Party branch has always devoted much attention in this connection.

Two of the 7 members on the Tachai Party branch committee are women, as are 4 out of 7 Youth League branch committee members. Among the women cadres are veterans of many years as well as new hands. Some are concurrently members of Party committees at the provincial or regional level, some are in the leading bodies of the commune and brigade.

From the outset the Tachai Party branch realised that training women cadres involved an ideological revolution demanding a complete break with feudal tradition.

Just after Liberation Sung Li-ying, a young woman in the village, became active in political affairs. Ground down in slavery in a landlord's home at 14 before the liberation, she had bitter hatred for the landlords and a strong desire to overthrow them and gain emancipation. She fervently wanted to follow Chairman Mao in making revolution. The Party branch saw that she had the makings of a good cadre, and decided to give her some training.

Looking down on women, however, was still strong among some villagers. "A woman's place is at home, cooking, weaving, nursing children Since when have they started to run village affairs?"

To overcome such backward ideas, the Party branch started a campaign to publicise equality between men and women, and organised a special discussion on whether women could take part in "running village affairs" or not. The consensus leaned to one side. "Why not?" people demanded.

"Didn't women do sentry duty during the war? Didn't they carry on production in the rear areas to support the front? . . . Remember those women cadres from above? How well they spoke and how bravely they fought at the front. Nothing can be accomplished without women."

This was the first time in Tachai's history that feudal ideas of contempt for women came under serious criticism.

Sung Li-ying was admitted into the Chinese Communist Party in October 1947.

As a cadre, Sung Li-ying's inexperience was a great handicap. At first, she just could not get the women to come to her meetings. Chairing a meeting, she would blush and stammer and stop short, so that Party branch committee secretary Chen Yung-kuei had to take over. Tongues started wagging again with "I told you so." And when her first-born fell ill and died, a handful of landlords, rich peasants and other class enemies went around whispering: "It serves her right, running around like that No wonder the child died!"

The Party organisation analysed all this talk and concluded that some simply showed feudal ideas whereas some came from class enemies who wanted to make trouble and sabotage women's liberation. The Party branch gave the class enemies a sound rebuff. It then called a meeting to educate the masses. One woman speaker after another took the floor to recall the bitter oppression they had suffered in the old society where women were at the rock-bottom and to thank Chairman Mao and the Communist Party for helping them to stand up in the new society. The meeting aroused the deep proletarian class sentiments of all present and encouraged the women to strive for equality between men and women with heightened consciousness.

The way the Tachai Party branch trains its women cadres is mainly for them to learn to work and struggle in the course of work and struggle.

Though it was difficult at first for Sung Li-ying to mobilise the women to take part in production and political study because of her unfamiliarity with policy, the Party branch insisted on giving her different tasks so that she would learn. She soon got some experience.

From this example, the Party branch concluded that women cadres can be brought up only by fighting against difficulties. At the time the agricultural producers' co-operative was formed (before the commune was established in 1958), the Party branch recommended that the peasants choose 19-year-old Kuo Ai-lien as co-op vice-chairman. It also gave another young woman Kuo Feng-lien the important job of heading the "iron girls' shock team" and made her political instructor of a local militia company.

When the co-op was first set up, a young bachelor sneered at the women: "I'm all for equality and all that. What about lifting this big rock together?" This hurt the women's feelings. Not long afterwards, all the members were weeding in the fields and the same scoffer suddenly found himself far behind the women, whose skilful fingers twinkled among the millet plants. He wasn't let off easily this time. Led by Sung Li-ying and Kuo Ai-lien, the women criticised him for his former attitude. The man promptly went to the Party branch to complain of bad treatment. He did not get the sympathy he expected. Instead, Comrade Chen Yung-kuei told him: "The women were perfectly right. The Party branch supports them. They had to take a lot in the old society, but not any more now. They, too, are masters of the new society.

And here you are still sneering at them and picking on them I don't blame them for giving you a piece of their mind."

The Party branch helps women cadres in every way it can. When a women's meeting is called, women cadres are always asked to speak first and the other members of the Party branch committee will only make supplementary remarks to drive home the important points.

The Party branch considers that the women cadres must study Marxism-Leninism seriously and raise their theoretical level in the course of doing practical work, so that they can constantly make progress politically. Though Sung Li-ying is now 43 and always busy doing political work, or working in the fields or at home, she has never let up in her study of theory. Since last year, together with two other women cadres, she has studied *On Contradiction, On Practice and Manifesto of the Communist Party*, discussing the works paragraph by paragraph and seeking explanations whenever she needed. They have thus gradually raised their theoretical level and ability to understand and analyse things.

The Party branch realises that women have more difficulties than men in doing some work. It shows its concern for women cadres in two ways.

It helps solve their problems regarding children and housework by setting up creches and kindergartens, thus relieving them of part of these burdens. In giving them work, the Party branch takes into consideration the concrete conditions of each woman cadre and leaves them plenty of time to take care of their homes. Though they are encouraged to do exemplary work in production, their physical characteristics are taken into account and they are dissuaded from doing over-heavy work or work otherwise unsuited to them.

The women cadres are helped to correctly solve the problems of marriage, care for their children and housework. Towards those already married, the Party branch often talks with their husbands and parents-in-law to enlist the latter's support.

One night in the winter of 1967 when Kuo Ai-lien was at a meeting in the commune, her baby cried for a long time at home and her husband was in a dither. The mother-in-law also was displeased. Ai-lien came home late to a fuming husband, and a row ensued. When the Party branch heard of this, it immediately sent Chen Yung-kuei to talk with the husband. "If we men are away at work, the women hold the fort and never complain when we come home late," he said. "So why can't we look after the children for a change when they go to meetings? Women are the 'other half' of the brigade, you know. Just imagine half the brigade chained at the home - how can production and revolution go ahead then?" In the meantime, Sung Li-ying was chatting with the mother-in-law. "In the old society, we women were less than human beings. We had no say in anything. Now that Chairman Mao and the Communist Party have liberated us, we should support women running public affairs."

The women cadres play an increasingly important role in revolution and production. Representing the interests of the women of the whole brigade, they have become the links between the Party organisation and the masses of the women.

25. Prejudice in the Young Communist League

The Young Communist League is made up of boy and girl members between 15 and 25 years who are studying or already working. Branches have been established in factories, mines, shops, streets, agricultural production units, government offices and educational institutions. Since the Young Communist League is responsible for training young people for political participation and forms one of the main recruiting grounds for party membership, any apparent prejudice against girl members has been viewed with great concern. This article, from Zhongguo Qingnian (Youth of China), firmly denounces the view evident in letters written to the magazine that recruiting women members 'will not serve any great purpose'.

Correctly Look at the Question of the Young Women joining the League, *Zhongguo Qingnian, Youth of China*, August 1, 1964.

Some of the basic League organisations are not willing to accept young women in recruiting members. This is an abnormal phenomenon. In your letter you mentioned that some of the comrades in your League branch took the view that "young girls are bound to get married, young wives are bound to give birth to children," so the admission of these members into the League "will not serve any great purpose." This understanding and way of looking at things are not suitable. Not taking in any young women as members and not paying attention to their ideological work are an indication that some comrades engaged in basic-level work of the League lack a correct knowledge about young women. They consciously or unconsciously overlook the role of young women and see only their shortcomings. They do not analyse concretely their difficulties. They do not sufficiently realise the far-reaching significance of doing well their work among this group of persons.

Young women account for half of the total number of young people. They have formed an indispensable force on all fronts of socialist revolution and socialist construction . . . As an old saying goes: "Women support half of the world." The role of young women should by no means be overlooked. This is one aspect of the matter.

We must also realise that many young women will encounter more difficulties than young men on their forward road. For example, the old thoughts as well as old practices and influences still restrict them in the countryside at the present time. Hindrance to taking part in social activities is still great and the household chores remain a great burden for them. Under this particular condition the League organisation should take a different view toward those who are backward and should adopt a practical and correct attitude. There are two reasons why some of them lagged behind: One is political and ideological and the other is actual difficulty which prevents them from participating in all meetings and activities. In the former case it is necessary to stress persuasion and education. In the latter case, we should educate them on the one hand and care for them and understand them on the other. The more difficulties they have the more practical assistance the League should render them. Young women themselves should take a practical

attitude toward their actual difficulties. Are they to throw themselves away and retreat in the face of difficulty; or are they to muster their courage, fight against and overcome difficulties? All ambitious revolutionary young women should take the latter attitude . . .

