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*In Commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of Chairman Mao's
"Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art"*

ADHERENCE TO CHAIRMAN MAO'S REVOLUTIONARY LINE MEANS VICTORY

Editorial by "Renmin Ribao", "Hongqi" and
"Jiefangjun Bao"

Imbued with revolutionary enthusiasm, we today mark the 30th anniversary of our great leader Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art*.

This brilliant work came into being during the great polemics between the two lines 30 years ago. It makes a thorough ideological and political criticism of the "Left" and the Right opportunist lines in literature and art pushed by Wang Ming, Liu Shao-chi and other political swindlers like them. It inherits, defends and develops the Marxist world outlook and theory of literature and art, sums up in a systematic and penetrating way China's historical experience of the struggle between the two lines in the ideological field from the time of the "May 4th" Movement, and lays down for our Party a complete proletarian revolutionary line on literature and art. Being a fighting

programme for remoulding our Party, literature and art and world outlook in the image of the vanguard of the proletariat, the work played an important role in the rectification movement in Yenan and in Party building over the past three decades; it remains at present a powerful weapon for our Party in carrying out education in ideology and political line and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is a classic that all members of the Communist Party and the revolutionary masses should study.

“The correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything.” Since Chairman Mao gave the *Talks*, his proletarian revolutionary line on literature and art has gripped the masses on an ever wider scale. As a component part of the revolutionary movement led by the Chinese Communist Party, the revolutionary literary and art movement has kept advancing in the tempests of the revolutionary struggles to seize political power and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat by armed force. Profound changes have taken place, particularly since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, in the whole cultural field including literature and art. Revolutionary model theatrical works have been popularized on an unprecedented scale. A mass movement for creating works of socialist literature and art is surging. A number of good or fairly good works are emerging in various spheres of art — the theatre (including local operas), the cinema, music, dance, fine art, literature, etc. The ranks of proletarian revolutionary writers and artists are growing steadily and becoming stronger as they integrate with the workers, peasants and soldiers.

“In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines.” The struggle between political lines always expresses itself, first of all, in the ideological-cultural field. Chairman Mao has always paid great attention to class struggle and the struggle between the two lines in the ideological field. He initiated and led the criticism of the anti-Party adverse current represented by such articles as “Random Talks on Literature and Everyday Life”, “Wild Lily” and “Some Observations on March 8, International Women’s Day”¹ in the days of Yenan. After countrywide liberation he initiated and led such

campaigns as the criticism of the reactionary film *The Life of Wu Hsun*,² the criticism of the Hu Shih³ school of subjective idealism, the struggle against the Hu Feng counter-revolutionary clique⁴ and the struggle against the bourgeois Rightists,⁵ right up to the criticism of the reactionary historical play *Hai Jui Dismissed from Office*.⁶ All this helped deepen the revolution on the political front step by step. Toeing the line of their chieftains Wang Ming, Liu Shao-chi and other political swindlers, the counter-revolutionary Chou Yang and the other three of “the four villains”⁷ and their ilk, who had hidden themselves in the revolutionary camp, came out into the open one after another in the course of these struggles and made frenzied counter-attacks on Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line; they made use of the portion of power they had usurped to oppose and undermine Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line on literature and art and to exercise a bourgeois dictatorship over the proletariat and revolutionary literary and art workers. All these struggles without exception sharply reflect the contention between the two classes and the two lines with regard to political line in different historical periods. The soul-stirring struggles between the two lines over the past 30 years tell us that such struggles will continue for a long time and that we must remind ourselves of the question of political line every year, every month and every day and constantly engage in **“a struggle of proletarian ideology against non-proletarian ideology”** in order to consolidate and strengthen continuously the dictatorship of the proletariat in the superstructure including all fields of culture.

Adhering to Chairman Mao’s teaching **“Carry out education in ideology and political line”**, Communist Party members and the revolutionary masses in China, under the leadership of the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao, are deepening the criticism of and struggle against the counter-revolutionary revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi and other political swindlers. This struggle is a continuation of the struggle between the two lines within the Party over the past 30 years. Liu Shao-chi and other political swindlers as well as their agents such as Chou Yang and company are all counter-revolutionary double-dealers skilled at disguising themselves. They waved “red flags” to oppose the red flag, masquerading themselves as revolu-

tionaries while writing counter-revolutionary articles. The experience of the struggle over the past three decades has proved that, provided we conscientiously study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, seriously remould our world outlook and consciously follow the Party's correct line, we can gradually raise our ability to distinguish between genuine and sham Marxism and expose all pseudo-Marxist swindlers in their true colours. Marking the 30th anniversary of the *Talks* today, the whole Party, the whole army and the people of the whole country should first of all **"read and study seriously and have a good grasp of Marxism"** and, with the *Talks* as their weapon, deepen the criticism of all reactionary ideas spread by Liu Shao-chi and other political swindlers.

It is essential to uphold the materialist theory of reflection and oppose the idealist theory of apriorism. The *Talks* gives a penetrating exposition of the Marxist viewpoint that practice is primary and develops the Marxist theory of knowledge. Liu Shao-chi and other political swindlers denied that knowledge originates in practice and preached "super-genius" and "prophets", which are all anti-Marxist fallacies. In accordance with Chairman Mao's instructions, we must make a serious **"study of Marxism-Leninism and of society"**, go deep into reality to make investigations and study, and remould our subjective world in the course of changing the objective world. All revolutionary intellectuals and revolutionary writers and artists must for a long period of time unreservedly and whole-heartedly go among the workers, peasants and soldiers and, in the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment, remould their world outlook, move their feet over to the side of the millions of workers, peasants and soldiers, learn from and sum up their valuable experience, and work hard to portray them in the thick of their struggle.

It is essential to uphold the proletarian theory of classes and oppose the landlord and bourgeois theory of human nature. Liu Shao-chi and other political swindlers plucked the tattered theory of human nature from the ideological arsenal of the exploiting classes to attack the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the *Talks*, Chairman Mao already thoroughly refuted this reactionary theory in its various manifestations.

We should act as the *Talks* urges us to do, conscientiously study the Marxist theory of classes through practice in class struggle and the struggle between the two lines and keep firmly to the stand of the proletariat — for members of the Communist Party, this means keeping to Party spirit and Party policy. We should, in the dauntless revolutionary spirit of daring to go against the stream, fight resolutely to the end all overt and covert enemies and all erroneous ideas and actions which depart from Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. We should diligently and honestly serve the people of China and the world. **"This couplet from a poem by Lu Hsun should be our motto:**

*Fierce-browed, I coolly defy a thousand pointing fingers,
Head-bowed, like a willing ox I serve the children."*

It is essential to uphold the Marxist materialist conception of history and oppose the idealist conception of history of the exploiting classes. The issue of whether history is made by the masses or a few "heroes" reflects the struggle between the proletarian and bourgeois conceptions of history. The *Talks* gives a profound elucidation of the brilliant historical materialist conception that the people are **"the creators of the history of mankind"**. Liu Shao-chi and other political swindlers, however, reversed history and denied the great role of the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers in making history, so as to create counter-revolutionary public opinion as part of the preparations in their plot for the restoration of capitalism. As Chairman Mao teaches, we should seriously study and grasp the materialist conception of history and, in connection with the current class struggle and struggle between the two lines, distinguish the correct line from the wrong line and constantly heighten our consciousness of the struggle between the two lines.

Proletarian literature and art are **a component part of the whole revolutionary machine**. Party organizations at all levels should view the matter from the high plane of adherence to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and thereupon pay attention to and strengthen Party leadership over literary and art work, conscientiously sum up experience and quicken the pace of struggle-criticism-transformation on the literary

and art front. They must first of all grasp the line and orientation, persist in making literature and art serve the workers, peasants and soldiers and proletarian politics, defeat all kinds of interference and sabotage from Right or "Left", wage a constant, active ideological struggle and continue to eliminate the pernicious influence left over by Liu Shao-chi and other political swindlers on the ideological-cultural front. Second, they must see to it that Party policies are implemented, and must do a really good job of building up the ranks of writers and artists ideologically and organizationally, with particular attention on the ideological remoulding of writers and artists; they must conscientiously carry out the Party's policies on cadres and intellectuals, unite all who can be united, bring into full play the socialist initiative of both professional and amateur writers and artists in a correct way, steadily raise their consciousness of the struggle between the two lines and their ideological and vocational levels so as to enlarge and strengthen the ranks of proletarian writers and artists in the course of struggle. Third, they must pay attention to promoting literary and art creation and criticism, and firmly carry out the principles and policies laid down by Chairman Mao, such as **"Let a hundred flowers blossom; weed through the old to bring forth the new"**, **"Make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China"**, and **"With us . . . the raising of standards is based on popularization, while popularization is guided by the raising of standards"**. It is necessary to learn from the experience gained in creating the revolutionary model theatrical works, dare to do things and blaze new socialist trails, allow people to make mistakes and correct them, energetically promote the blossoming of socialist literature and art, and strive to keep abreast of the vigorous development of socialist revolution and socialist construction characteristic of the excellent current situation and meet the growing needs of the workers, peasants and soldiers.

History advances, the revolution deepens, and the movement to criticize revisionism and rectify style of work gives impetus to progress in all fields in China. Countless facts time and again confirm this irrefutable truth: When the Party's line is correct we have everything. So long as we adhere to Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line, we will continually win new victories. Let us hold the great red

banner of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought still higher, and **unite to win still greater victories** along the revolutionary course charted by Chairman Mao!

NOTES

¹"Random Talks on Literature and Everyday Life", an anti-Party article published by the renegade Chou Yang in July 1941, slandered and attacked the Yenan revolutionary base and advocated exposing the "seamy side" of life there. At Chou Yang's instigation, in 1942 Wang Shih-wei published "Wild Lily" and Ting Ling "Some Observations on March 8, International Women's Day". These articles painted a totally false dark picture of the liberated area, alleging that Yenan was "worse than the old society". Chairman Mao in his *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art* sharply criticized the reactionary stand and fallacies of Chou Yang and others.

²This film advocating bourgeois reformism and servility was made soon after the founding of the People's Republic of China. The chief character in the film Wu Hsun (1836-1896) lived during the great period of history towards the end of the Ching Dynasty when the Chinese people were rising to oppose imperialist aggression and feudal reaction, but he fervently advocated feudal culture, ignored the class struggle of the oppressed and capitulated to the feudal rulers. Yet this film portrays him as a "hero" and heaps praises upon him. In May 1951 a *Renmin Ribao* (*People's Daily*) editorial pointed out the reactionary character of the film and started a nationwide campaign to criticize it.

³Hu Shih (1891-1962) was a notorious scholar of the bourgeois-comprador class. His subjective idealism and bourgeois pragmatist method in his studies on philosophy, history and literature exercised a considerable influence on Chinese academic and cultural circles. The movement in 1954 and 1955 to criticize Hu Shih's school of subjective idealism raised the ideological level of Chinese intellectuals.

⁴Hu Feng was a renegade who sneaked into the ranks of the revolutionaries. After Liberation he rallied other Party renegades, Trotskyites, reactionary Kuomintang officers and imperialist agents in literary and art circles and organized an underground counter-revolutionary clique to carry out sectarian activities against the Communist Party and the socialist revolution. Hu Feng's clique opposed the leadership of the Party and the socialist system, attacking Chairman Mao's proletarian line on literature and art. In May and June 1955, *Renmin Ribao*

published three sets of material about this counter-revolutionary clique, thoroughly exposing and smashing its insidious plots.

⁵In 1957 certain bourgeois Rightists took advantage of the Party's rectification campaign to launch a frenzied attack on the Party, in the hope of usurping leadership and restoring capitalism. A *Renmin Ribao* editorial published that June called upon the people of China to hit back at these Rightists, and their schemes were frustrated.

⁶This reactionary drama written by Wu Han in 1961 used ancient history to slander modern times, distorting historical facts to depict the Ming Dynasty official Hai Jui, who represented the interests of the smaller landlords, as a champion of the peasants. Wu Han's aim in writing this opera was to defend those Rightist opportunists who had been dismissed from government posts and reverse the verdict on them. At the beginning of the cultural revolution this drama was criticized by people all over China.

⁷This refers to Chou Yang, Tien Han, Hsia Yen and Yang Han-sheng. Lu Hsun in 1936 in his "Reply to Hsu Mao-yung and on the Problem of the Anti-Japanese United Front" described these four men as villains who "were using the revolution for selfish ends" and "undermining the nation's revolutionary strength". After Liberation these four men usurped leading positions in literary and art circles and pushed a counter-revolutionary revisionist line on literature and art. During the cultural revolution their counter-revolutionary history was exposed and they were thoroughly discredited.

OUR ARTISTIC HERITAGE AND OUR NEW ART

Thirty years ago Chairman Mao in the *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art* clearly set forth the Marxist-Leninist principle of critical assimilation of our heritage of Chinese and foreign art and the dialectical relationship between critically inheriting and creating something new, thus enriching and developing the Marxist-Leninist theory of the literary and artistic heritage. To make a fresh study today of our great leader's teachings on these problems has a deep and topical significance for us; for this can help us artists to carry out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line on literature and art more consciously, to create better works of socialist art, and use our paint brushes to serve proletarian politics more effectively.

I

How should we consider our legacies of Chinese and foreign art? This has long been an acutely complex problem on the art front,

This article was written by members of the Chekiang Art College.

a problem over which the struggle between two lines has never ceased to rage.

In the *Talks* Chairman Mao pointed out: **“We must take over all the fine things in our literary and artistic heritage, critically assimilate whatever is beneficial, and use them as examples when we create works out of the literary and artistic raw materials in the life of the people of our own time and place.”** This is the attitude for us to adopt regarding past works of art, whether Chinese or foreign. In order to develop revolutionary art we must, on the basis of familiarizing ourselves with the life of the workers, peasants and soldiers, correctly assimilate all that is good in the artistic heritage to strengthen and enrich our own creations. We should oppose taking over everything from the past indiscriminately, as well as negating everything uncritically. Both approaches are extremely wrong and harmful. We must use dialectical materialism and historical materialism to critically assimilate the best in the artistic heritage. Only so can we differentiate between the fine art which belonged to the people and those rotten things which belonged to the exploiting classes, between the fine essence and the dross. Only so can we see that even the best works of the past have certain limitations. Only so can we recognize what is harmful to us today and what can be used as an example for our socialist art. Only so can we reject the dross and assimilate the fine essence. Revolutionary mass criticism is the pre-requisite for making use of old art forms and artistic techniques. Without criticism we cannot differentiate between the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the bad, cannot make our heritage serve us, and certainly cannot use old works as examples when we create new things. Only through correct criticism can we achieve these aims.

