

# WOMEN IN CHINA TODAY

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# LOVE

Sung Chih-ti

"How is it that you have got so much strength?" I asked Sun Shu-chun.

"Because the people in my charge are all fighters and heroes," she replied, "they give me courage whenever I am with them."

Sun Shu-chun was an ordinary girl student. She voluntarily enlisted in Shanghai in the Chinese People's Volunteers and worked as a nurse. In school, she was delicate and timid and disliked anything dirty. She did not look her age, was physically immature and it seemed as if she would never quite grow up. She often got frightened and was upset at every trifle.

When the Chinese People's Volunteers entered Korea, they very soon came to grips with the enemy. The Health Service Station, to which Sun Shu-chun was attached, received an order to remove and take in 500 wounded soldiers. Conditions were extremely difficult. It was during the cold season and there were heavy snowstorms. Nearly all the houses in the war-area had been burned down by the enemy. It was only with great difficulty that they found a room to operate in, with just its four bare walls remaining intact. Their superiors stressed that four things should be warm: rooms, beds, food and stretchers; and ordered them to take every possible measure to reduce the suffering of the wounded. Sun Shu-chun, together with her comrades, resolutely rose to the occasion and worked day and night repairing houses, digging caves, collecting hay and gathering firewood. The work was not quite finished yet when the wounded soldiers were brought in from the battlefield.

The head of the nursing-squad said to her: "We nurses must stand by the wounded soldiers through life and death." "Dear

head-nurse," she replied, "as far as that goes, you may rely on me!" Actually, she did not seem to be able to take full responsibility in the beginning. She was a new comer, not very strong, rather timid and not yet seasoned by the hard conditions of war. While on the road, the head-nurse often had to help her with many things, carrying her knapsack and chatting with her. The head-nurse also had to encourage her with words, to spur her on when she was likely to fall behind when climbing mountains. Her feet often got blistered with too much walking, so the head-nurse had to prick the blisters for her. Snowstorms often cut off their breath. The head-nurse then cheered her up by telling her about the heroic deeds of our fighters. In the end, Sun Shu-chun confessed, "Dear head-nurse, working here I feel quite happy, though I suffer physically."

At first, she felt shaky when washing blood-stained clothes for the wounded soldiers. But reminding herself that this was the blood of heroes, she pulled herself together and didn't feel queer anymore. In constant contact with the wounded soldiers, she came to

understand from concrete examples what was meant by the "hard bones" of the proletarians.

While still on their way to the place whereto wounded soldiers were to be removed, the head of the nursing-squad took pains to get her mentally well prepared and explained to her, "When the soldiers have been wounded, they are not likely to be in a good mood. In some cases, you may find that they lose their temper and grumble at the smallest trifle. So, we nurses must always be considerate and understanding and serve them whole-heartedly. Remember, it is not for their own sake that they have been wounded."

In spite of her long experiences in war, the head-nurse made a mistake this time. The fact is that the Chinese People's Volunteers on the Korean front never lose their temper but are always considerate towards the nurses. Once, as Sun Shu-chun was drowsily nodding, a badly wounded soldier, fearing to disturb her, stealthily crawled out of the ward to go to toilet. When she discovered this, she was so ashamed of herself that she nearly burst out crying. But the wounded soldier consoled her, "Nurse, you

are too tired. You had better go to sleep for a while. I'll manage."

Nearly all the seriously wounded soldiers refused to be removed to the rear. When they had to be removed, it was done only after strong persuasion or even by force. They often clung to the stretchers and cried: "Nurse, I'll be all right very soon. I can still carry on." "How could I ever face people again if I went back in this way?" "What a humiliating sight for the Korean people to see me in such a sorry plight?"

To get enough food for the wounded soldiers, the cooks had to exercise their wits, experimenting successfully under the most difficult supplying-conditions. Once, Sun Shu-chun also went to hunt for fresh food stuff. On her way back, she saw four American planes of the mustang type coming from the opposite direction. Before she had time to get herself well-sheltered, incendiary bombs were dropped down on a small village nearby, setting it on fire. Then the enemy planes started strafing, making a terrific noise that sounded as if everything was being rent to pieces. Sun Shu-chun knew that this vil-

lage harboured some badly wounded soldiers, as she had noticed them, on passing through the village the night before. In a moment, she forgot the enemy planes, she forgot herself. Only one thought flashed through her mind, "I must save them!"

Immediately she rushed out of her shelter and fearlessly plunged into a burning house. The roof was already on fire and flames were spreading towards the doorway. The room was full of smoke. She groped with her hand and found one of the wounded soldiers. She cried to him, "Quick, hold on to me!" But he pushed her aside and said, "First take my squad-leader!"

She carried away four men one after the other, carrying them across a brook and putting them down in a valley. When she wanted to start on the fifth man, her strength failed her. She saw stars and a white froth formed on her mouth. She could neither move her legs nor stand up straight; she went limp all over. The wounded soldier on her back called to her, "Careful!" Just as he was uttering his warning, she fainted and fell into a ditch filled with ice and snow.