The reason why some of the basic League organisations and League cadres were not willing to accept young women as League members was because they did not start from the viewpoint of education and from the over-all viewpoint. What they saw and thought of were usually those who were activists and they rarely concerned themselves with those young people who were inactive. They paid attention only to those people who played the role and noticed how big or small a role they were playing. They forgot that the League was the core to consolidate and educate the youth in general and that its object was to do work among them including the young men and young women. Only if we constantly pay attention to consolidating and educating youth as a whole can activists emerge in great numbers. To do the developing work well among the young women will help to consolidate and educate young women in general. And only if we lay stress on consolidation and education for the youth as a whole can we do the work still better in recruiting League members.

26. Women on revolutionary committees

Revolutionary committees were established during the Cultural Revolution to replace a single line of command or management. As leadership groups they include representatives from all the important groups in the factory, or commune for example. Normally they are based on a 'three-in-one' combination consisting of party members, technicians and representatives from the constituent workshops or agricultural production or other units. This reading, published in provincial newspaper, reminds its readers that without the correct viewpoint women can easily become 'accompaniments' after election to the revolutionary committees. The theory of 'showing concern for women' can work to the advantage of women, but it can also unwittingly degrade the status of women by according them a passive rather than an active role.

Attach full importance to the Role played by Women Committee members, *Wenhui bao* (A Shanghai newspaper), June 14, 1968.

During the present unprecedented great proletarian cultural revolution, a group of revolutionary women who were formerly unknown have mounted the political stage and become revolutionary leaders under the guidance of the great thought of Mao Tse-tung. Some of them are serving on revolutionary committees at all levels and taking a direct part in the state administration . . . The question of women has never been isolated. It is always linked to the political revolution. The women's movement should not be alienated from the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie . . . the influence (of the latter) have made some of our

comrades unable – even today when the socialist revolution has developed in depth – to really attach importance to the major role laid by revolutionary women . . . There should be some women committee members. 'We should show concern for women'. This theory of 'showing concern' looks like attaching importance to the role played by revolutionary women but, in essence can still degrade the status of revolutionary women. In the past two years . . . the participation of some of them in the revolutionary leading groups of the current great proletarian cultural revolution was a great achievement but we advise those who hold the theory of 'showing concern for women' that they take a good look at themselves in the mirror and quickly and thoroughly rid their minds of the dust of the viewpoint of the exploiting classes on the women question. 'Women comrades are heavily burdened with household chores. Let them take a lighter load of the revolution'. This thinking can easily make the revolutionary women become accompaniments after entering the revolutionary committees . . . In fact, the viewpoint that women can only work in the kitchen and look after the children precisely reflects the outdated concept of the exploiting classes towards women and must not be allowed to revive. Our great leader Chairman Mao teaches us: 'The day all Chinese women stand up will be the time of victory of the Chinese Revolution'. Whether we attach full importance to and develop the role of women committee members is by no means a trifling question, but a question of whether we thoroughly eliminate the ideas of the exploiting classes or not, a question of whether we can look forward to the all-round victory of the great proletarian revolution or not . . . Every revolutionary comrade should earnestly handle this question and must neither take it as an ordinary question nor ignore it.

THEIR IDEOLOGICAL EMANCIPATION

'Numerous facts gleaned from the Great Leap Forward have proved that only by enabling women to obtain their ideological emancipation will it be possible for them to develop their infinite source of power'.

Renmin Ribao, (People's Daily), 2 June 1958.

The wide scale entry of women into the labour force was responsible for highlighting the fundamental problem confronting women – the history of their cultural oppression. The experience of the 1950's had showed that changes in the economic base and the creation of new social forms do not necessarily result in the adoption of new values and standards of behaviour. Vestiges of old social habits and thought long survive the initial act of revolution and the remaining contradictions, reflected in the continuing social secondariness of women, must be constantly resolved. *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily) noted on Women's Day this year (1973):

'China was under feudal rule for 2,000 years and the exploiting classes left behind deep-rooted ideas discriminating against women and looking upon them as slaves and appendages. Today, classes and class struggle still exist in our society and it is still impossible to eliminate completely the remnants of the old ideas of looking down upon women. Neglecting to train more women cadres, giving men and women unequal pay for equal work in rural areas, showing unwillingness to accept women as workers in some factories, and the remaining feudal influences in marriage – all these are a reflection of such old ideas. It is necessary to wage a protracted struggle against them so as to overcome the idea of looking upon women as inferior'.

From the 1960's the women's movement has been especially concerned with raising the consciousness of women of their position and effecting their ideological emancipation. The first two readings examine the special ideological problems of women workers, the second group look at the role of political study in solving these and the last reading is a case study in which ideological education has been given special attention.

27. Ideology and consciousness

Although men and women workers share many of the same attitudes of mind there are a number of questions particular to women workers. These result from their history of oppression and certain biological differences. The first reading examines the particular political and ideological problems of women workers which separate them from their male counterparts and necessitate a particular ideological education. Women have constantly been encouraged to study, articulate their special problems and exchange their experiences within small encounter groups of women or on an individual and sisterly 'one key to one lock' basis. Without self-awareness, a woman will be 'unwilling to fly though the sky is high!' Both the Party and the Women's Federation have been anxious that women should make the most of the opportunities offered to them in the new society. First and foremost they have sought to widen the horizons of women's minds beyond the family and the home through the process known as 'consciousness-raising' and the acquisition of technical skills. The second extract, from Women in China, asks in what respects women should be self-conscious and calls on women to 'dare to remould themselves'.

Strengthen Political and Ideological Work among Women Workers, *Gongren Ribao* (Worker's Daily), Peking, July 8, 1959.

Man workers and woman workers view many questions in the same light, for instance, the question of how to know the Communist Party and the working class, the question of personal future, the question of working for whom, and the question of relationship between individuals and the state, between production and livelihood, and between freedom and discipline. However, owing to traditions and to different physiological conditions and different social obligations, the thinking of woman workers is not always the same as the thinking of man workers. For instance, under the influence of such feudal thoughts as "man travels everywhere while woman is confined to the kitchen", "a well sunk by woman will not yield water and a boat rowed by woman will capsize", women workers generally have an inferiority complex. Further, woman workers are more finicky than man workers. Women, particularly those coming from the exploiting classes, have tender feelings and strong self-respect; they cannot endure hardship and do not hold the masses in respect. Furthermore, the political ardour of women workers is more likely to decline than that of men. When they are young they have a high ideal and are full of vitality; once they get married and have children and a family burden, they are likely to become retrogressive. Woman workers also have a greater family burden.

Questions like these are likely to arise in carrying out political and ideological work among woman workers. Therefore, in addition to resolving questions common to man workers and woman workers, attention should be paid to such questions peculiar to woman workers in carrying out the political and ideological work among woman workers.

Political and ideological work may be separately carried out for woman

workers in the light of concrete conditions and in coordination with certain festival days (like the Women's Day and July 1) and certain campaigns (like the campaign for publicising the Marriage Law). Publicity should be conducted in accordance with the circumstances and guided by them. For instance, the inferiority complex among woman workers is mainly due to the fact that women have long separated themselves from social production. To do away with their inferiority complex, they should be taught to take an active part in production, develop the communist style of thinking, speaking and acting with courage, and perform creative labour. Finicky airs among woman workers should be traced to their cause and explained so that woman workers can understand that finicky airs are not the nature of woman, nor an established aesthetic standard, but an affect left to women by the old society where women were regarded as a play-thing. To overcome finicky airs, it is necessary for them to get strong spiritually by intensifying training and mixing with the masses. Education may either take the form of organising discussion of real people and real things (both in the factory and outside the factory, both the good and the bad) or take the form of special reports. Experience shows that the masses will welcome various forms of reporting and discussion provided the reports and discussions are concentrated on certain problems and provided it does not take long. The state of mind must be constantly comprehended before political and ideological work can be purposefully conducted and linked to reality. Therefore, woman workers' state of mind should be investigated and studied. The investigations may be carried out periodically (monthly or quarterly) and in connection with the central tasks. Education for woman workers will be very fruitful if it is conducted according to the results of such investigations.

In What Respects should we be Self-conscious? *Zhongguo Funu*, (Women of China) October 1, 1963.

The Party and the government have created full conditions for women to take part in social labour and have opened for us a new scope where we can fully develop our talents and ambition and can work for the Party and the people. The question lies in how the revolutionary women will treat dearly this great age and what we possess. In my opinion, we women should first have self-consciousness and, secondly, acquire skills. Revolutionary consciousness plays a decisive role. Without self-consciousness, a person will be unwilling to fly through the sky is high, but will confine herself to her so-called warm small family and indulge herself in material life and comforts, stick to her present situation, refuse to make progress, and idle away her precious time. She will certainly come to her ruin and miss all the favourable conditions that have been created for women of our age.