However, the renegade Liu Shao-chi with Chou Yang and his other followers peddled a counter-revolutionary revisionist line on literature and art to meet their counter-revolutionary political needs. They carried out frenzied distortions, both from the Right and from the “Left”, of this Marxist-Leninist principle of critical assimilation of the cultural heritage.

Chairman Mao teaches us, **“Make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China.”** But Liu and his gang for decades

interpreted this as wholesale and indiscriminate taking over of ancient and foreign art. They adopted the counter-revolutionary policy of glorifying foreign art and reviving feudal art. On the pretext of saving old culture from extinction, salvaging the best of traditional art or promoting cultural exchange, they idealized the corrupt ancient court art, decadent landlord-gentry schools of painting and reactionary modern-revisionist art. But they reserved their highest praise for western bourgeois art, regarding it as having attained the pinnacle of culture not to be surpassed. Thus they did all in their power to clear the way for feudal, bourgeois and revisionist art. They admired everything ancient and belittled present-day achievements, worshipped everything foreign and disparaged what was Chinese, attempting to put ancient and foreign art on a par with the art of socialist China. All these sinister designs were aimed at using feudal and bourgeois ideas to remould socialist art, to help bring about a complete capitalist restoration.

To destroy all the decadent art of feudalism and capitalism and to create and develop our new socialist art, we must thoroughly debunk the superstitious veneration for what is foreign or ancient when dealing with the artistic heritage. We must use historical materialism to make a proletarian and scientific reevaluation of this heritage.

Back in 1913 Lenin pointed out that in class society each national culture has two component parts: bourgeois culture and the elements of a democratic, socialist culture. The former is decadent but holds the ruling position, while the latter is progressive but subordinated. Works belonging to the former category abound in both Chinese and foreign artistic heritage. Such works glorify the former ruling classes, disseminate superstition, uphold Confucian and other feudal moral codes, propagate the “theory of human nature” of the landlord-bourgeois classes and so forth. We must thoroughly expose and completely reject such art.

Works belonging to the second category are relatively few, but in their limited way they depict the workaday life of the labouring masses and their struggles against the ruling classes. We should give such works their rightful position in history. However, even these

good works often have two sides. They expose the viciousness and despotism of the exploiters; but they also uphold the reactionary ideology and iniquitous social system of the ruling classes. In view of this complexity, we must use Marxism, Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought to make a serious, concrete study of specific works of art and to analyse and revalue them. For example, feudalism in China lasted for several thousand years, and there are things in feudal art which are anti-feudal; but this does not mean that in our socialist period we can make indiscriminate use of all such art. So on the one hand we must differentiate between all decadent feudal and bourgeois art and good people's art, works which contain certain democratic and revolutionary elements. On the other hand, we must recognize that works which played a progressive role in history nonetheless reflect, for instance, certain ideas of bourgeois democracy, individualism or bourgeois humanism which are fundamentally opposed to the proletarian ideology of the socialist period. We must also draw a clear dividing line between such works and our proletarian art, analysing their class nature. Both types of differentiation are matters of principle relating to the problem of who remoulds whom in the realm of art.

The great torrent of the cultural revolution has swept away the filth and scum in our art. The counter-revolutionary revisionist line in literature and art with its worship of foreign art and revival of ancient art advocated by Liu Shao-chi, Chou Yang and their gang has come under heavy fire. But the struggle between two lines is not yet over. The problem of how to critically assimilate all the beneficial elements in the Chinese and foreign artistic heritage is by no means completely solved. Some people even now are so enamoured of old art forms and techniques that in their creative work, consciously or unconsciously, they are still using old styles and sentiments to portray the worker-peasant-soldier heroes of our age. Such artists may talk about renouncing the old and creating new works, but in practice they are still conservatives who "dress up in feudal robes to play modern heroes". They cannot faithfully reflect the new life of our socialist society and may even distort the heroic images of the workers, peasants and soldiers. There are others who regard all old works of art as

pernicious and accuse anyone who tries to utilize the artistic heritage of "resuscitating the past". Some even consider that a clean sweep should be made of all traditional painting. These conservative ideas regarding the artistic heritage and the ultra-"Left" negation of all old art forms and techniques are both wrong. If we commit these mistakes, we are actually falling into the trap laid by Liu Shao-chi, Chou Yang and other swindlers.

These two manifestations — the worship of foreign art and revival of ancient art, and the nihilistic approach to the whole artistic heritage — look like two opposing viewpoints but actually both have their roots in the revisionist theory of art. Liu Shao-chi, Chou Yang and their like sometimes opposed making necessary reforms in old art forms and techniques on the grounds that "coercion is wrong". They went so far as to declare that reforms of this kind were impossible. At other times, they went completely counter to the law of historical development and proposed putting an end to painting in the traditional style, denying the possibility of using earlier art forms or types of painting to serve the people today. The aim of these different schemes was to oppose Chairman Mao's revolutionary line on literature and art. The ultra-"Left" opposition to reforming old art forms and techniques serves the same purpose as the Rightist insistence on allowing the whole heritage of ancient and foreign art to exist on a par with socialist art, which is fundamentally opposed to the policy of **"weeding through the old to bring forth the new"**.

Our aim in revaluing our heritage of Chinese and foreign art is to better serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, serve socialism, serve proletarian politics. If we forget this important premise, then there can be no true critical assimilation and we shall slip into the error of worshipping foreign art and reviving ancient art, or of taking a nihilistic attitude to the past. We must therefore study our inheritance from the critical Marxist-Leninist standpoint, using it as a textbook of class struggle, which helps us keep our feet planted in the present while learning to understand the past and looking to the future. We must correctly evaluate and critically assimilate all fine Chinese and foreign art legacies, reform and utilize old art forms, make what is ancient serve the needs of the present and make foreign things serve China, to

facilitate the development of our socialist art. This was aptly expressed by our great writer Lu Hsun when he said, "It is like eating the flesh of an ox or sheep: we discard the hoofs and hide and keep the essence, to nourish and develop new organisms."

II

Chairman Mao in the *Talks* has also told us that **"taking over legacies and using them as examples must never replace our own creative work; nothing can do that"**. Taking over art forms and using them as examples are only means to an end. Our goal is to boldly create new socialist art, to give more successful portrayals of the heroic images of our workers, peasants and soldiers.

Taking over past legacies and creating new art are a unity of opposites, but the latter is the principal aspect of this contradiction. Unless we take our stand on creating new art, we cannot develop socialist art and the proletariat cannot firmly occupy the art front, we shall stray down the old reformist path and feudal, bourgeois and revisionist art will make a come-back. The new age and new content demand appropriate new forms to express them. When the content changes, the form must change accordingly, until it conforms completely to the needs of the revolutionary content. A specific ideological content must be embodied in the best possible artistic form to produce a powerful educational impact. The traditional art forms and techniques were created through long centuries to suit the needs of the content of those times. Unless remoulded and transformed they are quite inadequate to portray the heroic images of modern workers, peasants and soldiers. For example, the fluid lines representing the flowing robes and broad sleeves of feudal nobles, the "wrinkled" brushwork depicting jagged rocks and withered branches in Chinese painting, the sombre colours conveying the atmosphere of bygone ages, or the fantastic compositions reflecting the spirit of capitalist society cannot be used to portray the heroic characters among our workers, peasants and soldiers today. It is clearly impossible for such techniques to reflect the mighty struggles of our present age. So new art can only be created through practice. In recent years

some good or comparatively good works of art have appeared. These new creations are based on the needs of our age. In order to portray the heroic images of workers, peasants and soldiers, they have adapted certain relatively healthy art forms and techniques from the heritage of Chinese and foreign art, and have concentrated and typified phenomena from our revolutionary life and struggles. These works are not restricted by foreign dogmas or by ancient feudal conventions. In this respect there are valuable lessons for us in the revolutionizing of Peking opera carried out by revolutionary artists under the guidance of Comrade Chiang Ching. It was by constant and painstaking revision that they created the revolutionary model operas.

Our proletarian innovations must be made from the stand of the proletariat and the masses. This is a question of principle and of orientation. Only by abiding by this principle and advancing in this direction can our socialist art enrich and perfect its form and content. Only so can it better serve the needs of the people and be welcomed by them. We reform artistic forms and methods in order to evolve our own Chinese art forms to portray heroic workers, peasants and soldiers. In art we should weed through the old to create the new, instead of creating works of the old type. This means portraying new subject-matter dealing with the life of the masses. We should have our own Chinese art forms which are popular with the people. In other words, we should reject old feudal and bourgeois things and create new socialist and communist art.

Chairman Mao has told us: **"Works of literature and art, as ideological forms, are products of the reflection in the human brain of the life of a given society. Revolutionary literature and art are the products of the reflection of the life of the people in the brains of revolutionary writers and artists."** The ardent life and struggle of the workers, peasants and soldiers are the inexhaustible and richest source of our socialist art, indeed the only source. If we cut ourselves off from this source, then innovations in art are just empty words. Only when revolutionary artists plunge into this rich source and use the proletarian world outlook and proletarian view of art to seriously observe, experience, study and analyse

the vivid life and struggles of the people and draw rich raw material from this can they evoke in their minds the heroic images of millions of workers, peasants and soldiers. Then they can condense and typify, generalize from and distil these phenomena, embellishing them to create revolutionary works of art. This is the only correct process for creating socialist art. However, charlatans such as Liu Shao-chi and Chou Yang insisted that feudal and bourgeois art were the source of socialist art, doing their utmost to deceive art workers and persuade them to shut themselves up in their studios, to burrow into heaps of old paintings, to copy from traditional art, to look for "sources" for their art in art albums, pictorials or photographs. They tried to prevent artists from going among the workers, peasants and soldiers and from taking part in the three great revolutionary movements: the class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment. If art workers take their advice, they will move further and further from the living fount of our socialist reality until they finally lose their creative spirit and turn revisionist.

The only source of artistic creation is the life of the people. However good certain art legacies may be, they can only be "streams" and not the "source" for they were created by artists of the past from raw materials drawn from the people's life at a specific time and in a specific place. Again, artistic forms and techniques are not produced from such "streams" but from the life of society, from the needs of class struggle, the better to express the central theme of certain works. In the last thirty years and especially since the cultural revolution, some good and comparatively good works of art have successfully depicted the heroic images of workers, peasants and soldiers, have successfully conveyed the thoughts and feelings of the masses, have successfully reflected the revolutionary struggles of this great age. These works with their militant style and rich flavour of life are created not because revolutionary art workers have any unique "genius" or "inspiration" or possess some special "technique", nor because they have assembled a hotchpotch of things from the past or copied these things, but because they derive their art from real life, have gone deep into the lives of the people and acquired profound understanding. So in dealing with the problem of the relationship

between the "source" and the "streams", we must oppose giving the same priority or greater importance to the "streams", or even considering them as the "source".

Some comrades pay little attention to the "source" and are interested only in the "streams" because they have been poisoned by Liu Shao-chi's counter-revolutionary revisionist line on literature and art and lack a correct understanding of Chairman Mao's directives: **"Make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China"** and **"Let a hundred flowers blossom; weed through the old to bring forth the new."** This is fundamentally a problem of lacking the proletarian world outlook. We believe in the unity of the world outlook and methodology. We consider that an artist's whole practice is closely linked up with his standpoint and world outlook. If we want to weed through the old to bring forth the new in art, we must first weed through the old to bring forth the new in our ideology. If we do not discard the old ideas derived from feudal, bourgeois or revisionist art, then new proletarian concepts will be unable to enter our minds, and we shall be unable to create works with a new artistic form and new content. In order to solve this problem, we must make a serious study of the Marxist-Leninist classics and the works of Chairman Mao. We must go whole-heartedly, unconditionally and for long periods to the midst of the workers, peasants and soldiers, to the midst of the three revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment, so as to integrate ourselves with the workers, peasants and soldiers, transform our old ideology and step by step establish a proletarian world outlook and proletarian outlook on art.

Chairman Mao has pointed out: **"What we demand is the unity of politics and art, the unity of content and form, the unity of revolutionary political content and the highest possible perfection of artistic form."** Genuine proletarian art workers must hold to this lofty ideal and have the courage to create new things, to produce more fine revolutionary works so that our proletarian art, like a treasure-house of precious gems, will shine with ever greater splendour.

A General Review of New Art Works

To commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*, the National Fine Arts Exhibition opened on May 23 in Peking. This exhibition presents more than three hundred works of art including paintings in the traditional style, oil-paintings, woodcuts, serial pictures, New-Year pictures, posters, scissor-cuts and paintings in *gouache*.

The exhibits dealing with Chairman Mao's great revolutionary practice are superior artistically to previous works on this theme, successfully expressing the feelings of the worker-peasant-soldier masses and the love of people of all nationalities in China for our great leader.

Chairman Mao Is with Us, an oil-painting from Shensi, depicts Chairman Mao in a loess cave building in Yen-an chatting with poor peasants and local cadres, and advising them to get organized in order to boost production to support the war against Japan and improve their own living conditions. The noble image of our leader here makes us realize his unremitting concern for the people and his close unity with

them. The red charcoal flames and bright sunlight symbolize the warmth which he generates in their hearts. Chairman Mao has passed a cigarette to an old peasant, who treasures it too much to smoke it — a touch revealing the masses' veneration for our great leader.

Another oil-painting *Wall of Iron* reflects a different facet of Chairman Mao's close relationship with the masses. It presents a battlefield in northern Shensi where the Chairman meets some peasants supporting the front during the War of Liberation (1946-1949). The long line of these peasants winding through the hills shows vividly that the masses are the main force in the revolutionary war and a true wall of iron. This moving scene brings home to us Chairman Mao's deep faith in and reliance on the people, who in turn love and support him with all their hearts.