"What now?" she pondered anxiously when she had recovered herself. Suddenly she heard the maddening sound of the strafing of the enemy's machine-guns. She had not noticed this when she was concentrated on carrying the wounded soldiers out of the sea of flames. Once she had stopped, the sound rang clear in her ears.

"Shame on me if I let the people's heroes be sacrificed uselessly. That would mean a great loss to the people!" Suddenly she was filled with a strong determination. The strafing sound of the enemy's guns made her scramble to her feet.

Then she carried away three more wounded men. By this time, other comrades had reached the place. More than 40 wounded soldiers were rescued in this way.

After the incident, Sun Shu-chun confessed that she could not understand herself why she had had so much strength at the time, or why she had been so brave.

But in fact, she understood it perfectly well. She understood what was worth loving and how to love.

When Sun Shu-chun is now no longer the delicate and timid girl student she used to be. The war for a just cause has given her the incomparable courage and strength of a hero. The war for a just cause turns an ordinary person into a hero, while the war for an unjust cause can only bring disaster to the American aggressors.

## I Will Tread in the Footsteps of Heroes

### Chih I

*Woman Member of One of the Cultural Troupes  
in the Chinese People's Volunteers*

Once, I read "The Heroic Daughters of Our Motherland," and it moved me so much that from that moment I knew I was going to take the heroic deeds of these dauntless sisters as a glorious example.

Now I am fighting shoulder to shoulder with them at the front in Korea. When I crossed the Yalu River, my heart leapt for joy as I realised that from now on my name would be linked with the fame of the Chinese People's Volunteers and that I would have my share in the struggle to defend our



motherland and safeguard world peace. I, too, would be known to my compatriots as one of "The Most Beloved Ones\*." I knew what I had to do to prove myself worthy of the high hopes staked on me by my own people, by the Korean people and by all the peace-loving people of the world.

On arriving in Korea, I was put in one of the cultural troupes. Our job is to go right down to the front line and give performances for our troops. There are altogether thirteen of us in this cultural troupe. We have to do everything, from collecting materials, writing songs and plays to the actual performances. Everybody has to be a jack-of-all-trades. Once you lay down your pen, you will be asked to take up the fiddle; or if the occasion requires it, you may have to turn from fiddle-playing to singing. At first this was pretty difficult for us. But there are no difficulties which we can't overcome. By our united efforts, we have succeeded in carrying out the task entrusted to us.

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\* A title of honour given to the Chinese People's Volunteers.

If you give performances in the front line, it is impossible to concentrate the audience in one place. So we have to tour from one unit to the other, and very often, the same program had to be repeated more than 120 times to the different units of one army division. We used to cross the enemy-lines and climb one hill after another to bring some recreation and art to every fighter at the front. The soldiers enjoy our performances immensely and always give us a hearty welcome. Once the team arrives at a unit, the news spreads at once through the ranks and they start to boil water for tea and put up slogans in the communication trenches to welcome us. They call out happily: "Here's our cultural troupe again!"

When we have gone the whole round of performances, we have to prepare immediately for our next program. Once, I had to do two numbers in the same program, a drum-song† and a solo. I had never sung a drum-song before and was quite a stranger to it at

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† A popular form of dramatic song accompanied by the drum and the Chinese violin.

the time. Only three days were available for practice and rehearsal. I was determined to master it within that period.

I took the music notes, practiced all day long and wouldn't go to bed till midnight. I was so obsessed by the song that I could not sleep even when I lay in bed. That was the first night, I lay awake till three o'clock in the morning. It was pitchdark outside and the cold wind of North Korea was roaring. "No use trying to go to sleep now," I said to myself, "better get up and practice the song. I must carry out my task ahead of time."

All the comrades in the dug-out were sound asleep and snoring. I should not disturb them. So I went to another dug-out which was so low that I could hardly hold up my head even when sitting down. I lit a small oil-lamp, cut off the burnt wick of the previous night, and covered the opening of the dug-out with some grass. The night wind came in through the chinks. It cut me in the face, but braced up my spirit. I opened the song book and began to practice by the light of the lamp. The wind howled among



Woman member of the cultural troupe of the Chinese People's Volunteers performing for the fighters in an air-raid shelter near the front.

the tree-tops and the sound of cannons and explosions could be heard from afar. Though quite alone in such a lonely place and with black night all around, I didn't have the slightest sense of fear. All my attention was concentrated on the song which I hadn't quite mastered yet.

Two days later, our program scheduled was completely put on in dug-outs, in trenches and indeed everywhere where our fighters were to be found. When I saw that the fighters enjoyed my drum-song tremendously and beat out the rhythm with their hands, I sang in even higher spirit. The performances over, they wrote us letters, expressing their determination to destroy the enemy and asking us to forward their determination to their commanders.

This is the very impetus which inspired us to incessantly overcome all the difficulties and to forge ahead.