1. We should remember the fountain when we drink its water. We must not forget the past. The "past" includes two aspects. One aspect is the miseries imposed upon women by the old society. In the dark years in the old society, women existed as slaves of families and as "playthings". Women had neither a political stand in society, nor a position in family. The "women's virtues" in the feudal society and the marriage of convenience in the capitalist

society, which existed in old China, weighed heavily on women, depriving them of all their rights and freedom and enslaving them. If we do not know or have forgotten the miseries which the women of old China suffered, we shall not be able to understand or appreciate the happiness in which women of new China are living. The other aspect of the "past" represents the innumerable revolutionary veterans, including a large number of women who, for the emancipation of women, worked hard for the revolution in the dark years and carried out long-term struggle bravely and strenuously on lofty mountains, in dense forests, in cold and hunger, in battlefields, in courts, in prisons, and within the extensive boundaries of China. Thousands and thousands of revolutionaries and people have sacrificed all they had, even their precious lives. Our memories of the comrades who shed their blood for the revolution are an inspiration to us and demand us to take good care of the existing revolutionary conditions and environments and to double our effort to do our work, so that we may not be ashamed of ourselves before the revolutionary martyrs, before our age, and before our future generations.

2. In the face of an important task, we should strive to make progress vigorously and carry out our work and struggle intensively, and must not allow any slackening of our effort and suspension of our work. Revolutionary women comrades must have a wide scope and face directly the socialist construction of the motherland and the cause of emancipation of the whole mankind.

3. We must, in the spirit of continued revolution remould ourselves, transform the society, and accomplish the task of complete emancipation of women. Led by the Chinese Communist Party, women of new China have been emancipated, but they still need to undergo a long-term struggle before they can win their complete emancipation. The ideological and habitual influence of the exploitation class in the old society will still play its role in a rather long period of time to come. For example, such ideas as "the husband is responsible for supporting a family, while the wife is responsible for household chores" and "man is superior to woman", are reflected consciously or unconsciously in the thought of a large number of people, and are shown frequently in everyday life in the form of contradiction among the people. To get rid of these ideas completely, it is still necessary to carry out education and struggle repeatedly. Such defects as self-abasement and narrow-mindedness left behind on women by the old society are shown from time to time, consciously or unconsciously, in a large number of women comrades, and hinder their progress. A great deal of work is also required to be done in this respect. Every revolutionary woman should look at this problem directly and, under the Party's leadership, increase their consciousness, learn some skills, and self-consciously take up the task of transforming these defects. The starting point of this task of remoulding is first of all in ourselves. We should be daring to remould ourselves and shake off other moral burdens left behind by the old society.

28. Combining theory with practice

'Ideological work and political work remain the soul and command in all

types of work'. The first reading from a report by the President of the Women's Federation emphasises the importance of the ideological character of the work of the women's movement. Women are encouraged to participate in political study in order to raise their political, ideological and theoretical levels of understanding. They should proceed from an understanding of the overall situation to the specific questions surrounding the position of women in a socialist society. Throughout China from the early 1960's local groups of women began to meet, study and consider the relevance of the works of Mao Tse-tung to their lives. This was not just study on an abstract and theoretical level, for as an editorial in *Zhongguo Funu (Women of China)* points out, 'the purpose of study is use'. In the second article, two women, Wang Hui-ching and Shih Ping transform their outlook and relate their newly acquired knowledge to situations in their daily lives. In this they are following the exemplary models of Lei Feng, Chang Ssu-te and the Canadian surgeon Norman Bethune – all of whom are mentioned in the text.

Report of the President of the Women's Federation, *Xinhua, New China News Agency, Peking, February 24, 1960.*

Our women's federations should . . . endeavour to guide women to heighten their political and ideological consciousness and raise their technical and cultural levels; . . . Our women's federations should, under the single leadership of Party committees at the corresponding levels, guide women to overcome self-abasement and conservatism, to make heroic determinations, to set their minds free, to think, speak and act with courage and daring, and to innovate things and create things constantly . . . They should mobilise women to take an active part in political studies so as to raise their socialist and communist consciousness. Take an active part in the anti-illiteracy campaign and spare-time studies so as to raise their cultural and scientific levels.

Man is the most active factor in productivity, and the development of man's activity and creative power in production is the key to high-rate development of production. Both political and ideological education and material incentives play an active part in stimulating the zeal of the people. Our principle is to give the political and ideological education the primary importance and material incentives the secondary. Chairman Mao told us: 'Ideological work and political work remain forever the soul and command in all kinds of work'. We must, therefore mobilise women to take an active part in political studies, constantly guide women to raise their socialist and communist consciousness, and bring in to play women's high degree of consciousness and enthusiasm. Undue stress of material benefits to individuals is completely wrong because it will lend itself to the growth of bourgeois individualism . . .

It is of momentous significance to help women constantly raise their cultural and scientific levels. It will help women study political theories and carry out technical innovation and technical revolution and will narrow down the difference between mental labour and physical labour . . .

In the first place, we must study seriously Marxism-Leninism and Chairman Mao's works, deeply comprehend and firmly carry out the Party's line,

guiding principles and policies, and constantly raise our political, ideological and theoretical levels . . . The Mao Tse-tung thought is a typical example of integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of Chinese revolution and construction, is a developed and enriched Marxism-Leninism based on a summing-up of the experience in the practice of our revolution and construction . . . only when we use the weapon of Mao Tse-tung thought can we wage a determined struggle against modern revisionism.

In the second place, we must not confine ourselves to the small circle of women's work. In our work we must proceed from the central tasks of the Party and from the over-all situation of socialist construction. We must make a good job of women's work and promote the realisation of women's complete emancipation. Our cadres engaged in women's work must deeply realise that the emancipation of women is part of the Party's cause of socialist revolution and socialist construction and that the emancipation of women can continue to advance only when the socialist revolution and socialist construction continue to advance . . .

This does not signify that our women's federations have no jobs of their own. As a matter of fact, with the socialist construction advancing by leaps and bounds, our responsibility for mobilising women is heavy and the work of our women's federations is rich in substance. Meanwhile, at the present stage the women's masses have their special problems which should receive special attention from cadres of our women's federations, who must keep the Party committees informed of the new condition and problems confronting woman masses, put forward suggestions on how to expand women's work, and promote further emancipation of women.

. . . My aim in repeatedly calling on cadres of women's federations to study theories, interest themselves in politics, proceed from the over-all situation, gain an all-round development, and achieve large-scale cooperation, is to raise the political and ideological character of women's work.

The Purpose of Study is Use, *Zhongguo Funu (Women of China)*, December 1, 1961.

Comrades Wang Hui-ch'ing and Shih P'ing have a definite purpose in their study of Chairman Mao's works. The process of their study is one of raising their understanding and remoulding their thought. This is the first salient feature of their study. Born of a working-class family, Wang Hui-ch'ing was imbued with the bourgeois ideology; she had a desire to become famous and rich and looked down upon the working people. Influenced by the spirit of Lei Feng, she took up the study of Chairman Mao's works, hoping to learn something from them. When she became aware of the revolutionary truth that intellectuals must identify themselves with the masses of workers and peasants, she woke up as if struck by the spring thunder. She thought: "I was originally a member of the afflicted working class, and yet I have forgotten my origin. I wanted to place myself above the worker and peasant masses. What a dangerous thing to do!" Having confessed her mistake, she has since read Chairman Mao's works with the feelings of her class, and taken the

initiative to get in touch with the peasants and intensify the tempering of her thoughts and feelings.

Shih P'ing, a stage actress, at first did not know whom she should serve, so she began studying Chairman Mao's works in order to solve this problem at hand. Once she took up the study, she compared herself with others. When she saw such a noble aim of life as Chang Ssu-te and Norman Bethune had, she felt the smallness of herself. However, to overcome one's individualism was not an easy thing. She had studied for some time and raised her understanding, yet she still repeated her errors. But she persisted endlessly in a struggle against her individualism, and found a correct method to deal with it: "Whenever I come across a problem, I would think of what Chairman Mao says and then look at what I have done. Is what I have done right or wrong?" She read the article "Serve the People," word by word and sentence by sentence, examining her attitude, finding out her mistakes, and comparing herself with others. Seriously she criticised herself. In this way she woke up slowly.