Another important section of this exhibition projects the heroic images of workers, peasants and soldiers. These spirited works catch the eye as soon as one enters the main exhibition hall. Among these new heroes of our age are steel workers, miners and ship-builders creating wealth for the people on the industrial front; poor and lower-middle peasants inspired by Tachai to transform their mountains and streams by relying on their own efforts under the most adverse conditions; armymen and people's militia training hard, ready to combat any enemy; government cadres seriously studying Marxist classics and working selflessly to serve the people; members of national minorities going all out in socialist construction; and educated young people who have gone to work in border regions and villages and are now maturing all over our vast land. These paintings reveal the revolutionary aspirations and determination of the Chinese working people to overcome difficulties of every kind by depicting the characters in fiery revolutionary struggles.

For example, the oil-painting *Battling for Copper*, designed collectively by some Liaoning artists, depicts the rugged cliffs surrounding a copper mine to bring out the miners' resolute character. As an experienced old miner coolly and accurately directs the work, from the gleam in his eyes, his broad chest and confident brow we sense his confidence in victory; while the young worker at his side is handl-

ing the heavy drill like a young tiger charging with irresistible strength. These two men, one old and one young, make a strong impression, for they form one integrated whole like splendid bronze statuary.

Other works conjure up the spirit of their subjects through specific acts, gestures and episodes from daily life. An outstanding example of this is a painting in the traditional style by Kang Tso-tien, *The Red Sun Warms Generation After Generation*. Here the artist has successfully created a truthful and typical image of an old peasant woman who is telling school-children about her past sufferings to help them appreciate their present happiness and give them a lesson in class education. The old woman is fingering the sleeves of her new padded jacket. This gesture so typical of country women expresses her feelings in this specific situation. The broken old basket holding a gourd-dipper in front of her bears mute witness to the days when she had to go begging. But the artist does not make her dwell on her former sufferings. Instead, through the joy on her face and her neat new clothes he conveys the goodness of life in the new society. At the same time the words which she had written on the blackboard — “Chairman Mao is the people’s great saving star” — and the spade she has propped against the wall, together with the expressions of the schoolchildren and teachers who are basking in the sunshine of Mao Tsetung Thought, help us to understand this peasant woman’s profound class feeling for the Party and Chairman Mao, her love for collective labour and for the children whom she is educating by her own example. These details add depth and nobility to the image of the old peasant woman.

As time marches on it impels the content of our art to change, while changes in content expedite innovations in artistic form. A revolutionary political content can only find full expression in good artistic forms. The theme of *The Red Sun Warms Generation After Generation* has topical significance, and to bring out this theme the artist has evolved an artistic form loved by the masses. The treatment of the subject is true to life, but this work of art is more typical than real life. The warm, light tints are the natural colours of spring, and moreover forcefully portray the happiness of China’s children today. The balanced composition, clear outlines, authentic details and unaffected mode of expression form an organic whole with the theme,

conveying a sense of naturalness, order and harmony. When we stand in front of this painting, we feel that here is a scene from real life and tend not to notice the artistic form and technique. This testifies to Kang Tso-tien’s skill as an artist. The coloured woodcuts *Patrolling* and *National Institute of the Peasant Movement in Kwangchow* display vivid characterization, good composition, dramatic colouring and harmony of content and form.

The paintings in the traditional style in this exhibition have integrated form and content fairly successfully because the artists have followed Chairman Mao’s instructions to “**make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China**”. Whether in the depiction of characters or the use of Chinese ink and water-colours or special brush strokes, the artists have critically assimilated the best traditional techniques and adapted certain methods of western painting. The result is works of art reflecting the spirit of our new age and definitely Chinese in style. Thus Yang Chih-kuang’s *A Newcomer** has made successful use of western methods of depicting light and perspective to enrich and develop our traditional Chinese ink painting. The girl’s pride at coming to work in a mine is brought out by her fearless bearing as she stands bathed in morning sunlight. Similarly, in *Able to Speak at Last*, by means of skilful brush-work the artist vividly depicts the thrilling moment when a deaf-mute girl, cured by acupuncture treatment, speaks for the first time. Another painting *Dawn in the Forest*, an original composition with fresh brush strokes, presents the magnificent forests of northern China.

A salient feature of this National Fine Arts Exhibition is the number of spare-time artists who have emerged from the ranks of the workers, peasants and soldiers and the co-operation between professional and amateur artists, who are learning from each other’s good points. This is a concrete example of the deep-going changes in the field of art brought about by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Artists from the broad ranks of workers, peasants and soldiers are the main force in our whole proletarian art. Works of art created by the masses provide the sound foundation for the flowering of our so-

*See *Chinese Literature* No. 3, 1972.

cialist art. Chairman Mao has always encouraged and emphasized mass activities in various fields of art. He has issued the call: **“Our specialists in the fine arts should pay attention to the fine arts of the masses.”** Works by worker-peasant-soldier artists today take pride of place as the major, essential part of the exhibition not as in the past when, under the revisionist line in art, they were nothing more than sideshows in art exhibitions. Furthermore, the works by amateur artists are no longer crude and unpolished but have reached a higher standard both in political content and artistic form. Since spare-time artists take part directly in revolutionary struggles, their works are pervaded by buoyant revolutionary enthusiasm and a rich aura of real life.

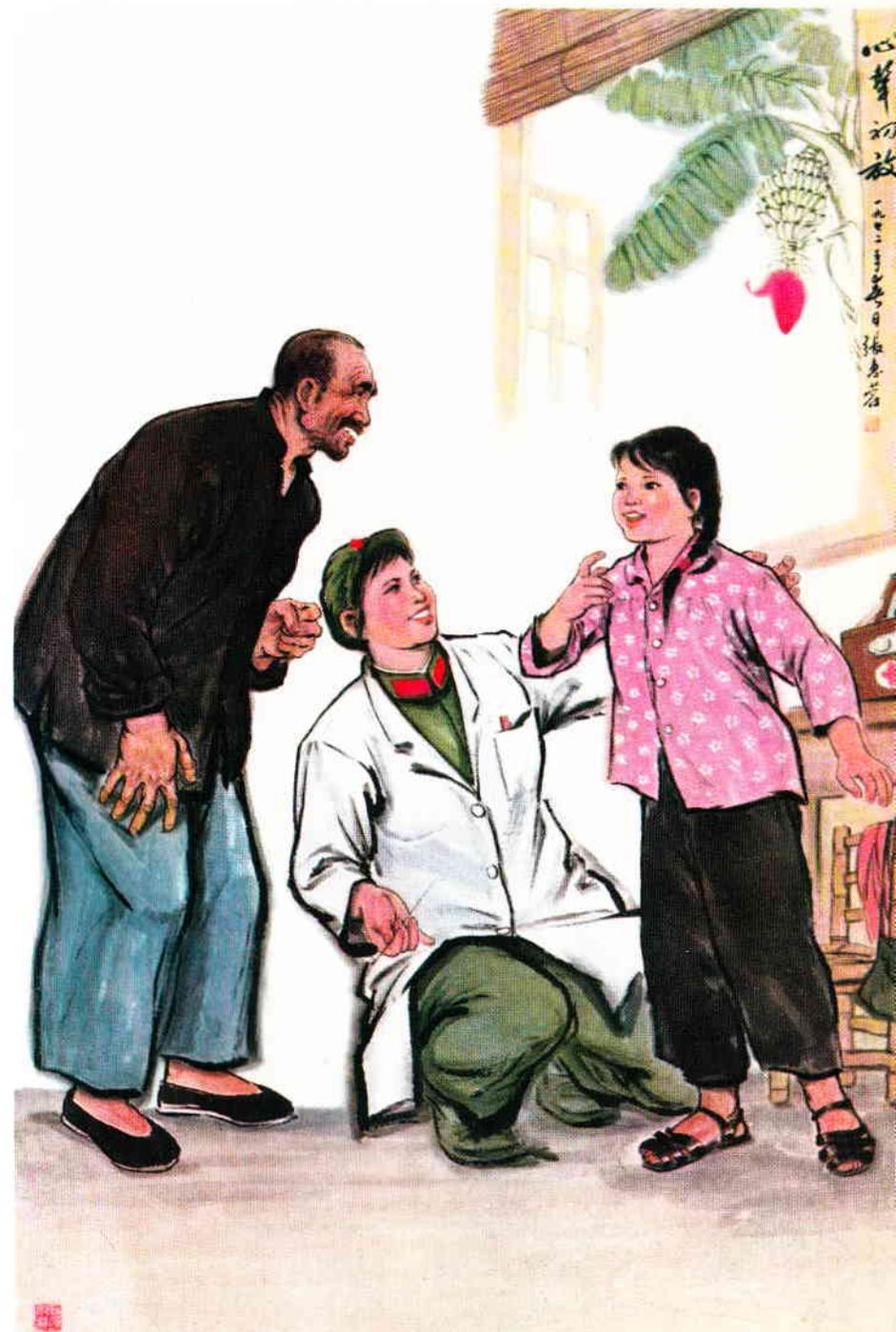
In recent years our professional artists have been steeled by the cultural revolution and by going deep into the fervid struggles of real life to integrate themselves with the workers, peasants and soldiers. This has brought about changes in their mental outlook. The works of some veteran painters in this exhibition reveal the change in their thoughts and feelings and their determination to create new and better art. And the works of the young spare-time artists show that they are growing to maturity by taking the course charted by Chairman Mao.



National Institute of the Peasant Movement in Kwangchow
(coloured woodcut) by Liao Tsung-yi



Battling for Copper (oil-painting) designed collectively, painted by Wu Yun-hua
Able to Speak at Last (painting in the traditional style) by Chang Hui-yung ▶





Chairman Mao Is with Us
(oil-painting)
by Chin Wen-mei



The Night of Victory over the Japanese Aggressors (oil-painting)

by Tsai Liang



Patrolling (coloured woodcut)

by Tseng Chao-hsin



林海朝晖
王静怀画



Li Ying

Weaving Baskets

Under the south eaves
Scarlet New Year couplets,*
At the foot of the north wall
Drifts of melting snow;
Spades polished and polished again,
Seeds carefully selected,
Are just awaiting the return
Of the wild geese from the south
And the spring wind to whet our ploughshares;

The poems published here and in the following pages are selected from *Jujube Grove Village*. See the article on p. 126.

*Couplets with a festive or revolutionary content pasted on the doors in Chinese villages for the Spring Festival.

For then our whole team, old and young,
Will join battle in the spring ploughing.

Pipe bowls are scraped and cleaned,
Whip handles firmly bound
As carters lose patience
Waiting for the spring,
And the Party secretary sensing this,
When all the dung-carting's done,
Makes a suggestion:
"We won't buy crates and baskets
But learn from Tachai*
And weave our own this year!"
No sooner said than done:
They carry low stools to the courtyard
And basking in the sun
Take up bundles of brambles
To strip with flashing knives;
Girls, young fellows and wives
All clustering around
The old Party secretary.
Why! He's an old hand at this job,
Our secretary.

Crate after crate they weave,
And weaving chat,

*A mountain district in Shansi Province famed for its spirit of self-reliance.
In 1964 Chairman Mao issued the call: "In agriculture, learn from Tachai."

Chairman Mao's instructions
Imprinted in their hearts
In letters of gold —
Self-reliance!

Our secretary takes some beating, says one.
He economizes for the revolution,
His skilful hands set an example
And we dare tackle Old Man Heaven!

At the bottom of each crate
A plum-blossom design,
Round the border lotus leaves,
Fine-woven, strong
And interlaced like fish-scales;
With these baskets we shall move mountains,
With these crates we shall build dykes,
Then for watering the fields
We'll make wicker buckets.

Who says the second month is a slack season?
Spring has even now signalled its coming
On the tip of willow boughs;
In no time the ground will thaw,
Ponds and hills will turn green.
Listen to the melting snow
Dripping from the eaves!
See how the New Year couplets catch the eye,

Those bold characters on red paper
Are surely laughing!
“We’ll go all out, learning from Tachai,
Defying heaven and earth
To win fine harvests.”



Trying Out the New Canal

Who says there is too little rain this spring?
A ring on the telephone brings the tides of spring
With the message from the sluice-gate:
We are giving the new canal its trial run!

Rushing water charges to end the drought of March
In March’s gusting wind;
And children happy to see their old playmate again
Race with the foaming waves.

Seeds are selected and ready in the store-room,
Ploughshares are polished and ready under the eaves;
We are only waiting for the breeze of spring
To try out our new ploughs.

The water is coming, coming,
To irrigate a thousand acres of paddy;

Ten miles is no distance at all
For such a head of water;
See how many bean-leaves and stalks it sweeps along,
Flecked with snowy foam and floating chips of ice.

The young pump operator,
His trouser-legs rolled up,
His coat unbuttoned in the breeze,
His feet in rubbers, carrying a spade,
Looks quite a chap
As he inspects the channel!
For from his finger-tips, it seems,
White with foam and crystal clear
Races an endless freshet of spring water.

Someone calls to the peasants going to the fields:
“Hey! Not that way — water’s coming!”
And at these words a whole new stretch of land
Is dyed a verdant green.



Home Leave

The fields lie sound asleep so deep the night,
All is quiet as he enters the village;
The street is not the street that he remembers,
The paths are not the paths that once he trod.

In the courtyard of his home
The sapling he planted is higher than the house;
As he opens the door
The Chairman's glorious portrait meets his eye;
The beds are not yet made, nor the windows closed;
The only sound —
The ticking of a clock on the table —
Where has everybody gone?

The night breeze answers him:
Listen! Out on the road

Horses carting wheat are neighing.
Listen! On the threshing-floor
The threshing-machines are chortling;
In the wheat fields outside the village
Flash sickles wet with sweat.

Unable to sit still, the young soldier Chen
Takes a sickle from the wall and runs out,
His home-coming a new battle,
One battle-line joining another.
The same fields, these, that once he tilled,
The same sickle he used in the old days,
Only the whole team's drive
Is greater than ever.

He bounds along into the sea of wheat
And swings his sickle as if to race the tide,
Reminded of yesterday's bayonet drill
In the army.
Swish, swish, falls the wheat,
He has reaped half a *mu* before cockcrow.

Is it with sweat or with dew
That tunics and trousers are wet?
As day breaks the reapers, straightening up,
Hear their team leader exclaim:
"Well! I was wondering who that was.
Young Chen's 'infiltrated our camp'
Without our knowing.
Hey there! Knock off! Stop working!
You've come a long way and must have some rest..."



Echoes of Laughter

The meeting ends, people leave, the lamp goes out,
Like the tide ebbing from the seashore,
Leaving behind in the room the scent of tobacco,
Leaving the echoes of laughter.
Through the small window-pane
The twinkling stars seem to be frolicking;
On the earthen *kang*
The old couple toss and turn, sleepless,
Thinking of the past,
Thinking of today, tomorrow....
That distant rumbling
Is tractors ploughing at night;
That neighing

Is from our team's stable of mules and horses.
A good harvest will help our country,
We're living better than we ever dreamed;
Well, we must work even harder,
Just over seventy can't be called too old.

Beside his wife, the old man
Smokes one more pipe of tobacco,
The hearts of both in a tumult;
The earth beneath their feet has broadened out,
The sky above their heads seems higher, vaster....

Deep in thought the old man sits up,
Strikes another match
And raises the glowing red flame
High above his eyebrows.

"What are you looking for?" his old wife asks.
"I'm taking another look
At Chairman Mao's portrait.
It's Chairman Mao who's led us
Along the sunny road of socialism;
I want Chairman Mao to see me too,
A hired hand thirty years ago;
I want Chairman Mao to see how happy I am...."

Late at night when all is still
And the breeze is chill,

How many people are singing in their sleep,
How many are laughing, lying on new mats,
As the fragrance of jujube blossom
Is wafted through the village....





Passing the Orchard

Gnats swarm, wasps buzz,
As our cart lumbers through the orchard;
For miles around the fragrance
Is heady as wine;
The sound of singing
Floats above the tree-tops,
Then the song ends,
Someone calls from among the trees,
And the carter looking up wonders:
Who can that be?
There among the fruit trees
Flashes a red check jacket.
Hah! So it's Chao-chao
Who lives in the back lane;

Just a slip of a girl
But she has plenty of spirit.
Last year she finished a course on forestry,
Now she's home experimenting
To improve our peaches by grafting.

We follow the highway, passing the stone bridge,
A dog barks in the village ahead,
And not far away someone calls:
"My sixth boy has finished school,
He's home for good,
Grown sturdier now and tall;
He's been learning to make fertilizer,
He looks a well fertilized young plant himself!"
The carter bursts out laughing
And cheerfully cracks his whip.
"In the past," says he,
"When kids went to school in town,
They were like roasted beans
Popping off as soon as done.
Now, the birds return to the wood,
Rivers flow into the sea,
Carts keep to the road...
This line of Chairman Mao's is really good!"
He fills his pipe and flourishes his whip,
While I look back
At the red fruit
Ripening so fast on the boughs.

Illustrated by Chen Yu-bsien

Little Passengers

Yao Ke-ming



New Companions

Our train stopped at a small station about sunset. There, an eight-year-old boy named Tsung-tsung was put in my care for the rest of the journey. There were still traces of tears on his chubby face and his nostrils flared as he choked back a sob. I was told that when the last train had stopped here he had slipped down onto the platform for a bit of sightseeing while his mother was busy helping an old woman passenger who had fallen ill. The train had left him behind. Our train was to take him to Shanghai, his destination. His mother had talked it over with the people at the station and arranged to have him brought to Shanghai where she was waiting for him.

I took him into one of the carriages and tried to find him a seat. But they were all taken.

"Uncle conductor, let him sit with me." A clear childish voice called out ahead of me. A boy stood up from his seat by the window and waved at us. He wore a new khaki jacket and the scarf of a "Little Red Soldier" round his neck. His eyes smiled a welcome.

This was Kuo-ping! Fine, the two boys could keep each other company on the journey. We went up to him. By then the man sitting beside Kuo-ping had moved a little to make place for the new traveller.

"Don't fight if you sit together," I told them.

"Don't worry, uncle. I never fight. I guarantee to take good care of him."

"Why, you yourself need taking care of," I said as a joke. I could not help laughing.

"I'm much older than he." Kuo-ping expanded his chest and pulled Tsung-tsung up to check their heights. "I'm in the fourth grade and he's probably . . . in the second, at most."

"All right then, I'll put him in your care," I said, giving him a pat on the back.

Kuo-ping began to bustle about. When I brought a wet towel, he took it from me and told Tsung-tsung, "Come, wipe your tears away." When I gave the younger one a bowl of noodles, Kuo-ping urged, "Tsung-tsung, eat them up quickly. Oh, but don't scald your tongue!"

Then he flicked the dust off Tsung-tsung's trousers, helped him button his coat and smoothed down the collar.... He acted just like a big brother.

Exhausted perhaps from his sightseeing and crying, Tsung-tsung, resting his head on Kuo-ping's shoulder, soon dozed off comfortably in the rocking train.

It was late spring and still a little chilly at night. Kuo-ping fumbled in his string bag, took out a spare jacket and laid it over his little friend.

Home

Kuo-ping had begun the journey with us right from Peking Station. His aunt who brought him to the station office said to me, "Comrade, this boy is going to Shanghai. His parents'll meet him at the station there. I'm too busy to take him home. Please keep an eye on him, he's still quite young."

"Young!" protested Kuo-ping raising his head. "Several years ago when the Red Guards came to Peking to swap revolutionary experiences in the early days of the cultural revolution, they were only a little older than I, weren't they? When I grow up I'm going to the farthest border area to settle down in one of the production teams there."

"Don't worry," I assured Kuo-ping's aunt. "On our train he'll be as comfortable and safe as in his own home."

I took Kuo-ping to the train. He was the first to arrive since the passengers had not yet been admitted to the platform. At the sight of so many vacant seats he was as happy as a lark. He chose one by the window, sat on it and pressed his nose flat against the window-pane.

Chug — chug — the train started off, puffing out clouds of steam. The window became a miraculous picture-frame with ever changing scenes: Dark mountains, clear streams, fields of golden rape, bridges arching like rainbows — slipped swiftly by. Here an old buffalo suddenly emerged from a pond, scattering water from its back. There, tractors ploughed through waves of mud in the fields like ships at sea. PLA men on a military exercise, carrying packs on their backs, were climbing a mountainside, vigorous as tiger cubs. Newly-built blast furnaces flew past like a series of hills . . .

Kuo-ping was spellbound. As the train rushed on, his eyelids drooped and he fell asleep.

I covered him lightly with a spare railway uniform. An hour later when I came back after inspecting the other coaches, I fixed the jacket to cover him better. Just then, he woke up.

"Uncle, you . . ." He looked at me with drowsy eyes.

Soon it was meal time. I brought him some food from the dining car.

"Here you are, Comrade Little Red Soldier." A PLA man sitting opposite handed him a big apple. Kuo-ping politely refused. The armyman insisted on thrusting it into his hand. As Kuo-ping tucked into his food, I asked:

"Is your home in Shanghai?"

"My granny's home is in Peking, my mama's in Shanghai."

"Oh, you have two homes."

"Yes." He nodded. Then he asked, "Uncle, where's your home?"

"Mine?" I gave it some thought before I answered, "I also have two homes. One is in Shanghai, the other right here." I pointed at the coach. "Chairman Mao teaches us to serve the people wholly and entirely so the train is my home. And my family members are all the passengers, the workers, peasants, soldiers and others."

Kuo-ping understood immediately.

Little Conductors

Our train flew on its way.

Early next morning I took Kuo-ping and Tsung-tsung two large buns for breakfast. Tsung-tsung was already awake. His cheeks were rosy and, after a night's sleep, he looked full of vim. His lively eyes darted here and there, taking in everything with interest. Kuo-ping shoved the apple into his hand but Tsung-tsung said, "No, no! Eat it yourself."



"It's not mine," said Kuo-ping. "The PLA uncle gave it to us. You must eat it."

Having finished their apple and buns, the two young travellers started chattering away to each other.

Tsung-tsung knew that Kuo-ping had stayed in Peking for some time so he asked many questions: How many lanterns are there on Tien An Men Gate? What is the depth of the water under the Chin-shui Bridges? How high is the Monument to the People's Heroes? . . .

Kuo-ping in turn asked Tsung-tsung how many times he had travelled by train. Tsung-tsung admitted that this was his first ride on a real train. But he often played a game at home by lining up stools and benches to form a train. He himself was the engine driver. His passengers were balls, cloth dolls or whatever he could find. But he'd been awfully silly for he'd never thought of having a conductor on his train.

The two little chaps pointed their fingers at me, whispering together. I only caught an odd word:

"This uncle's very nice . . ." said Kuo-ping.

"When I grow up I want to be a conductor too. Do you think I can?" That was Tsung-tsung's voice.

"But you'll have to wait for years and years," said Kuo-ping, sadly.

They were both lost in thought. Suddenly Kuo-ping's eyes sparkled. He put his hand round his companion's neck and said excitedly, "You're also a Little Red Soldier, aren't you? We Little Red Soldiers should learn from the workers, peasants and soldiers. Shall we . . ." Kuo-ping put his mouth so close to Tsung-tsung's ear I could hear no more.

A moment later, Kuo-ping took out from his satchel a few picture-story books about revolutionary heroes including *Lei Feng*, *Chin Hsun-hua*, *Yang Shui-tsai* and showed them to his friend. When Tsung-tsung said he could not read them all, Kuo-ping began to read to him. Two small heads leaned against each other as they turned the pages, small fingers carefully keeping the place.

With many things to attend to, I left them to carry out my other duties.

After an hour or so the train stopped at a small station. I came back to their coach to sweep the floor. To my surprise, it was very clean.

"Those two youngsters picked up all the odds and ends and scrap paper long ago," the passengers told me. "They cleaned up the tea-tables too."

"Comrade, how come you've two extra young conductors here!"

I turned to the seats where the boys sat. Why, where were they? Had they jumped off at this station for another walk?

I hurried towards the end of the coach. Good, there they were bustling about happily. Tsung-tsung, his face flushed with exertion, was passing parcels, string bags and other things down the car to an elderly woman who was getting off while Kuo-ping, helping an old man down the steps, kept cautioning, "Be careful, careful . . ."



"You're really good little conductors!" I praised them.

Tsung-tsung grinned and Kuo-ping made a grimace.

Afterwards I took them all along the train, showing them the mail and luggage cars, the dining car and broadcasting compartment. Finally we came to the special sleeping compartments for foreign guests and overseas Chinese. Look, here is an old overseas Chinese who has just emerged from one of the compartments....

The boys were very excited. Kuo-ping said, "There're so many kinds of compartments in a train. It must be such fun to be a conductor."

Afraid that they would be fagged out I suggested they'd better sit down for a while. I could see that Tsung-tsung was rather mischievous. He kept feeling this and tapping that with his fingers, so I said strictly, "You mustn't poke around in the train and touch everything you fancy." They nodded.

But how was I to know that something unexpected would happen.

An Unexpected Incident

"Who — whoo...." After gathering speed for some time, the train arrived at another big city where the stop was for twenty minutes. "Don't go very far along the platform," I warned the boys before I went off to help the passengers with their luggage.

Soon after, I heard a childish voice suddenly pipe up on the train's loud-speaker: "Hey, all passengers wait a minute! Don't leave yet, everyone...."

What was the matter? Passengers getting off the train stopped in their tracks, puzzled.

Whose child was playing with the microphone and having fun? I wondered. Then a thought struck me and I hurried towards the broadcasting compartment.

Chin-fang, the girl announcer, told me that she had left the room in a hurry and forgotten to switch off the loud-speaker. When she came back, she found Tsung-tsung holding the microphone and speaking into it. No children were allowed to do this, in case they broke the equipment. As she snatched the mike out of his hands, startled

by Chin-fang's angry expression, Tsung-tsung stammered as if trying to explain something. Suddenly, he turned round and ran out.

After a while, Kuo-ping and Tsung-tsung came back to their seats in the coach, hand in hand and smiling gaily, although obviously perspiring.

"You've been naughty boys," I told them crossly. "Who said you could play with the mike?"

Kuo-ping looked rather embarrassed, Tsung-tsung began to explain, "I... I didn't..." but Kuo-ping nudged him to prevent him saying more.

"Look here, you two!" Chin-fang commanded. "From now on, you stay in your seats and behave yourselves. Don't poke around and touch my things again."

Tsung-tsung pouted, looking very wronged. Perhaps he felt that he might lose his honoured occupation of "little conductor".

A Purse

Just then, an old grey-haired man, wearing black-rimmed eye-glasses, hurried into our coach, glancing right and left in search of someone. The moment he saw Kuo-ping, he hugged the boy and kissed him on both cheeks. "Ah, I've found you at last," he murmured, "I've found you!"

When he saw my uniform and arm-band with the words "Chief Conductor", the old man asked, "May I know your name?"

"My name's Li."

"Ah, Comrade Li," said he in great excitement. "I've something to tell you."

He was an overseas Chinese who was on a tour of the motherland. When the train arrived at this station and he was getting off, he heard an announcement over the loud-speaker, "All passengers, wait a minute...." He didn't know what was the matter but he stopped to listen. Then the loud-speaker was switched off. When he picked up his suitcase and walked off down the platform towards the exit, he heard someone call out, "Old uncle, old uncle! You've lost something...." He turned round, but the stream of passengers in



his wake blocked his view. A moment later, he felt someone tugging at his coat. This time there stood a little boy panting for breath, his face wet with sweat, holding a purse in his hand. The old man felt his pocket. *Aiya!* His purse which he kept fastened to a silver chain was gone. Yes, it was the very one the little boy was holding out to him.

Before the train stopped at the station, Kuo-ping and Tsung-tsung had discovered the purse under a table when they were helping the dining-car attendants to sweep up. At first they meant to hand it in to me. But a careful look convinced them that they'd seen it somewhere before. Then they remembered! When I had taken them

to look over the train, they had noticed an old overseas Chinese coming out of the wash-room. The old man, fishing in his pocket for his handkerchief, had also brought out a purse attached to a silver chain. The fine purse had caught their eyes. Then when the passengers were beginning to leave the train, they wondered if the old overseas Chinese was getting off at this station? So, one of them jumped onto the platform and hurried towards the exit while the other dashed straight into the broadcasting compartment....