It will be seen that Wang Hui-ch'ing and Shih P'ing have a purpose in their study of Chairman Mao's works, and make demands on themselves. That is why they do not evade their own ideological problems; on the contrary, they regard Chairman Mao's words as a weapon with which to fight against their non-proletarian ideas. Thus, through studies, they have continued to raise their class consciousness, and their thoughts and feelings have changed. It is for this reason that although they have not studied too many articles, they are able to start from concrete problems and to proceed from small to big problems, from a low level to a high level, and go from the shallow into the deep. And, as a natural consequence, they would be confronted with some major problems, namely, whom to serve, what to live for, and how to transform the intellectuals. These problems are all big problems relating to the establishment of a revolutionary outlook on life. If one is able to link one's study with the problems of one's outlook on life and pays attention to applying the proletarian stand, viewpoint and method to the transformation of oneself, one will then come to grips with the basic problem of revolutionisation. The process of man's revolutionisation is the very process of ideological revolution. The aim of our studying the thought of Mao Tse-tung is to revolutionise ourselves, to transform the objective as well as the subjective worlds

If one is able to link one's study with one's thought, one will be able gradually to apply the method of integrating theory with reality. This is a fine point of their studies. What is meant by integration of theory with reality? . . .

To link theory with reality and to learn and apply flexibly what we have learned, we must necessarily go through the process of reading, thinking and using in the course of study, that is, we must combine intensive reading, deep thinking, and frequent use of knowledge.

Why is intensive reading necessary? Because only when we read repeatedly, carefully and intensively can we remember firmly the things we study and comprehend them deeply. Intensive reading does not mean learning by rote; it means the exertion of efforts to grasp the spirit and substance of the things we have to learn. Intensive reading requires that we must not seek quick and

great results and must not go in for the form, but that we must be concerned with quality and practical results or, in other words, we must begin with having less but finer results. "Better fewer, but better." . . .

Deep thinking is the process of comprehension and digestion. The writings of Chairman Mao are the summations of the actual struggle for revolution and construction. When we study them, we must fully explore them in our minds before we can understand and examine their meaning. At the same time, we must examine our own thought and practical work before we can digest these writings and apply them in our work . . .

Frequent use means that we must be diligent in practice. Use is the purpose of study and also the method of study . . .

Knowledge depends on practice, and separated from application learning loses its practical significance . . . The ultimate purpose of study is therefore application. Chairman Mao is most strongly against the practice of treating the Marxist-Leninist theory as a dogma. In his "On Practice," he points out: ". . . Marxism emphasises the importance of theory precisely and only because it can guide action. If we have a correct theory but merely prate about it, pigeonhole it, and do not put it into practice, then that theory, however good, has no significance." We must listen to Chairman Mao's words and impose strict demands on ourselves. First of all we must grasp the link of ideological remodeling and be brave in carrying out a self-revolution, unreservedly opening fire at our erroneous ideas. Where the broom does not reach, the dust will not be swept away by itself. When the old does not go, the new will not come.

29. A case study: the Peking Bus Company

One of the primary means of ideological education and the setting of new standards of behaviour has been to exchange experiences and to single out certain persons and deeds as examples for emulation. The following reading is a case study of women's work in which ideological education has received top priority. It is a report of the principles and practices of women's work at the First Maintenance Centre of the Peking City Bus Company. It is preceded by an introductory note written by the editors of Women of China which highlights for readers the main lessons to be learned from this particular example or model of women's work.

Why their Work among Women Workers was Successful — *Zhongguo Funu*, (Women of China) September 1961.

The present issue of this magazine carries an account of the experience gained in work among women workers at the 1st Maintenance Centre of the Peking Municipal Omnibus Corporation. In this centre, the Party's policies have been concretely implemented in the work among women workers, and this work has been carried out actively, carefully, practically, and regularly, resulting in the proper solution of women workers' actual problems in day-to-day life. Because of this, many of the women workers have been very

energetic and confident, laboured cheerfully and actively, and completed their tasks well.

From the experience of this maintenance centre, we have learned that in work among women workers, as in all other kinds of work, it is necessary to regard ideological education as supreme and, in conducting ideological education, to overcome generalisation and try to obtain marked results by analysing concrete conditions concretely and treating different kinds of cases differently.

Generally speaking, of the problems now present in the thoughts of women workers, some are due to failures to understand clearly the meaning of work, some to practical difficulties encountered in work and living, and some to the lack of experience in work or living. Some of these problems are rather general, some are confined to special groups (such as young women workers, old women workers, single women workers, and women workers with heavy household work to attend to, all of whom have special concrete problems of their own), and some are confined to a few individuals. The 1st Maintenance Centre has conducted ideological education in consideration of the problems in the thoughts of women workers and the fact that there are many young women workers. Report meetings have been organised, and at them talks were given on the situation, on production tasks, and on such problems as the correct approach to work and life. Forums of young women workers and old women workers have been organised, and at them the old women workers recalled their pasts and contrasted them with their present conditions by way of conducting class education. Intimate talks have regularly been held with individuals, and their families visited, and in this way concrete help was given to everybody according to the problems she had. The causes of ideological problems of individuals have been regularly and carefully analysed, and the leaders have made bosom friends with the masses. The backward have not been simply criticised as such, but have been given comradesly help, enlightenment, and persuasion. Some of the women workers were not skilled enough, and their service was not good enough. They were organised to observe standard performances and attend demonstrations and thus helped to become more skilled and complete their tasks properly. Because the leaders have discovered and solved problems promptly, have proceeded from reality, and have adopted different methods acceptable to different sections of the masses, the results of their work have been good, and the women workers have further increased their knowledge of the exceedingly favourable situation at present, of the importance of their work and of the ways of carrying out their work properly.

From the experience of the maintenance centre, we have also learned that while ideological education is being conducted, care must be shown and solutions found for actual difficulties in the day-to-day life of workers, and this must be done really as an important political task.

While they labour [as men workers do], women workers have physiological problems peculiar to themselves, and married women workers have to carry out a great deal of work in looking after children and keeping houses. The handling of such problems has a direct bearing on production. For this reason, it is necessary to show concern for usual difficulties in the day-to-day life of women workers and help them in solving such difficulties.

Many of their problems, such as the problem of leading a frugal life, the problem of sanitary napkins, the problem of rest, the problem of children, the problem of family ties, and the problem of household work, can be solved provided affectionate concern is shown for them, the resources of the masses themselves are depended on, and rational arrangements are made. The members of the committee of women workers have paid attention to teaching and arousing women workers to solve their own problems and to help one another in solving problems. Many problems have been solved with considerate help.

From the experience of the maintenance centre, we have also learned that in order to work well among women workers, it is necessary to implement the mass line and to pay attention to discovering, training, and depending on activists among the masses. Such activists are the best acquainted with the conditions of the masses. . . .

In the afternoon of October 26, we called to a conference cadres in charge of work among women workers from basic-level trade unions and various factories and mines in Peking municipality. We invited Wang Yü-fen, a member of the committee of women workers of the 1st Maintenance Centre of Peking Municipal Omnibus Corporation, to talk about how that maintenance centre carried out work among women workers. The conference hall was packed to capacity. They all listened very attentively. After the conference, their comments on the talk were favourable. They held that the work among women workers of the maintenance centre in question was carried out very carefully and realistically, and the experience of this maintenance centre deserved to be studied. Why is the work among women workers of this maintenance centre successful? How is it carried out?

Penetrating and careful ideological education

Proper political and ideological education is a prerequisite for success in any work. The members of the committee of women workers and activists of the maintenance centre, under the leadership of its Party general branch, regularly go into the midst of women workers, doing so in the interests of production. They make friends and chat with women workers, pay investigation visits to them, and thus try to get better acquainted with their family conditions, such as how many people there are in their family, how many children they have, where their husbands work, how their family budget stands, and how things are between a wife and her husband and her mother-in-law. On the basis of such information, when a concrete problem arises, it would not be difficult to find out its cause. They never simply and harshly criticise as "backward" women workers who have problems, but help them concretely in ways suited to the individual cases. Ideological education is conducted carefully and concretely. The measure adopted in each case is suited to the individual concerned, and no generalisation is practised.

Some of the women workers in the 1st Maintenance Centre are young girls. Fresh from school, they lack a correct approach toward work. Take 18-year-old Tung for instance. She thought that the bus conductor had to "put up with things" and "had no prospect," and sometimes was late for work or did not show up at all. She was given "X" every time her work was

measured against the "standard of service." In view of this, Li Wei-hsiu, a member of the committee of women workers, took the initiative in approaching her. She chatted with her and explained to her that the duties of the bus conductor were important. She let her attend forums to listen to old bus conductors' talks on the importance of the job. Also, she visited Tung's house and asked for her mother's cooperation in helping her. Deeply moved, her mother said: 'I used to think that as she was young and childish, it did not matter if she did not go to work on any particular day. Now that I know how important a bus conductor's job is, I promise to help in educating her.' As expected, Tung gradually improved. She was elected a red flag bearer in July and again in August this year. Some girls do not know how to arrange life. The newcomer Li, for instance, could not deny herself the pleasure of buying things. After buying a pair of sandals, she would buy a silk shirt and then a pair of woollen trousers. She ate several ice lollies and drank several bottles of soda water a day. After she had spent every cent she had, she would feel unhappy and lose her interest in work. In view of this, the chairman of the trade union of the bus fleet concerned and a member of the committee of women workers chatted with her and advised her to be more frugal. Li is no longer borrowing money everywhere. She saves some money every month and can concentrate on work. Some young girls loved pleasures. They went to far-away dance parties after work and did not return to their dormitories till late at night though they had to go to work at three or four in the following morning. As a result, they could not keep their spirits up during working time. Some girls had boy friends but did not know how to approach 'love'. They felt very unhappy. In view of this, the committee of women workers, together with the Young Communist League organisation, organised report meetings for the benefit of women workers. At these meetings, talks were given on the situation, on work, on the importance of work, and on the correct approach toward love and marriage. Also, the dormitories of women workers were made bases of ideological education. There, many kinds of cultural and recreational activities were organised, such as newspaper reading, the study of Chairman Mao's works, singing, the playing of harmonicas, and weekend evening parties. In this way, women workers were led to take part in activities conducive to physical and mental health, and their spiritual life was enriched. Such rich and colourful life was very satisfactory and meaningful to the girls, who said, "The Party and the trade union show real care for us. We must work well."

Properly helping women workers to solve problems in day-to-day life

Most of the women workers in the 1st Maintenance Centre are married and have children. They have work to do at home. Some of them did not make proper arrangements for their household work and children. This affected their work and studies. The committee of women workers shows deep concern for problems and difficulties in the day-to-day life of women workers and always tries to help them properly to solve such problems. The problem of children is one which married women workers want badly to solve. There are 347 married women workers in the centre, and therefore many children to be taken care of. The nurseries and nursing rooms sponsored by the centre

could at first accommodate only 80 children. What should be done to solve the problem? The members of the committee of women workers adopted many practical measures. They brought out the latent potentials of the nurseries sponsored by the centre so that they might accommodate as many more children as possible. They helped women workers to find families which would take care of their children for them. They made arrangement with street nurseries for the care of the children of women workers. Some women workers were not on good terms with their mothers-in-law, and so the latter did not want to take care of their children for them. Help was given to these women workers in improving their relations with their mothers-in-law and in persuading the latter to take care of their children for them. In some exceptional cases, the problem of children could not be solved in any of the above ways, and it was recommended that the administration transfer the women workers concerned to work in the early shift (from 5 to 8 in morning and 5 to 8 in the evening), so that they might both go to work on time and have time for looking after their children. Because many kinds of methods were employed, the problem of care was solved in the cases of 37 children in the first half of this year. The mothers of these children were thus enabled to devote themselves to work.

As a rule, women workers who have many children also have heavier burdens of household chores. At the change of seasons, they often have to apply for leaves of absence during which they can make and mend clothes for their children. Whenever household chores become heavy, the members of the committee of women workers and activists will pay extensive investigation visits to the houses of women workers who have many children, and, in the spirit of class friendship, set young women workers to help them in making, mending, and washing clothes, cleansing houses, and repairing windows, so as to lighten their burdens of household chores. It is with the help of others that some women workers with many children like Shao Ping-shu have maintained full attendance at work throughout the year.

Some women workers do not work energetically because there is disharmony in their families or because they are on bad terms with their husbands. In such cases, the members of the committee of women workers and activists will help the women workers concerned even more patiently and painstakingly, and they will carry out work not only among these women workers but also with their husbands and will go on working in this way till success. In the first half of this year, together with the members of the committee of living of the trade union, the activists of work on women workers paid a total of 523 visits to 480 families. From these visits, it was found that daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law were on bad terms in 26 families, wives and husbands were on bad terms in 16 families, and problems of marriage were present in 18 families. Help was given in different ways to these separate cases in accordance with their concrete conditions, and most of the problems were solved. For instance, Sun Shu-ying had been on bad terms with her husband for 12 years, but they are now on good terms with each other, thanks to the affectionate concern shown by activists of the trade union. Sun Shu-ying has also greatly improved her work. She said, "The problem of 12 years' standing has been solved. How can I help feeling happy? I will do immediately whatever the leadership may call upon me to do!" She

is now a red flag bearer in work and also an activist of work on women workers. She says that she will help others to solve problems in the same spirit in which the leadership has helped her. Some women workers had just been married and did not know how to cook or do other kinds of household jobs. This affected their day-to-day life and also their work. So some activists went to their homes to teach them how to cook rice and bake cakes. It is in the above manner that the women workers of the 1st Maintenance Centre are shown care in day-to-day life and given painstaking, penetrating, proper and concrete help in the solution of personal problems.

Attention to labour protection and disease prevention among women workers

Proper labour protection to be given women workers during the periods of menstruation, pregnancy, parturition, and lactation is an important matter in safeguarding their health and bringing out their enthusiasm in production. Apart from helping the administration in seriously enforcing regulations and systems for the protection of women workers, the committee of women workers also regularly get information and exercise timely care through activists among women workers. The activists among women workers of workshops and bus fleets are well informed of facts concerning the menstruation of women workers. Women workers who have been certified by medical departments as suffering from extraordinary disturbances during the menstruation period are given leaves of absence. When women workers do not have menstruation when due are urged to have medical examinations, and should it be found to be due to pregnancy, recommendations will be made to the administration concerning their care, or, should irregular menstruation be discovered, they will be urged to seek positive medical advice. To provide women workers with facilities in dealing with menses, "sanitary boxes" are set up at bus stations, containing sanitary napkins for use.

Subject to approval by the administration, women workers suffering from extraordinary disturbances during pregnancy may be transferred to lighter jobs before the proper time. Particular attention is paid to the protection of women workers who are pregnant for the first time. For instance, when Wen Ch'uan-niang, a woman worker of the maintenance workshop, was pregnant, an activist informed her of the things to which she should pay attention and also instructed the women workers around her to take care of her. Concerning pregnant bus conductors, not only are recommendations for their protection made to the administration, but the drivers of the same buses are required to take care of and help them and see to it that they do not do any heavy job.

After a woman worker has delivered her baby, an activist will, if so required by her, help her in leaving the maternity home, in getting her pay and parturition allowances, and, if she lacks milk, help her in placing orders for cow's milk. Because of such painstaking and good care, the woman worker will come to work zealously upon the expiry of her maternity leave . . .

Helping women workers in becoming more skilled

The committee of women workers of the 1st Maintenance Centre, while

paying attention to their thought and day-to-day life and to enabling them to play a positive role in production, also pays close attention to helping them to become more skilled and improving the quality of their service. The overwhelming majority of the women workers of the maintenance centre are bus conductors. "Job assisting teams" have been formed around advanced workers to instruct low-skilled women workers on buses, teaching them how to receive money, tear tickets, give back changes, show passengers to right places, help the young and the old, and maintain order on buses. When she was new to the job of a bus conductor, young woman worker Lo Yi-wei often made mistakes, for which she lost several dollars every month. She felt very sad. Nor could she discover the causes of her mistakes. So Li Wei-hsiu, a member of the committee of women workers, went onto her bus to help her. For the first section of the journey, Li did the job while Lo was watching. For the rest of the journey, Lo did the job while Li was observing her closely. After receiving such concrete help a few times, Lo greatly lessened the mistakes she made and became more self-confident. The committee of women workers also set women workers to observe and learn from one another and to unfold emulations in the course of which they compare themselves with, learn from, and try to catch up with the advanced and help the backward.

Because the committee of women workers regularly takes great care of their thoughts, life, and work and continuously tries to increase their enthusiasm in work, the women workers have become increasingly vigorous and their rate of attendance to work has risen steadily. The quality of the service of the women bus conductors has also improved greatly . . .