At last they found the owner of the lost purse. The old man took his purse, opened it and found everything intact. When he finally realized what had happened, the boy had disappeared. Only then did the old man remember that he hadn't expressed his thanks, he hadn't even asked the boy's name. He came back to the train, determined to get the conductor to help him find the boy so he could thank him properly. How glad he was to run into him so quickly.

"I've been away from the motherland for more than twenty years. There've been such changes!" the old man exclaimed. "In a little boy, I've caught a glimmer of the shining, noble spirit of New China. I came back once before to visit my motherland, but that was in the old society. The railways were chaotic, the trains dark and dirty, an epitome of the whole society. I had to keep my suitcase close by my side for fear of losing it, yet even so it was stolen in the end. Today, I carelessly dropped this little purse, and it was returned to me untouched."

As he spoke, the old man was quite overwhelmed. He removed his glasses to wipe his eyes and then announced, "As a Chinese I feel very proud of our motherland under the leadership of Chairman Mao!"

"So you kept your good deed a secret from me, eh? Whose idea was it?" I asked the boys sternly, pretending to be annoyed but feeling more like a child who'd been given a taste of honey.

Tsung-tsung pointed a finger at Kuo-ping. "It was his idea! Really! He told me to keep it a secret. He said one shouldn't boast about such a thing because we should always serve the people and not want to be praised...."

A Little Propaganda Troupe

The train had been on the run for over twenty hours. A certain impatience became obvious. Some passengers looked more frequently at their watches, others yawned wearily, some of the children fretted and even cried.

"How can we help the passengers to spend the last few hours happily?" I cudgelled my brains as I went around checking the cleanliness and ventilation in the coaches. Suddenly as I neared Coach No. 6 I heard a lively song.

I love Peking's Tien An Men,
On Tien An Men the sun rises.
Our great leader Chairman Mao
Leads us as we march forward.

I entered the coach. What a stirring scene! About a dozen Little Red Soldiers of different ages stood together. Cheeks flushed and heads wagging, they were loudly singing while Kuo-ping, standing on the seat opposite them, waved his arms vigorously conducting the chorus. Some of the passengers were standing up to watch, others leaned over the backs of their seats to see better. All of them seemed to enjoy the performance.

They sang one song after another. Tsung-tsung sang an aria from a model Peking opera and Kuo-ping recited two of Chairman Mao's poems. The audience cheered and clapped repeatedly for encores. More people flocked in from other coaches. Just then, Kuo-ping spotted me. He gave me a playful wink and shouted, "Shall we ask uncle conductor to sing a song?"

"Yes, yes!" came a shout as applause burst out and all eyes turned to me.

"But . . . but . . ." This surprise attack put me in a fix. I turned around and tried to make a get-away. Unfortunately, Tsung-tsung caught up with me. "You can't escape," he shouted as he caught me by the sleeve. "You mustn't run away, uncle. Sing us a song, do!"



Then I had an idea. "All right," I said. "The Little Red Soldiers have given us an excellent performance. Uncles and aunties shouldn't just sit here listening, should they?"

"No!" The Little Red Soldiers shouted in chorus.

"Now it's the turn of uncles and aunties then. Let's all sing a song together, how's that?"

"Good!" applauded the youngsters. "Red flags flutter, clarion is the bugle call . . ." we began and the majestic song resounded in Coach No. 6.

The song had no sooner ended than several voices called out together, "How about coming to our Coach No. 5, young actors?" and "We passengers of Coach No. 7 welcome you, Little Red Soldiers! . . ."

Soon, cheerful songs rang out in the other coaches.

Destination

"Who — whoo . . ." The train, ringing with songs and laughter, sped around mountains, across rivers and over the green carpeted fields.

Kuo-ping and Tsung-tsung resumed their seats. Tsung-tsung pressed his nose against the window-pane, looking out. "Uncle," Kuo-ping asked me, "how many more stops before we reach Shanghai?"

"Only one more," said I. "You've done a fine job as little conductors. You should rest now."

"Soon we'll not be little conductors any more. What a pity!" Kuo-ping said regretfully.

"We'll be little conductors when we take the train again. What do you say?" Tsung-tsung cocked his head as he asked Kuo-ping.

I looked at them fondly. "We're coming to the end of our journey. But there is no end to serving the people."

They looked at me and nodded heartily.

"Who — whoo . . ." Along the rails across our vast countryside, the train sped on towards its destination.

Illustrated by Miao Ti

Chang Teng-kuei



Can Pumpkins Lay Eggs?

When Sixth Company reached the mountains Old Man Heaven was sulking. Several days on end were overcast or wet. But Sunday dawned a perfect day, and the men's spirits soared as high as the cloudless sky. The company concert troupe gathered cheerfully on a sunny slope to sing at the top of their lungs, in preparation for the get-together that evening with the Miao Village commune members. The song they were practising was that old army favourite *The Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention*. The rousing strains rang out across the valleys to re-echo from the cliffs, making sound effects more stirring than the music broadcast by the village loud-speaker.

The kitchen was even livelier with the staccato chopping of vegetables and the huffing and chuffing of bellows. The instructor, in white overalls, was helping out by peeling and slicing potatoes. Li Chih-chun, a blackboard newspaper "correspondent", was washing pumpkins for the mess squad leader to cut up. Suddenly the squad leader cried out: *Aiya!* The others crowded round, imagining he must have cut himself. To their amazement they saw that one of the

pumpkins had been full of eggs, which were now rolling all over the kitchen table. Luckily the squad leader moved fast. Otherwise a few eggs would undoubtedly have rolled off and been smashed.

"Well!" exclaimed one of the cooks. "So pumpkins can lay eggs! How weird! What about the others? Are there eggs in them too?" He picked up a chopper to slice open another pumpkin.

"Steady on there!" said the instructor. He examined each pumpkin in turn and burst out laughing. "Look. Here's how the eggs got in there."

The others had a good look. Sure enough. A piece the size of a man's fist had been cut from the base of several pumpkins. Through that hole the flesh had been scooped out and the eggs put in. Then the rind had been replaced so neatly and tightly that you needed sharp eyes to spot what had been done. They discovered two other pumpkins with eggs inside. Not only hen's eggs but wild duck's eggs too. One had been smashed when the first pumpkin was chopped open. The remainder weighed nearly six pounds.

Young Li scratched the back of his head. "Eggs in pumpkins!" He chuckled. "This is a real mystery."

"If we can clear it up, there should be a lesson in it for us," the instructor commented.

"Give me that job, instructor," begged Young Li. "I'll find the answer to this riddle."

"How will you go about it?"

"Here's what I think," replied Young Li confidently. "We can be pretty sure that these eggs are a present from the old folk in the nearby production teams. I've been to each team several times. I know the people well."

"What do you intend to do when you get to the teams?" put in the mess squad leader.

"First, pay for the eggs, according to the Eight Points for Attention. Secondly, make investigations. And thirdly, write a piece on 'The Mystery of the Egg-laying Pumpkins' to help the whole company understand our revolutionary tradition."

"Suppose nobody will own up?"

"Quite. Whoever slipped those eggs in isn't going to let on."

"You'll have to use your head," said the instructor.

So Young Li went off to "use his head", leaving the others there to get on with their work. He went first to the quartermaster to draw the money for six pounds of eggs and find out which teams had sold them pumpkins recently.

"Miao Village, South Peak, North River and Big Gully," the quartermaster told him.

"So many teams! Which do you think was responsible?"

"That's hard to say. Since our arrival all the teams round here have organized groups to support the army, each trying to outdo the others."

"Well, which team do you think put these eggs in the pumpkins?"

"I really can't say."

"Give me a pointer at least."

"How about Granny Wu of Miao Village?"

"That's an idea. Yes, it could well be her, I quite agree. But what, specially, makes you think so?"

"She and her old man came with a load of pumpkins a couple of days ago. I said they oughtn't to put themselves out at their age. Guess what granny said."

"Did she tick you off?"

"She didn't, actually. She said: We're all one family. Don't treat us as outsiders. How was the river water brought up to Miao Village? I just laughed and didn't answer. Then granny said: Yes, you're busy year in year out building railways, yet you worked away in your off-time with spades and picks till you'd dug that channel winding up the mountain and led the Water Dragon up here. How sweet it tastes, that clear, clear water! Drinking it gladdens our hearts. Why did you do it? Chairman Mao's soldiers love the people, that's why. Of course the people love an army like that. So why shouldn't I bring over a load of pumpkins? When granny talked that way, there was nothing I could say."

"Thanks. This is extremely important information."

After breakfast, Young Li slung a satchel over his shoulder and set off for Miao Village. It was four miles away, across one hill, two ridges and three gullies. But he covered the distance in just about

an hour. Sweat was pouring down his face as he entered the village, found the house where granny lived and pushed open the gate. As luck would have it, Granny Wu was at home. When the young soldier hurried in, sweating and panting, she thought something must be wrong. He did his best then to calm down and pretend he had just dropped in casually. He hung his satchel on the branch of a pomegranate tree, which dipped gently as if in greeting. Then he sat down to help granny make up bundles of capsicum. Before he could start on the speech he had prepared she asked:

"What wind blows you here today, Young Li? Did the concert troupe send you over to find material to write up for them?"

"I came because today's Sunday. And I haven't seen you, granny, for quite a few days."

The old woman beamed. "Old folk and young here, we're all looking forward to the concert your company's putting on for us this evening," she told him. "Do you still sing that song *The Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention*?"*

"Sure. That's a song we always sing."

"Quite right too. You ought to sing it. Each time I hear that song it reminds me of the year when the Red Army marched north to fight the Japs. They came singing that song. They left singing it, too. Every soldier in the Red Army did as it says in the song. Before that I'd no idea there could be such good troops."

*The Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention are the rules of discipline laid down by Chairman Mao for the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The Three Main Rules of Discipline are as follows:

1. Obey orders in all your actions.
2. Don't take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses.
3. Turn in everything captured.

The Eight Points for Attention are as follows:

1. Speak politely.
2. Pay fairly for what you buy.
3. Return everything you borrow.
4. Pay for anything you damage.
5. Don't hit or swear at people.
6. Don't damage crops.
7. Don't take liberties with women.
8. Don't ill-treat captives.

Young Li, listening, forgot the speech he had rehearsed. Afraid that a direct question might give the show away, he seized his first chance to approach the matter indirectly.

"You know, granny," he said, "the way you patched those pants of mine the other day reminded me of when I was a boy at home. I tore a big hole in my pants climbing a tree, and my granny gave me a good dressing-down. But her bark was worse than her bite. She put on her specs, threaded a needle, and stitch by stitch sewed up the rent."

"So you were a young limb of mischief at home as well. Robbed crows' nests too, I'll be bound."

"Hmm." They were straying from the subject again. Young Li tried to steer the conversation back to the mystery of the pumpkins.

"Granny," he started, but then broke off again.

"What is it? What's on your mind?"

"I don't know how to say it. . . ." Young Li stood up and climbed on to a bench to hang the capsicum from the eaves. Looking down then he spotted an important clue — two big hollowed out pumpkins on the window-sill, the white seeds laid out to sun beside them. Aha, granny! he thought. I've discovered your secret now. It's no use your trying to fool me.

Meanwhile granny handed him three more bundles of capsicum, saying as she did so, "Straight talking is what I like. I've no patience with people who hum and haw and beat about the bush."

Emboldened by the pumpkins on the window-sill, Young Li replied: "Well, I'll speak plainly. Why did you hollow out those pumpkins, granny?"

"Is that all that's worrying you?" Granny laughed. "Yesterday some comrades from our commune clinic asked our team for ten pounds of pumpkin seeds to use in medicine. They want them in a hurry. I took out the seeds to sun them, and in a few days we shall send them in. It's for the good of all, so we all should help."

That took the wind out of the young soldier's sails. He had just decided to challenge granny outright when in ran her grand-daughter little Ling-ling. "Granny!" she cried. "The whole third form's come. We want you to tell us a story before we go to pick herbs for the commune."

The words were barely out of her mouth when some twenty-odd children rushed in. They pressed eagerly around granny, greeting her warmly, tugging her arm, skipping, jumping, calling out, laughing. Granny beamed with pleasure at the sight of them. Life is sweet as honey for children today, she thought. But we must help them understand that good times don't just drop from the skies, neither are they the gift of some immortals or Buddha — they have to be won by fighting. They are the fruit of our revolution which is led by Chairman Mao.

"Very well," she said. "Granny will tell you a story."

The boy with the loudest voice, Little Mei, begged: "Tell us about how the Red Army came to our village — that story you told at the last Youth League meeting."

The other children were loud in their approval. Small hands started clapping like beans popping in a pan.

Granny stood up, dusting off her clothes. "Little pitchers have long ears!" she teased. "How do you know I told the Youth Leaguers that story?"

"My elder brother Ta-sung heard it," replied Little Mei. "He treats us like small kids. But actually he had no right to be at that meeting. He's only fourteen. He just sneaked in to listen."

Mention of Ta-sung brought a smile to Young Li's face. That young rascal had been discovered organizing a whole bunch of children to wash overalls and quilts for the company on the sly. . . . While he recalled this episode, granny had started her story. Very soon Young Li, too, was listening intently.

"One autumn day in 1935," said granny, "I'd been out with Big Shan and Little Shan to pick pumpkins. Back home, without stopping for breath, I set about getting the midday meal. I'd just put a pan of maize meal on the stove, and the pumpkins in the pan were half cooked, when we heard two rifle shots at the foot of the hill. I slipped out to have a look. Mercy on us! The White brigands were swarming in from west of the village like a flock of carrion crows, yelling and shouting, making our hens flap up on to the roof and our dog jump over the wall. I dashed into the house and scooped up a ladle of water to douse the fire. Then, with the two children, I

ran up into the mountains. We didn't come back until after the brigands had left. What did we see? They'd smashed the pan, spilling maize porridge and pumpkins all over the floor. They'd taken all our grain, all our hens and ducks. Luckily about thirty eggs in the back yard were so well hidden, those swine hadn't found them."

The children fumed: "What beasts they were, those White brigands!"