The work among women workers of the 1st Maintenance Centre has been carried out so carefully and solidly because some effort was exerted. Before 1958, this maintenance centre had only something over 30 women workers. In 1958 and afterward, following the big leap forward of production, public-transport developed. The number of vehicles increased, and tasks became heavier. In order to cope with the development of production, most of the men bus conductors became drivers after training. Their places were taken by women who had just walked out of their homes and by young girl students. Most of them were enthusiastic in work and eagerly wanted to do their work well. But there were certain problems on the part of some of them as to their work and their thought. Some lacked a correct approach to the job of a bus conductor and flexibility, and the quality of their service was not good. Some of them were tied down by household chores and children and often could not come to work. As the women bus conductors accounted for over 90 per cent of the total number of bus conductors of the 1st Maintenance Centre, the quality of their work had a close bearing on the work of the entire maintenance centre and on the interests of passengers. For this reason, the task of carrying out work among women workers properly became an urgent one for the leadership of the maintenance centre. The Party organisation of the maintenance centre promptly paid attention to this task. Toward the end of last year, the trade union of the maintenance centre appointed a full-time cadre in charge of work among women on the whole maintenance centre, and there were part-time women workers' committee members and women workers' team leaders in all workshops and all bus

fleets. Under the leadership of the trade union of the maintenance centre, a committee of work among women workers was set up. However, the work of the 1st Maintenance Centre was characterised by its being scattered and mobile.

How could one full-time cadre in charge of work among women workers and several part-time women workers' committee members carry out their work so painstakingly and penetratingly? The reason was that the leadership of the 1st Maintenance Centre paid close attention to the discovery and training of activists. Women workers who were advanced, experienced, and able to establish close contacts with the masses were selected and made activists of work among women workers. They were rallied together and depended on under the leadership of the committee of women workers, and the masses of the women workers were contacted in different ways. Attempts were made to learn about their work and thoughts. Concern was shown for their life. Their opinions and requirements were promptly reflected. Services were rendered to them enthusiastically. The leadership of the maintenance centre not only built a force of activists, but also paid close attention to training and improving them. The maintenance centre now has over 70 activists among women workers. Most of them were hard workers, including 14 annual advanced workers and nine standard bearers of bus fleets. The Party organisation and the trade union regularly organise activists to read newspapers and study current events and the work of trade unions and to learn the basic work methods of the Party and how to implement the mass line. Leadership comrades of the Party personally address and instruct them. Ideological education is conducted among them with regard to their own concrete problems. In this way, the activists have continuously heightened their ideological consciousness and consolidated their enthusiasm in work, have improved their work methods, gone into the midst of the masses, and served the masses enthusiastically. Helped by members of the committee of women workers and activists, many women workers were moved. Having heightened their consciousness, they volunteered to do some work for the trade union. In this way, the force of activists has been continuously expanded. Take for instance T'ao Ch'en-sheng, now a trade union team leader. After summer vacation this year, all her children had to go to school. She could not pay their school fees all at once. So she felt worried. But she did not want to apply for subsidies. While she was in this difficulty, a member of the committee of women workers called at her home. She discovered T'ao's problem and immediately reported it to the trade unions, which thereupon granted subsidies to T'ao. Women workers Yen Shou-ti and Wang Ya-hen did not have anybody to look after their children for them at home. Some activists called at their homes and at once helped them to solve their problem. From what had been done for them, T'ao Ch'en-sheng, Yen Shou-ti, and Wang Ya-hen learned how important the work of showing concern for people was. So they voluntarily and actively took part in the work of visiting homes and showing affectionate concern for people. They have now all become activists of work among women workers. A number of activists have thus been rallied around the committee of women workers, and this has enabled work among women workers to proceed smoothly.

SECTION V

THE CONTINUING REVOLUTION

'If we ask whether the Women's Liberation Movement in China has come to its end, the answer is definitely no

Soong Ching-ling, Feb. 11, 1972.

The women's movement in China is a continuing movement. It is recognised that women have not yet reached full equality or developed their full potential. The present campaigns reflect the acknowledged shortcomings in the work of the women's movement and indeed of the Communist Party and society as a whole: equal pay for equal work, full representation in leadership groups and the breaking down of traditional role differentiation in the home and at work. (See reading No. 30)* In spite of these shortcomings the image and expectations of women have altered beyond all recognition, Women in China today are deeply committed to their present opportunities the scope of which was unimaginable in the past. It is against the background of both the former suffering and bitterness of their own lives and the past weakness and humiliation of China that women there understand their own liberation. They perceive their own liberation to be closely linked to the future of the revolution in their country.

The Communist Party and the women's movement have played a mutually supportive role in creating the foundations of the emancipation of women. What is particularly impressive about a survey of the history of the women's movement in the People's Republic of China is the constant recognition of the women's problem at all government levels and the continuous summing up, analyses and setting forth of new programmes of work within the women's movement. In the last resort however the struggle within individual families, villages and factories could only be carried out by the women themselves. In this respect the separate establishment and the work methods of the organised women's movement has played a key role and been instrumental in raising the self-confidence and identity of individual women. In China today the strength and confidence of women is striking.

This selection of readings does not pretend to provide a definitive summary or view of the women's movement in China in 1973, rather it reveals both the depth and tenacity of the economic, social and ideological foundation of women's oppression in a society and the sensitivity which surrounds such a struggle. At the same time these readings also dwell on the

* In addition, the present movement to criticise Confucius and Lin Piao has far-reaching consequences for the position of women. The influence of the Confucian ideology which belittled their position and abilities by asserting the superiority of men and the inferiority of women has come under wide attack. For articles on this subject, written by leading members of the women's movement and published after this booklet went to press, see *Peking Review*, March and April 1974 (Nos. 10, 13, 14).

growing points for the future illustrating what can be achieved when social attitudes and institutions begin to be consciously redefined. The beginning but not the end. As Soong Ching-ling noted last year:

The Women's Liberation Movement will be ended when and only when . . . the process of the social transformation of society as a whole is completed . . .*

30. The Movement to Criticise Lin Piao and Confucius

At the outset of the campaign to criticise Lin Piao and Confucius, Lin Piao was accused of slandering women by using such phrases as 'women are backward in thought and ideas', 'a woman cannot be expected to have a bright future', 'a woman's future is determined by her husband' and 'women think only about how to get oil, salt, vinegar, soy sauce and firewood'. His recommendation to restore 'the rites and feudal propriety' was seen as an attempt to once more bind women with the reactionary feudal ethics founded by Confucius, but above all he was accused of advocating that the concept of male supremacy 'still preserved a logic of its own'. This was why the criticism of Lin Piao was linked to the criticism of Confucius: each was regarded as a member of the ruling classes who utilised the ideas of male supremacy to bolster the rule of the exploiting classes of their own time, be it of the slave owners or the capitalists. The campaign sparked off a movement among women to 'study and criticise' the origins and development of the ideology of male supremacy and to analyse their own history of oppression. In order to abolish the idea that male superiority and female inferiority really was the will of Heaven or an immutable social principle dating back to time immemorial, the campaign drew attention to the social origins and class foundations of the concept of male supremacy. The identification and widespread knowledge of the social origins of the idea of male supremacy allowed for the possibility of change and acknowledged the inherent incompatibility of the idea of male supremacy with the new principles of socialist development. Only the demise of the ideas themselves ensured their disappearance as a resource available for manipulation. (See Readings 1 and 2.)

Throughout the campaign the government seems to have been particularly anxious that women should collectively raise their theoretical understanding of the new ideology underlying socialist development, not just to enable them to consciously counter the influence of the old ideology of male supremacy, but to ensure that they were neither left out of the political movement through lack of interest or knowledge nor allowed men to ever again monopolise and manipulate ideological resources to the disadvantage of women. Women were reminded that the lessons to be drawn from their own history were that women's emancipation was impossible without the victory of the proletarian revolution and the emancipation of women could not be safeguarded without the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was necessary therefore that women both mastered the theoretical basis of the latter and understood the forces which threatened the continued existence of the proletarian revolution. Many groups, some combining peasants, workers and women students, were formed to raise the understanding of women of Marxist theory by studying the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung. In the campaign the aims and results of 'study and criticism' were to be constantly linked to the solution of current problems which were already the subjects of debate and discussion before the onset of the movement to criticise Lin Piao and Confucius. These problems had included the insufficient representation of women in political and leadership positions, the problem of equal pay for women in rural areas, the persistence of traditional customs in courtship and marriage and the division of labour

* See *Peking Review*, March 31, 1973.

within the household. For each of these continuing problems, men and women's groups were reported in the media as coming to a new awareness of an old problem through the recognition of the persistence of the old thought patterns originating in the concept of male supremacy. (See Reading 3.) The emphasis on the ideological emancipation of women was not a new element introduced during the current campaign. Indeed the problems have been stated time and again, but what is significant in this campaign is that it is the most analytical and concentrated attempt to integrate the emancipation of women into a nationwide effort to examine the history of women and change the self-image and expectations of both men and women.