"Yes, they were. At that time the landlords spread all sorts of rumours. They said: If the Red Army comes, they'll kill you all off. But you can't keep fire in a paper bag, a snowman can't stand the sun — the truth will out. Once the Red Army finally came, that opened our eyes.

"None of us will ever forget the day that the Red Army came to our village. It was the Mid-autumn Festival. Dusk was falling. Some folk were eating, others were still getting supper. The water in my pan was barely warm when a hubbub broke out again. I heard yells: The Red Army's come! The Red Army's come! Without stopping to put out the fire, I grabbed hold of Big Shan and Little Shan and ran. When we looked back from the mountain top, fires had broken out in the village. Flames were shooting from the roof of our house. But no one dared go down to put out the fires. Frantic as we were, we just had to watch our homes burn. But strange to say, as we watched, the flames dwindled and died down. By the time it was dark all the fires were out, there wasn't a spark to be seen."

"What made the fires go out, granny?"

"The Red Army men put them out. A few old folk and invalids had stayed behind at home because they couldn't run away. They told us that several fires had broken out before the Red Army men even entered the village. That was because several others, like me, had been in too much of a hurry to put out their fires. The Red Army soldiers came in at a run. The first thing they did was fight the fires. Once these were extinguished they swept the yards and filled the water vats. They didn't go into any house whose owners were away, but slept outside under the eaves, by the woodpiles or in empty sheds. Late that night, nearly a score of soldiers repaired our house by moonlight, some mixing mud, others plastering the walls or plaiting mats.

Fast as the wind they worked! The old folk watching understood that these were good soldiers, our own soldiers. They were for the poor, for those whose life was hard. So Grandad Li from the west end of the village took a stick and climbed the mountain to fetch us back.

"I found they'd repaired all the damage done by the fire. Some soldiers were still fixing up our door frame. I tell you, I didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. I thought I must be dreaming. I looked at the two children and pinched myself. It wasn't a dream, it was true. True! At that, tears gushed from my eyes. I don't cry easily, mind you. When the landlord strung me up and beat me because we hadn't paid our rent, when the tax-collectors whipped me, not a single tear did I shed. But now, at sight of those dear army boys, I couldn't hold back the tears. See that pomegranate tree there. It was planted in my courtyard by Young Ma, a Red Army man, in his time off. He found it growing wild in the hills and didn't like to let it go to waste, so he moved it here."

All eyes turned to where granny was pointing. The tree had grown high and sturdy. Its boughs were weighed down by big pomegranates, split open as if laughing, and swaying like small red lanterns in the breeze.

The children admiring the pomegranate tree thought: Where is that Uncle Ma now who planted this tree? He must have grown tall and strong too. If only he could come back to see these big pomegranates and tell us some stories!

As for granny, the tree meant so much to her that for a moment she was unable to speak. Young Li made haste to fetch her a cup of tea. And having moistened her throat she went on with her story.

"That day as soon as Young Ma had planted this sapling, he wiped the dirt off his hands and taught the children to sing *The Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention*. The kiddies learned it first, then the grown-ups joined in. It's a catchy tune, and the words are easy to understand. Before long everyone could sing it. Then in the village and in the fields outside, everywhere was singing and laughter. Never before had Miao Village been so gay. Our own dear Red Army men stayed here for three days to rest before continu-

ing on their march to the north. In those days there was not a soul, not a house to be found for forty miles or so to the north of us. So the Red Army had to take provisions with them. I racked my brain and hit on an idea. I hollowed out two big pumpkins, hard-boiled those eggs the bandits hadn't stolen, and hid them in the pumpkins. Then I fitted back the rind I had cut out so that no one could see any difference, and sold those pumpkins to the Red Army. I thought: Not a grain of ours nor a drop of water will you take as a gift. You return untouched all the food we offer to you. So this time I'll give you something without your knowing. By the time you find out you'll be scores of miles away. But do you know what happened? At noon that day, when the Red Army had marched a dozen miles or more they halted to cook a meal and discovered those eggs. At once they sent Young Ma and another comrade back to our village to pay for them. They arrived as dusk was falling after we'd all run away to hide, and coming into the village ran into the bandits. Young Ma threw a hand-grenade. That finished off two of the enemy and the rest turned tail and fled, firing their rifles. As the two Red Army men chased after them, a bullet went through Young Ma's right arm and his tunic was dyed red with blood; but it was only a flesh wound, luckily. Now that the bandits had gone, the two soldiers came back to our village, and when they had found me they gave me a silver dollar. Then Young Ma's comrade bandaged his wound and they hurriedly left us to rejoin their unit. . . . I wrapped that silver dollar up in a red cloth and hid it in a crock which I buried three feet under the ground. I made up my mind to starve to death sooner than spend that dollar. I wouldn't exchange it for piles of gold or silver. Sometimes late at night when everyone was asleep, I'd dig it up to have a look at it. Because then I seemed to be seeing Young Ma and our other dear army boys again."

With this, granny produced the silver dollar. It was sparkling and bright. The children passed it round from hand to hand and finally it reached Young Li. He held it up respectfully, his heart too full for words. It wasn't till he had returned the dollar to granny that he realized his problem was still unsolved. There was nothing for it but a direct assault.



"History has repeated itself, granny," he said. "Our company has not only found hen's eggs in pumpkins. We've found wild duck's eggs too."

Granny laughed. "And I can see from your face that you think I'm the one to blame, eh? Oh no, I wouldn't do such a foolish thing. I know the army regulations too well to make trouble for you that way. I do all I can to support the PLA, to help army and people to unite as one, strong as iron or steel, firm and solid as a Great Wall of stone. But today I wouldn't dream of hiding eggs in pumpkins."

Young Li had received a profound lesson. But the riddle of the pumpkins was still unsolved. "Well then, who could have hidden those eggs?" he asked. "I'm no nearer to solving this problem than when I started."

To his surprise little Ling-ling beside him piped up: "I know who did it!"

"Who?" demanded Young Li.

"That's a secret." Chuckling, Ling-ling went over to whisper into her grandmother's ear: "It must have been Ta-sung and his friends. I saw them collect lots of wild duck's eggs by the river. They exchanged some, too, for hen's eggs." When granny nodded, the little girl made a face at Young Li before scampering off with her school-friends to pick herbs.

"Most likely this was the work of Ta-sung and those youngsters," said granny. "Boys will be boys. They got this idea from my story and took a leaf out of my book. Come on, let's find Ta-sung."

Young Li promptly took down his satchel from the tree and accompanied granny to the team's experimental plot at the east end of the village. There they found a number of the older schoolchildren examining their broad beans.

"Ta-sung!" cried granny. "Come here!"

Ta-sung came over, blinking, and greeted granny.

"Did you smuggle eggs into some pumpkins?"

Before Ta-sung could deny this his friends burst out laughing. That gave the show away.

"This is how it was. You're always telling us, granny," — Ta-sung mimicked Granny Wu's way of talking — "our dear Red Army

men covered thousands of miles in the Long March, and the PLA men have come to build railways through these mountains of ours. All with one aim, to liberate the whole country and build up New China. Think what it means, building this railway here. These high ranges of ours were always the back of beyond, but now they'll be linked up with the whole wide world. A distance it took a whole month to travel on foot can be covered by train in only a day or two. We must do all we can to help the PLA build this railway. Help them with extra hands and with supplies...."

"Don't beat about the bush." Granny cut him short. "Out with the truth. Was it you who put eggs in those pumpkins?"

"It was like this." Ta-sung was not in the least disconcerted. "We're learning from you, granny, to help the PLA whole-heartedly. So we took certain steps."

"What steps?"

"Well, none of them came off. First, we tried to wash clothes secretly for the PLA men, but they found out and stopped us. Then we took fertilizer to their fields. Eight loads we took, and got sixteen back in return. The third time, we gave them pumpkins from our experimental plot, but they sent them all back. We tried every way we could think of, but nothing worked; so when we heard the story you told that day that gave us a new idea and we followed your example...."

"You imp of mischief!"

"Young rascals!" exclaimed Young Li, very touched and pleased. "Well, now that I've found you what's to be done with this money?"

"These children can't accept money," said granny. "But if you take it back you won't have carried out your task. Why not give it to the school to spend on an experimental plot?"

Ta-sung, seeing no help for it, threw up his hands. "That's the only thing to be done."

Young Li, clapping, rejoined cheerfully: "I'm all in favour."

And so the riddle of how pumpkins lay eggs was finally unravelled.

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

Sending Back a Lost Horse

Noon. Two men, one elderly and the other young, walked briskly out of the municipal chemical fertilizer wholesale depot. The older one walked in front, a bill of lading in his hand, while the younger, holding a red-tasselled whip, followed closely behind. The old man, Hsieh, was leader of the Advanced Production Team of Wenke Brigade. The young one, Wang, was the team's cotton-growing specialist. They had come to Loyang to buy chemical fertilizer. Setting off at dawn, in a pleasant spring breeze, they had driven steadily and covered a distance of about 25 miles in a few hours. They took the horse from the shafts and tied it to a tree, then went into the wholesale depot. After making their purchase, they went straight back to the willow tree on the road side not far off where they had left the horse.

"After he's fed, shall we pick up our load and start for home?" Wang asked.

"Of course. Time waits for nobody. We must make the most of the farming season," said Hsieh.

"*Aiya!* Team Leader, our Black Dragon's disappeared."

The horse, named Black Dragon had indeed disappeared. They dashed to the tree. The horse was nowhere to be seen, but its bridle was still dangling there. A leather strap must have broken.

"Curse it! The old team leader told me a few days ago that the strap needed repairing. But I neglected it..." Young Wang silently blamed himself.

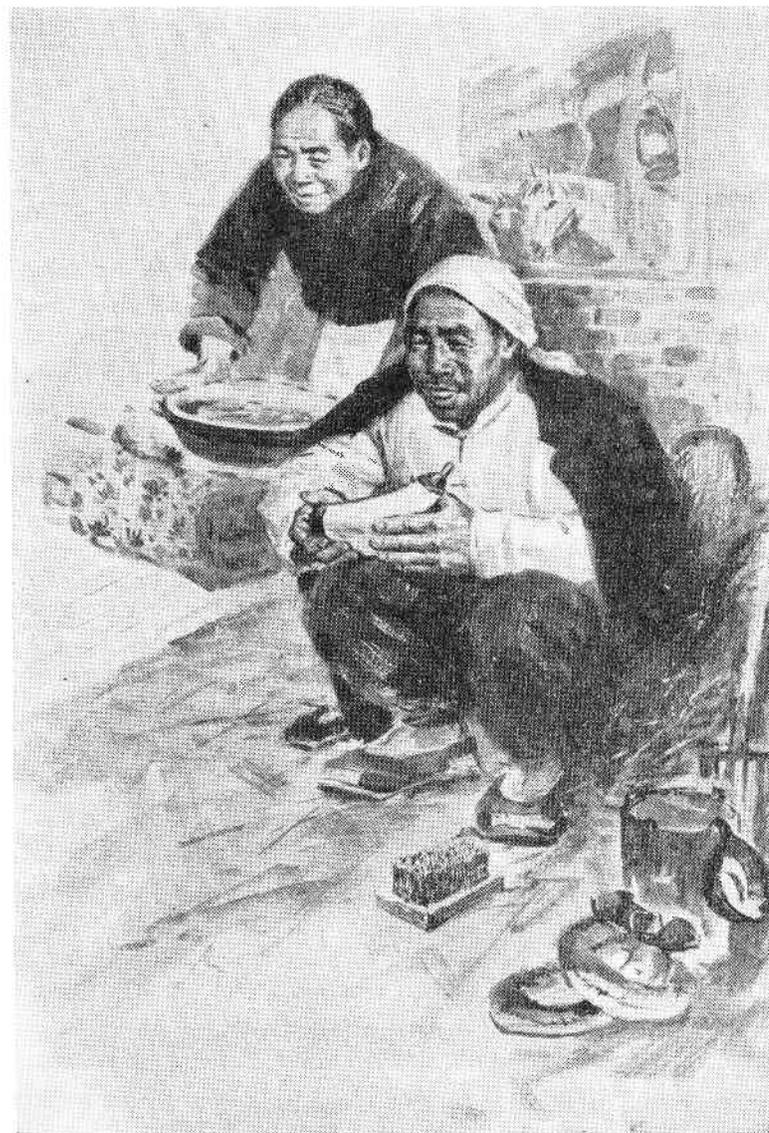
Hsieh was even more anxious. All members of his team knew how very, very dear Black Dragon was to their team leader.

Five years before, a mare had died three days after foaling. Hsieh, then a stockman, took such care of the foal, he did not eat a proper meal himself for two days and nights. He moved his wife too into the stockman's room where they both lived for forty-eight days tending the young horse day and night. His loyalty to the collective prompted him to spare no efforts and the foal was saved. It grew strong and sturdy, its coal-black hair sleek and shining. The team members called it Black Dragon because it worked so energetically. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution Hsieh was elected the team leader, but he still visited the horse every day to fondle it.

Now, where had the animal gone?

There was a railway station not far from the place where it had been tied. While Hsieh and Wang were in the chemical fertilizer depot, a train had roared into the station with a shrill whistle. The horse, in a city for the first time, was scared by the noise of this monster. It neighed in panic and reared madly, till it broke the strap of its bridle and galloped away. Passing over Loyang Bridge, the horse was forced to a halt by an approaching automobile but, neighing in alarm, it turned aside and rushed off to the southwest...

The sun was setting. Members of the Red Banner Production Team belonging to the Li Family Village Brigade, were going home from the fields when they saw a big black horse running towards them along the road. Li, political instructor of the team, looked around and saw no one following the horse. From his experience Li realized the horse was scared. "We must stop it," he thought. Probably the animal was tired for when Li called to it to



stop, it obeyed. Li took off his belt and looped it around the horse's neck. Docile then, the animal followed him.

"What a horse! It's one in a hundred, better than the big grey mule we bought recently."

"How wonderful it would be to pair it with our big mule. Pity it isn't ours."

"What a way to talk. Just think of the people who've lost this horse. How worried they must be."

Members were airing their views. Li joined them to say significantly, "That's right. We should try to send it back where it belongs."