'Women can Prop up "Half of Heaven" — A Criticism of the Reactionary Thinking of Confucius and Mencius that Discriminated against Women', by the 'Red Detachment of Women Squad' of Kuchiningjulien Plant, Inner Mongolia, *Guangming Ribao* (Guangming Daily), Peking Jan. 14, 1974.

Confucius, who for the past 2,000 and more years had been played up by reactionary ruling classes as a 'sage', was a spokesman for the slave-owning class on the decline. For the sake of upholding the reactionary rule of the slave-owning class, he concocted a complete set of 'teachings of propriety' and 'principles' which discriminated against women. He uttered such nonsense as: 'Of all people girls and servants are the most difficult to behave to.' He regarded women and slaves as the lowest of the 'mean people'. This reactionary fallacy was all along used by reactionaries as the spiritual shackle for enslaving our working women . . .

Why did Confucius and Mencius, these political representatives of the slave-owning aristocracy, so discriminate against and cruelly oppress the working women? This was determined by their reactionary class stand and class interests. Confucius lived in a period which witnessed the gradual decline of the system of slavery and the ascendancy of the newly emerging feudal forces. At that time, he stubbornly stood on the side of the slave-owners and firmly opposed the reforms of the newly emerging feudal system. The essence of his thinking was to uphold the rule of the slave-owning aristocrats and to prove by theory that the working people deserved only to be exploited, enslaved and ruled, which meant that they must unreservedly uphold caste system of the stern and severe slavery system. Confucius regarded the establishment of authority of the husband and the suppression of women as one of the foundations of the rule of slave-owners. Because of this, the cruel oppression of women was not due to the biological distinction between men and women, but rooted in the social system dominated by a small handful of the exploiting classes. The reactionary theories and ways of Confucius and Mencius which discriminated against women were precisely in the service of upholding such reactionary rule.

Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao clung desperately to this political corpse of Confucius and nonsensically said that the thinking of Confucius still possessed 'logical factors' even today. They also slandered our women as 'backward in thought and ideas' which was indeed reactionary in the extreme! By moving lock, stock and barrel the reactionary theories of Confucius and Mencius

which showed utter contempt for women, Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao had an ulterior object in view.

By propagating that women were born 'backward' and 'ignorant', they endeavoured to use idealist transcendentalism to hoodwink the broad masses of working women, oppose our studying of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung thought and oppose our taking part in the three great revolutionary movements so that they could achieve their sinister activities of smothering the socialist activism of the broad masses of working women and carry out their capitalist restoration more easily.

'On Confucian Persecution of Women in History', by Sun Lo-ying and Lu Li-fen, *Xuexi yu Pipan* (Study and Criticism), Jan. 10, 1975.

In Chinese history Confucianism had long murdered and persecuted the masses of the people, particularly women. At the present stage of deepening the criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius, further repudiating Confucian persecution of women is fraught with immense significance in eliminating the remaining pernicious influence of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius on the question of women and in breaking completely with old and traditional concepts.

Persecution of women and inequality between the sexes has been a social product since the advent of the system of private ownership and division of classes in the human society. In primitive society women and men alike took part in productive labour, sharing the fruits of labour and their status being one of equality. In matriarchal society in which clannish affairs were handled by women, 'the people were only aware of the mothers and not the fathers'. This indicated that women's social status was then very high. The myth about the legendary Nü-wa in high antiquity mending heaven with stones demonstrated popular respect for women. However, with further development of the productive forces and followed by the inception of the system of private ownership and the practice of monogamy, the slave society made its debut. In slave society the slaves must subordinate themselves completely and wholly to the slave owners.

As the philosophy of the slave-owning class during the transition of the slave system to the feudal system in China, Confucianism played the role of defending and upholding the collapsing system of slavery by setting forth ethical criteria for the persecution of women. These were later refined and perfected in feudal society by Confucianists in succeeding generations, becoming the spiritual yoke for vast numbers of women. History has proved that the degradation of women in China was in direct proportion to the exaltation of Confucianism.

As the venerable master of the Confucianists, Confucius was the arch culprit in the persecution of women. To restore the slave system of the Western Chou, he did his best to push the reactionary political line of 'restraining oneself and returning to propriety', spreading such fallacies as the superiority of men over women. During the Warring States period Mencius likewise dis-

tinguished men from women, declaring that 'man and woman should be set apart'. These fallacies had served as the reactionary theoretical basis for Confucianists in succeeding generations to persecute women. As the Warring States period was marked by social upheavals during which the newly rising landlord class was gradually supplanting the declining slave-owning class, Confucius' reactionary argument in favour of persecuting women was largely brushed aside by the public and its influence on society was indeed very limited. *Chou-li* [Chou ritual] contains accounts of meetings in the month following the advent of spring between unmarried men and women enamoured of each other . . .

Despite the introduction of the systematised feudal institution by the Han Confucianists, the latter were not popular at the time. The Han rulers from Kao-tsu to Emperor Wu all espoused the Legalist line and there was no strict distinction between men and women in respect of their social status. Women were permitted to marry again or married those of their choice . . .

Since Confucius was conferred the exalted title of 'King' during the T'ang period Confucianism had been elevated to frightening proportions. In the wake of the practice of feudal rulers to revere Confucius and applaud the Confucianists, persecution of women was intensified. Concubinage was tolerated while courtesans began to thrive. This severely undermined women both physically and mentally. To advocate 'masculine superiority and feminine inferiority', Confucianists talked about "having a son as fulfilment of a primary filial duty . . ."

In feudal society the estates of landlords, big and small, were in fact miniature imperial palaces, where the landowners regaled themselves on choice food served, both literally and figuratively, by the daughters of peasants. The farmstead of Liu Wentasi, a big landlord in Szechwan, is living proof. Compared with the Sung period, however, the women of the T'ang Dynasty did enjoy a certain amount of freedom.

The Sung Dynasty marked the period which saw the decline of China's feudal society. To maintain their tottering domination, the reactionary ruling classes did their best to elevate and strengthen the position of Confucianism and establish the teachings of the Ch'ang-Chu school of reason as the orthodox philosophy of the state. On the question of women, they frantically advocated the idea of chastity . . .

Sung philosophers like Ch'eng I and Chu Hsi did what they could to promote the prime importance of chastity. This exactly served as a pliant knife with which the reactionary rulers persecuted women without betraying their sinister intentions. As Lu Hsün rightly pointed out: 'Chastity was not advocated from the Han to the T'ang. It was brought up during the Sung Dynasty when public sentiment was waning and the empire on the verge of collapsing.' That is why the more the reactionary ruling classes are on their way down, the more they will trumpet the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius . . .

Just as invisible letters are stronger than visible ones, Confucianism is more spiritually than physically harmful to women. In feudal society quite a few women had been so mentally exposed to the pernicious influence of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius that they were often liable to fall prey to old conventions. Since the Sung and the Ming the reactionary ruling classes have erected a large number of arches and tablets throughout the country as

tribute to chastity, with imperial exhortations that those who passed the arches with the tablets should show token respect to women who had refrained from acts that were not sanctioned by marriage laws . . .

Inequality between the sexes was practised in feudal society: it is still practised in the capitalist society, where everything is identified as commodity. The bourgeoisie has torn off the veil of paternalism over the family relationship in feudal society and turned this relationship into something relating to nothing but money. Since the Chinese bourgeoisie has countless political and economic ties with the feudal forces, they have not and could not possibly oppose feudal culture. Bourgeois culture and ideology has long been contaminated by feudal toxin that it is powerless to really solve the question of inequality between the sexes. Real equality between the sexes can only be achieved through the proletarian revolution . . . repudiating the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and castigating old and traditional concepts on the question of women is a long-term fighting task.

'Pay attention to Developing Female Membership of the Party, by the Party Committee of the 2nd Wuchou Municipal Light and Chemical Industries Bureau, Kwangsi Hongqi (Red Flag), July 1, 1974.

In Order to train and develop female Party members, we lay the emphasis on grasping work in the following aspects:

Penetratingly criticise the feudal idea that 'men are superior to women'. In the past, due to the influence of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius disseminated by Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao, some comrades of our bureau party committee and party branches at the basic level more or less misunderstood the development of female party membership. Some people held that 'young women can only work for a time; when they become middle-aged, they have to take care of their children, and when they become old, they shed their burdens.' Therefore, women could not be compared with men, and it did not mean much by developing party membership among women. To overcome this wrong idea of looking down on women, we held a number of study classes attended by members of the Bureau Party committee, secretaries of the primary party branches and members thereof in charge of organisation, and conscientiously examined and summed up the work of developing female Party membership.

The leading women cadres of some factories (cooperatives) under our Bureau were formerly ordinary workers. Through strenuous study and tempering in struggle, they joined the Party and took a leading post in their plant, fulfilling with remarkable results the tasks assigned them by the Party. After learning these facts, everyone saw more clearly than ever that women comrades can do what men can and that the vicious slander Lin Piao and Confucius hurled against women was intended to serve their political line of restoring the old order and pulling back the wheel of history. In this way, the ideological and class roots of the contempt for women were dug out, and the ideological obstacles standing in the way of developing female Party membership were removed.

THE MARRIAGE LAW
OF THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Adopted by the Central People's Government Council at its 7th Meeting on April 13, 1950. Promulgated on May 1, 1950 by order of the Chairman of the Central People's Government on April 30, 1950

CHAPTER I
GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Article 1

The feudal marriage system based on arbitrary and compulsory arrangements and the supremacy of man over woman, and in disregard of the interests of the children, is abolished.

The New-Democratic marriage system, which is based on the free choice of partners, on monogamy, on equal rights for both sexes, and on the protection of the lawful interests of women and children, is put into effect.

Article 2

Bigamy, concubinage, child betrothal, interference in the re-marriage of widows, and the exaction of money or gifts in connection with marriages, are prohibited.

CHAPTER II
THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT

Article 3

Marriage is based upon the complete willingness of the two parties. Neither party shall use compulsion and no third party is allowed to interfere.

Article 4

A marriage can be contracted only after the man has reached 20 years of age and the woman 18 years of age.

Article 5

No man or woman is allowed to marry in any of the following instances:
a) Where the man and woman are lineal relatives by blood or where the man and woman are brother and sister born of the same parents or where the man and woman are half-brother and half-sister. The question of prohibiting marriage between collateral relatives by blood (up to the fifth degree of relationship) is determined by custom.

b) Where one party, because of certain physical defects, is sexually impotent.

c) Where one party is suffering from venereal disease, mental disorder, leprosy or any other disease which is regarded by medical science as rendering a person unfit for marriage.

Article 6

In order to contract a marriage, both the man and the woman should register in person with the people's government of the district or township in which they reside. If the proposed marriage is found to be in conformity with the provisions of this Law, the local people's government should, without delay, issue marriage certificates.

If the proposed marriage is not found to be in conformity with the provisions of this Law, registration should not be granted.

CHAPTER III
RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF HUSBAND
AND WIFE

Article 7

Husband and wife are companions living together and enjoy equal status in the home.

Article 8

Husband and wife are in duty bound to love, respect, assist and look after each other, to live in harmony, to engage in productive work, to care for their children and to strive jointly for the welfare of the family and for the building up of the new society.

Article 9

Both husband and wife have the right to free choice of occupation and free participation in work or in social activities.

Article 10

Husband and wife have equal rights in the possession and management of family property.

Article 11

Husband and wife have the right to use his or her own family name.

Article 12

Husband and wife have the right to inherit each other's property.

CHAPTER IV
RELATIONS BETWEEN PARENTS
AND CHILDREN

Article 13

Parents have the duty to rear and to educate their children; the children have the duty to support and to assist their parents. Neither the parents nor the children shall maltreat or desert one another.

The foregoing provision also applies to foster-parents and foster-children. Infanticide by drowning and similar criminal acts are strictly prohibited.

Article 14

Parents and children have the right to inherit one another's property.

Article 15

Children born out of wedlock enjoy the same rights as children born in lawful wedlock. No person is allowed to harm them or discriminate against them.

Where the paternity of a child born out of wedlock is legally established by the mother of the child or by other witnesses or material evidence, the identified father must bear the whole or part of the cost of maintenance and education of the child until the age of 18.

With the consent of the mother, the natural father may have custody of the child.

With regard to the maintenance of a child born out of wedlock, if its mother marries, the provisions of Article 22 apply.

Article 16

Neither husband nor wife may maltreat or discriminate against children born of a previous marriage by either party and in that party's custody.

CHAPTER V
DIVORCE

Article 17

Divorce is granted when husband and wife both desire it. In the event of either the husband or the wife alone insisting upon divorce, it may be granted only when mediation by the district people's government and the judicial organ has failed to bring about a reconciliation.

In cases where divorce is desired by both husband and wife, both parties should register with the district people's government in order to obtain divorce certificates. The district people's government, after establishing that divorce is desired by both parties and that appropriate measures have been taken for the care of children and property, should issue the divorce certificates without delay.

When one party insists on divorce, the district people's government may try to effect a reconciliation. If such mediation fails, it should, without delay, refer the case to the county or municipal people's court for decision. The district people's government should not attempt to prevent or to obstruct either party from appealing to the county or municipal people's court. In dealing with a divorce case, the county or municipal people's court should, in the first instance, try to bring about a reconciliation between the parties. In case such mediation fails, the court should render a decision without delay.

After divorce, if both husband and wife desire the resumption of marriage relations, they should apply to the district people's government for a registration of re-marriage. The district people's government should accept such a registration and issue certificates of re-marriage.

Article 18

The husband is not allowed to apply for a divorce when his wife is pregnant, and may apply for divorce only one year after the birth of the child. In the case of a woman applying for divorce, this restriction does not apply.

Article 19

In the case of a member of the revolutionary army on active service who maintains correspondence with his or her family, that army member's consent must be obtained before his or her spouse can apply for divorce.

Divorce may be granted to the spouse of a member of the revolutionary army who does not correspond with his or her family for a period of two years subsequent to the date of the promulgation of this Law. Divorce may also be granted to the spouse of a member of the revolutionary army, who had not maintained correspondence with his or her family for over two years prior to the promulgation of this Law, and who fails to correspond with his or her family for a further period of one year subsequent to the promulgation of the present Law.

CHAPTER VI
MAINTENANCE AND EDUCATION OF
CHILDREN AFTER DIVORCE

Article 20

The blood ties between parents and children are not ended by the divorce of the parents. No matter whether the father or the mother has the custody of the children, they remain the children of both parties.

After divorce, both parents continue to have the duty to support and educate their children.

After divorce, the guiding principle is to allow the mother to have the custody of a breast-fed infant. After the weaning of the child, if a dispute arises between the two parties over the guardianship and an agreement cannot be reached, the people's court should render a decision in accordance with the interests of the child.

Article 21

If, after divorce, the mother is given custody of a child, the father is responsible for the whole or part of the necessary cost of the maintenance and education of the child. Both parties should reach an agreement regarding the amount and duration of such maintenance and education. Lacking such an agreement, the people's court should render a decision.

Payment may be made in cash, in kind or by tilling land allocated to the child.

An agreement reached between parents or a decision rendered by the people's court in connection with the maintenance and education of a child does not obstruct the child from requesting either parent to increase the amount decided upon by agreement or by judicial decision.

Article 22

In the case where a divorced woman re-marries and her husband is willing to pay the whole or part of the cost of maintaining and educating the child or children by her former husband, the father of the child or children is entitled to have such cost of maintenance and education reduced or to be exempted from bearing such cost in accordance with the circumstances.

CHAPTER VII PROPERTY AND MAINTENANCE AFTER DIVORCE

Article 23

In case of divorce, the wife retains such property as belonged to her prior to her marriage. The disposal of other family property is subject to agreement between the two parties. In cases where agreement cannot be reached, the people's court should render a decision after taking into consideration the actual state of the family property, the interests of the wife and the child or children, and the principle of benefiting the development of production.

In cases where the property allocated to the wife and her child or children is sufficient for the maintenance and education of the child or children, the husband may be exempted from bearing further maintenance and education costs.

Article 24

In case of divorce, debts incurred jointly by husband and wife during the period of their married life should be paid out of the property jointly acquired by them during this period. In cases where no such property has been acquired or in cases where such property is insufficient to pay off such debts, the husband is held responsible for paying them. Debts incurred separately by the husband or wife should be paid off by the party responsible.

Article 25

After divorce, if one party has not re-married and has maintenance difficulties, the other party should render assistance. Both parties should work out an agreement with regard to the method and duration of such assistance, in case an agreement cannot be reached, the people's court should render a decision.

CHAPTER VIII

BY-LAWS

Article 26

Persons violating this Law will be punished in accordance with law. In cases where interference with the freedom of marriage has caused death or injury to one or both parties, persons guilty of such interference will bear responsibility for the crime before the law.

Article 27

This Law comes into force from the date of its promulgation.

In regions inhabited by minority nationalities in compact communities, the people's government (or the Military and Administrative Committee) of the Greater Administrative Area or the provincial people's government may enact certain modifications or supplementary articles in conformity with the actual conditions prevailing among minority nationalities in regard to marriage. But such measures must be submitted to the Government Administration Council for ratification before enforcement.

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