Leading the horse to the stable, Li left it in charge of the stockman, mentioning how he had caught it. In the end he said, "Didn't we buy a new bridle for our grey mule? Put it on this horse." Meanwhile he took up a curry comb and gave the horse a thorough grooming. "Now, don't you worry," Li told the horse, patting its rump. "Feel at home here. You needn't stand on ceremony. Eat your fill. We'll send you home soon."

Li, fifty-eight of age, was a tall man with a deep tan and intelligent eyes under bushy brows. He had a good work style, that is, whenever there was a problem to be solved he brought it to the leading group of the team. As he put it, "More brains, more wisdom; and more hands, more efficiency." He was perfectly clear about what should be done with the horse. Nevertheless, after supper he called a meeting of the group to discuss the matter.

They met in the north room of Li's own house, which served as a study room for the production team. With the exception of their team leader Sung, who had gone to another team for some cotton seed, the members were all present. After telling briefly how he had found the horse, Li said, "Now, what shall we do with it?"

"I'll have first say," somebody said immediately after Li finished. It was Big Gun, the vice team leader, so nicknamed because he always spoke first at every meeting. "The animal came here a godsend," he went on. "If its owner comes for it, we'll hand it over to him. If nobody comes for it, we'll make use of it. Meanwhile let's pair it with our big mule for ploughing tomorrow."

"I object," said Chin-hsueh, a young member who usually led the study sessions. "We should do our best to send the horse back to its owner."

"Send it back? That's easier said than done. It's spring sowing time. We're short of labour. Who can we spare to take it back? Besides, who knows where this horse belongs? Where shall we take it?" Big Gun let loose this second shot.

"We can write a notice describing the horse and have it posted up. That would be doing our duty." This was from the usually reticent storekeeper.

"A notice is not enough," said the girl accountant Chu-hung, standing up. "We should send that horse back as quickly as possible."

Yun-lu, chairman of the Poor and Lower-Middle Peasants' Association, had wanted to speak for some time. Now he put in, "The girl is right. It's the busy season for both men and animals. The members of the team which owns this horse must be very anxious. They'll have to send out quite a few people to look for it. Even if it costs us some time and energy, we should try to find out where it comes from as fast as possible."

Listening while smoking a pipe, Li felt pleased about the discussion that followed. Knocking the ashes from his pipe, he stood up and said, "Comrades, there's a saying, a drum is silent till it is struck and a point of view will not be clear without an argument. Now 'sending back' a horse and 'using' a horse is not merely a difference in words; it is the difference between proletarian and bourgeois thinking in our minds. To make use of this animal is paying attention to our own interests. But sending the horse back shows a communist spirit which puts the interests of others before our own. Haven't we all studied Chairman Mao's *In Memory of Norman Bethune*? Dr. Bethune always thought of others without any thought of self. We must learn from him, comrades."

"Let's send it back," came the united response.

Big Gun, whose real name was Chu-tzu, however, did not chime in. Blushing, his head lowered, he was saying to himself, "The old political instructor lifts his head high and sees far. I've made a

bad shot again because my gun barrel is rusty. I must use Mao Tsetung Thought to guide me.”

Li went on telling them what each must do to get the horse back to its owner. “I told our brigade Party secretary about the horse at supper time. He’s gone to telephone to try and locate the owners. If he doesn’t succeed, Chin-hsueh and Chu-hung must write some notices and send somebody to post them up tonight in several places. Chu-tzu and Yun-lu will find some time tomorrow to hold a meeting of the team members for a serious discussion about this matter. Let everybody benefit from this education in ideology. I’ll tackle the job of taking the horse back to its owners tonight.”

“You’re not so young any more, political instructor. It won’t be easy walking on a dark night like this. Let one of us young people take the horse,” declared the vice team leader, moved by the political instructor’s spirit.

“What about your rheumatism, political instructor? You shouldn’t walk a long distance. Let me take it,” said the old storekeeper.

“Let me go!”

“Let me!”

Li made a gesture with his hand. “No arguing please, comrades. I’m used to my rheumatism. It’s nothing. It’s important to send this horse back. The matter’s settled. Let everybody carry out his part according to our decision.”

Just then the door opened with a creak. A man came in. It was the brigade Party secretary. He had telephoned to several communes nearby but each replied that they had not lost a horse nor had they heard of anybody else who had. He had hurried over to Red Banner Team and was just in time to hear what Li was saying. He was impressed with Li’s selfless spirit and told himself that this team was truly an unfading red banner and Li was indeed a good political instructor.

“I didn’t find the owners on the phone,” the brigade Party secretary told them. “But I heard your decision. It’s very sensible. You can send someone to put up notices and make inquiries at the same time.”



"Right. We've already discussed it. Time's precious. I'll start off with the horse tonight just the same," replied Li.

Taking along some food, a flashlight and a raincape, Li went to the stable. The big black horse, in a new bridle, looked splendid under the bright electric light. Catching sight of the political instructor, the horse raised its head and neighed loudly. Li laughed and said, "How impatient you are. Already homesick? Stop your noise. I'm going to take you home."

Li put a sack of fodder on the horse's back and led it out of the village. A conscientious and selfless person, he would not dream of riding a horse which belonged to another team. The bright moon shed a silvery light on everything. Coming to a cross-road Li hesitated.

"Big black horse, ah, you big black horse," Li grumbled. "People say that an old horse knows his way home. How come you get lost?" The horse stood there, not stirring, unaffected by the old man's problem.

"Anyway, if a thing is lost it must have an owner. The same goes for a horse. I'll go to one village after another to inquire." Li led the horse southeast towards Sun Family Hamlet.

When he came to the stable there, the electric light was still on. Li pushed the door open and went in. The stockman was feeding his horses.

"Hello, comrade, have you lost a horse?"

The stockman looked surprised. He turned and stared at the stranger. "No, we haven't," he shook his head.

"Have a good look at this one. Have you seen it somewhere before?" Li asked, leading the black horse into the brightly lit stable.

The stockman looked it over and shook his head again. "I've never seen it before."

"Sorry to have disturbed you, comrade. If someone comes looking for a black horse, please tell him that the Red Banner Production Team of the Li Family Village Brigade has found it." Li turned to leave.

The stockman quickly walked up and grasped his hand. He was moved by Li's spirit. "Old comrade, it's cold outside. Come into my room and warm up a bit."

Li thanked him and headed for Shih Family Hamlet.

In this way Li visited five neighbouring brigades and spoke to everyone he met. But the reply was always: "We haven't lost a horse." Then, at the Shihlipu Brigade, a stockman told him that the previous afternoon somebody from the Sunrise Brigade came looking for a horse. Pleased to hear this, Li patted the big black horse, saying, "We've a clue at last."

In the distance a cock crowed. Day was breaking. Li arrived at the Sunrise Brigade, explaining the reason for his visit. A member of that brigade told him: "We've found our horse, but this one you have may belong to the Advanced Production Team of Wenke Brigade, northwest of Loyang. Last night, visiting a relative I met one of their members looking for a horse. He described it. It might be this one."

Good news! Li forgot how tired he was after walking the whole night. Although Wenke Brigade was in the next county, quite some distance away, Li decided to take the horse straight there. Leading the horse, Li walked on a little faster.

In the mean time, Wenke Brigade sent out several members to look for the lost horse. Hsieh and Wang had gone around to many places in the city and suburbs. But they learned nothing about the horse. They posted up some notices describing it. The next day, at dawn, they came to a big department store in the west end of Loyang, where they saw a notice newly posted up. Young Wang read it.

"We found a big black horse running loose yesterday afternoon. Whoever is concerned please contact us." It was signed: Red Banner Production Team of Li Family Village Brigade.

Right away Hsieh and Wang took the bus bound for Li Family Village. It happened that Chin-hsueh of Red Banner Team who had finished with his job of posting the notices was also on it. When they left the bus the three men walked beside each other and fell into conversation.

"Is that Li Family Village over there?" asked Hsieh.

"Yes. Who are you looking for?"

"We're going to the Red Banner Production Team. Their notice says they've found a big black horse."

"So you are...."

"We're from the Advanced Production Team of Wenke Brigade. Yesterday we went to Loyang for a load of chemical fertilizer with the horse and cart. It broke loose and ran away."

"I'm from Red Banner Team. Last night our political instructor Li set out with the horse to look for its owners."

"To look for us?" Hsieh felt deeply grateful. "How can we ever thank you, comrade."

"It's nothing. It's our duty."

Just then somebody called Chin-hsueh's name. He turned and saw it was his team leader Sung.

"You're back, team leader! Have you got the cotton seed?"

"Yes! We can go and fetch it in a few days."

"What kind of seed is it?"

"Advanced No. 5. This fine seed is grown by the Advanced Production Team of Wenke Brigade. That team is a red banner in the cotton growing area. Some of us must go there to learn from their experience."

Fixing his eyes on Hsieh and Wang as he listened, Chin-hsueh now introduced them to Sung. "They are from that very team you mentioned. We found the black horse they've lost." Sung was delighted to meet them. He told them that he had heard on his way home that Li was taking the horse back to Advanced Team.

Hsieh and Sung grasped one another's hands tightly. Hsieh said, "We must learn from your communist spirit!" And Sung said, "We must learn from your advanced experiences." The more they talked the more friendly they felt towards each other.

Hsieh and Wang left Li Family Village and hastened home. They went straight to the stable. There the big black horse was eating his fodder. But the man who had brought it back had already left. "How he's put himself out for us," murmured Hsieh.

"Red Banner Production Team is a well-known advanced unit," remarked Wang. "Political Instructor Li is certainly a good leader. We must learn from them."

That evening at a meeting Hsieh told his team members how the Red Banner people had brought back their horse.

"We'll learn from them," pledged the members.

After the meeting the members put their pledge into action at once. They opened their storeroom and started to select some of their best cotton seed for Red Banner Team. They worked conscientiously until daybreak. Finally several bags of fine seed were ready.

In the morning Hsieh the team leader and Wang the cotton-growing specialist set off for Red Banner Team to take them the cotton seed and also to tell them all they knew of cotton-growing. "This is a good opportunity to learn from that team. Bring back their good work style and good thinking," stressed the team members.

A red sun was rising in the east shedding its bright light over the good earth. Hsieh and Wang, driving the big black horse between the shafts of the cart loaded with seeds of friendship, were on their way.

Illustrated by Wu Tseng-liang

Lin Chi

A Slip of a Girl

It was the factory's day off. But Li Ju-hai, leader of the carpentry section, had got up bright and early. Sitting back on a bamboo chair sipping strong tea, he was turning over a problem in his mind.

Li had been through the mill in the old society. Now, in his mid-fifties, he was the most competent carpenter in the whole works. But Li had a weakness: he was a stickler for rules and regulations. When their carpentry shop was first set up it lacked an orderly system. Tools of different kinds were stacked on top of each other, nails of different sizes were stored away together. Li took the lead in putting an end to this chaos by getting his mates to draw up regulations whereby nails, chisels, planes and so forth were classified and kept apart according to specification, so that the men could easily put their hands on any tool they wanted. This made the work go more smoothly. As time went by, Li came to know the new system so well that he could pick out any tool he wanted blindfold. Thus he took considerable pride in this brain-child of his.

One day a young worker who was new to the section and didn't know Li's ways happened to move a box of nails to where he could reach it more easily.

"What are you doing?" demanded Li. "A place for everything and everything in its place, that's the rule of this shop. Don't throw things out of gear by moving that box." He plonked the box of nails back in its place. When the young fellow looked put out, Li regretted having spoken so sharply. But then he thought: "In production you've got to have rules. Those young fellows are too careless. In their eagerness to speed up the work they don't take enough care of the tools. If they damage something, that will be too bad."

So Li's rules were inviolate. Until, strange to say, his own daughter Hsiao-ling started ignoring them. The problem exercising his mind today concerned this "naughty" daughter of his.

Li Hsiao-ling, though already a young worker of twenty, to her father was nothing but a slip of a girl. The previous afternoon Party secretary Chou Kang of the carpentry shop had consulted Li about a replacement for his assistant chief Chen Chih-chiang, who had just been transferred to another job. Li ran through the names of all the carpenters in his section, proposing several in turn. Finally, however, Secretary Chou asked: "How about your Hsiao-ling, Old Li?"

"What, her! Hsiao-ling?... She's just a slip of a girl. That would never do...."

The Party secretary burst out laughing. "You mustn't look down on girls, Old Li. Times have changed. Plenty of girls are doing a man's job today. What reasons have you for saying that Hsiao-ling wouldn't make a good assistant chief?"

Li grunted, at a loss for an answer. Then he mumbled: "Let me sleep on it before we decide anything."

So now, sipping tea, Li was thinking over this problem.

The strong fragrant tea stimulated his faculties. Twirling his greying moustache he ran his mind over the past, determined to find some good reason why his daughter should not be made assistant leader.

"Got it!" he exclaimed to himself. "Two good reasons why she isn't up to the job."

Li's two reasons were as follows:

The day that his daughter was taken on as an apprentice, Li had taken her to sign on. The manager asked her what job she wanted to do.

"What do you say, dad?" she asked.

Li had smiled and said to the manager: "Draughtsman, checker, lathe-operator, miller, those are all good jobs for girls. What's your idea, Old Wang?"

Before the manager could reply, Hsiao-ling twitched her father's jacket. Shyly yet firmly she spoke up: "I want to be a carpenter."

Li was a bit annoyed. Since the creation of the world, who had ever seen a girl work at a carpenter's bench? A sharp retort was on the tip of his tongue when the manager asked with a smile:

"Why do you want to be a carpenter, Hsiao-ling?"

"Hm." Li shot the girl a forbidding glance. "Do you think carpentry is fun, like riding a rocking-horse, eh?"

Unabashed by the manager's presence his daughter retorted: "Who's thinking of having fun? Time and again at home I've heard you say that now that the factory's expanding production it's particularly short of carpenters. That's why I want to be a carpenter."

"I see you're an observant girl who uses her head," the manager commented approvingly. "Let her have her way, Old Li. If it doesn't work out, she can switch to another job later."

At this, Hsiao-ling beamed, her flushed face pretty as a rose. But her father felt as if he had swallowed a scalding hot dumpling. He could not get a word out.

Hsiao-ling quickly learned her trade. She was soon an adept in handling saw, plane, axe and chisel. Before long, though, she was guilty of a blunder which made her old man huff and puff with exasperation.

It was Saturday and Hsiao-ling was hurrying to finish making a keel moulding. It seemed to her a simple job and there was a good film to see that evening, so picking up a piece of wood at random she set about planing it. When she had finished and checked the measurements, she put this mould on the shelf and hurried cheerfully to the canteen. But her father chased after her and dragged her back.

Hsiao-ling had no idea what the trouble was till Li, glowering, held up the mould she had made.

"Is seeing a film more important than work?" he growled. "How can you play around with a production task assigned by the state?" Hsiao-ling's look of dismay reminded him that she was still fairly new to the job. He therefore continued more gently: "This is unseasoned timber you've used. It may warp. If the mould changes shape, it'll produce nothing but rejects. Understand?"

Only then did Hsiao-ling realize the enormity of her offence. She felt thoroughly ashamed of her carelessness. "I'll do another, dad," she volunteered.

Her obvious remorse disarmed Li Ju-hai. "Go and have your supper," he said. "The film will soon be starting." Pulling out a carpenter's bench, he chose a suitable piece of wood and set about making a new mould himself.

Li had never forgotten this incident. He now told himself: "Hsiao-ling's too feather-brained to be assistant leader. She'd mess things up for sure. This is reason number one."

And reason number two? Why, Hsiao-ling kept undermining his regulations. She had told one workmate: "Now that we've expanded production and taken on more hands, when we all go for tools at the start of a shift there's such a crowd round the stores that it slows up the work. That old way of stacking tools ought to be changed." To another workmate she said: "We need a new method of doing things. This old one just holds us up. We must revolutionize it..."

Quite a few men in the section had been dissatisfied with the old regulations. With Hsiao-ling egging them on, even the assistant chief Chen Chih-chiang backed them up. And a day came when Hsiao-ling said to Li: "Our work's the concern of our whole section, dad. Now we all want to make some changes. How about it?"

Li thought: This is all your doing, you baggage! Concealing his annoyance, however, he said: "Well, I don't object to changes within reason. But with no regulations, things would get snarled up."

Since the section chief's attitude had changed, in their spare time the carpenters overhauled the whole storeroom, re-arranging tools and equipment in the way most convenient for work.

And Hsiao-ling lost no time in pointing out to her father: "We find this new system much handier, dad."

"So you say. Well, time will show."

The men hid their smiles at this, but Hsiao-ling burst out laughing. Her mates at once set up a din, sawing, planing and drilling to drown the sound of her laughter. But it was too late — Li had already heard it. "So you're laughing at your old man, you young minx!" he thought. "How can a provoking slip of a girl like this be made assistant chief of our section?"

First thing the next morning, Li told Chou Kang these two "reasons" for not promoting Hsiao-ling. The Party secretary simply smiled.

"As for the first case, Old Li," he said, "Hsiao-ling saw her mistake and hasn't repeated it. As for the second, it may well be to her credit. To my mind, Hsiao-ling's shaping well. She studies hard and goes deep into problems, has drive but isn't reckless. That's the sort of assistant section chief we need, I say."

Li neither nodded nor shook his head. "I couldn't set my mind at rest, Old Chou, if she were appointed assistant chief," he answered. "Let her try it out for a while before making a final decision. How about that?"

Chou Kang knew what was in the section chief's mind. "All right," he agreed. "We'll put her on probation."

So Hsiao-ling became "probationary assistant chief".

"Watch your step, Hsiao-ling," her father warned her. "Don't throw a spanner in the works while you're on probation. Refer everything to me, see?"

Her father's apprehensions made Hsiao-ling more conscious than ever of the weight of her new responsibility. But then she told herself: "If I study really hard and consult the others whenever problems come up, learning as I work, it shouldn't be too difficult."

"You must give me plenty of advice, dad," she begged.

Li hid his pleasure at this and simply grunted: "It's deeds that count, not words."

In the days that followed, Li observed that Hsiao-ling never slackened for a single moment and the routine work of the section was running smoothly. What's more, the girl used her head. She kept abreast with current events and gave the lead in study meetings. This helped put his mind at rest and lightened his own load. What reassured him most, however, was the fact that the section's monthly production quota would be fulfilled at least two days ahead of schedule.

Just at this point, though, the factory accepted a job of work for the army. The carpentry shop would have to turn out a large number of props. A meeting was instantly called to decide how to allocate this task between the different sections.

Li carefully evaluated the new spirit in his section since Hsiao-ling's appointment as assistant chief. Then in a loud booming voice he asked to be given one third of the overall task. This would so far exceed the workshop's original plan that for a moment everyone was dumbfounded. But since Li's section had always fulfilled its quota, they stopped worrying and clapped to show their approval. And Li's resolute, confident manner made the leadership grant his request.

The first to leave the meeting, Li hurried exuberantly back to his section to share the good news with his daughter. She had not turned up, however, by the end of the shift. After hesitating for a while, he cleaned the electric saw ready to start work as soon as the timber arrived. Then he went home.

Soon after Li reached home Hsiao-ling arrived back. At once he told her of their new assignment. She had in fact heard the news from Party Secretary Chou and was delighted by her father's boldness in shouldering heavy loads. But once they started discussing how to carry out the task, high words passed between father and daughter.

Li had already figured things out at the meeting. He repeated his plan to his daughter: "We'll re-allocate our man-power, run three shifts, keep our electric saw going day and night, and organize a 'relay race'. That way we can be sure of finishing our third of the work on time."

"Even if we do, dad, what about the other two thirds?"

"What do you mean?" Li demanded in surprise. "We can't do anything about the other two thirds. We'll be doing pretty well to finish our own one third."

"I've been making inquiries," said Hsiao-ling. "The other sections already have a heavy work load. They've accepted this new assignment cheerfully, but they're up against a whole lot of difficulties."

"That can't be helped. We mustn't bite off more than we can chew. We've nothing to be ashamed of, taking on one third."

"Having nothing to be ashamed of isn't enough, dad. To show real responsibility towards the revolution we must do better than that."

Li thought: "Trying to run before you can walk, you're bound to come a cropper." But all he said was: "If it isn't enough, tell me what you would do."

"I've got an idea — if only you'll back me up." Hsiao-ling decided that the time had come to put her cards on the table. "If we change our section's single-blade saw into a double-blade job, we can finish not only our third of the work but help out with the other two thirds. What do you say, dad?"

"That's no use. That would simply mess things up." Li sawed the air to stress his disapproval.

Mere mention of a double-blade saw made Li see red. A few years previously some of the carpenters had tried making one. To start with, he had not been against the idea. But as the days passed and all their efforts failed, their section fell behind in its work. Then in exasperation he burst out: "Until you fall, you don't know how slippery the road is. If you'll stop all this talk about double blades and fix the single blade back, I'll give you a medal."

"Just because it didn't work before doesn't mean we can't fix it this time, dad. A double-blade. . ."

"So now you're on about it!" snapped Li. "Our single-blade saw is working fine, why make a double-blade one? You just can't do it. But while you're trying, you'll spoil my single-blade saw."

"Remember what Chairman Mao says, dad. Failure is indeed the mother of success."

This made a dent in Li's resistance. In a much milder tone he replied: "I'm all for scientific experiments. But I'll never forgive you if you hold up that one third we've taken on."

"Secretary Chou has summed up the reasons for that failure before. We've drawn up a plan, and the repair shop has promised us all-out support. Besides, we've a foundation to build on."

"What foundation?"

"Old Chang and some others in our section have already had a go at it." Hsiao-ling spoke confidently. "Besides, we've the two cement bases left over from their previous trial. That's a foundation, isn't it?"

Having no way to refute this, her father tried another line of defence. "The lumber will be here two days from now. If you can fix the saw in three days, that's all right with me."

Hsiao-ling jumped for joy at this and at once rushed out.

That night the carpentry shop was brightly lit. Only the clink of metal and remarks exchanged by men hard at work broke the silence.

By the time Hsiao-ling reached the workshop, Old Chang and some others had dismantled the saw and fetched the parts for the double-blade saw from the storeroom. She promptly rolled up her sleeves and plunged into the fray with them.

Presently Li arrived. Although very sceptical about this venture, as section leader he could not just look idly on. Besides, he mustn't allow the young people to spoil any equipment through carelessness.

The work went ahead fairly fast, according to plan. Two days later they tried out the saw. But because of excessive vibration, it didn't work. Everybody's spirit sank, while Li thought to himself: "I told you so."

Hsiao-ling enlisted the help of Chou Kang and some other old workers. After investigation they decided that the failure was due to inadequate horse-power as well as to faults in the frame. Chou Kang immediately fetched another motor, while Hsiao-ling and the rest repaired the frame. Some of the new parts required had yet to be made, but after two days of hard work the men were fagged out. Chou Kang made them go home while he stayed behind to help Li and Hsiao-ling make the new parts.

On the morning of the third day, the electric saw was still not working. Li started pacing up and down frantically. He searched high and low for Hsiao-ling but could not find her. Then someone told him she was probably sleeping in the temporary hostel. "So after causing all this trouble she's taking it easy!" he fumed. He rushed to the hostel, only to draw blank again. When he returned to the workshop, Hsiao-ling was hard at work there.

"See here!" he snapped. "You haven't managed to make a double-blade saw and you've stopped the single-blade saw from working too. What's the idea?"

"Go back and wait. Presently I'll come and fetch you."

Hsiao-ling's eyes were bloodshot. Her father said no more. A truck-load of timber arriving now at the door, he hastily helped unload it. He was in the middle of this job, when shouts from the workshop made him dash back inside.

Everyone had gathered round the electric saw. Some were kneeling down to watch the driving mechanism; others, smiling all over their faces, were looking at the planks turned out. Hsiao-ling, red in the face with exertion, was feeding lumber into the rotating saw. The whirring blades scattered sawdust over her, and the shop was filled with the fragrance of fresh wood. Chou Kang tipped Hsiao-ling a wink.

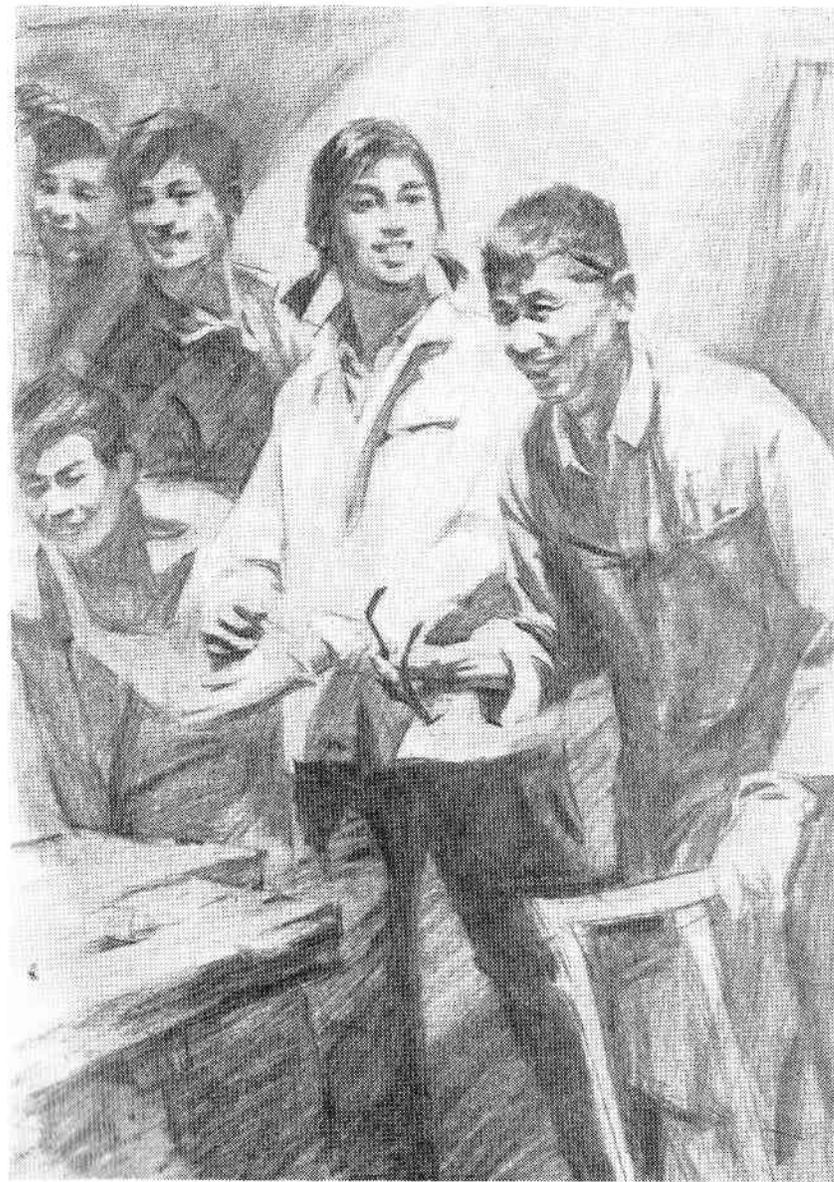
"Come and try this out, dad!" she called.

Li went up to the saw. With the skill born of long practice he pushed a log on to the table. The rasp of the blades lifted a weight from his mind. When he had sawn one prop, Chou Kang standing opposite took the neatly sawn piece and asked with a smile: "Well, how about it, Old Li?"

Li brushed the shavings off his clothes, twitched his greying moustache and grunted a couple of times. "Hm. Up to standard," was his verdict.

A roar of laughter greeted this announcement.

The "one third" quota was speedily completed. Li's section promptly went on to help with the other "two thirds".



A spring shower early that morning had freshened the air. The kapok trees lining the highway were in flower, with blossoms red as flame. The young rice shoots in the sunlit fields were a vivid green.

On the way to work Hsiao-ling asked her father: "Have you figured out, dad, how many days ahead of schedule our section will fulfil its assignment this month?"

"A whole week at least, I make it."

"Our section really has nothing to be ashamed of." Hsiao-ling cocked her head to watch her father's reaction.

"See here, Hsiao-ling," he answered seriously. "A fledgeling just trying out its wings has no cause to feel proud." An apt phrase he had heard came to his mind, and he added: "To show real responsibility to the revolution it isn't enough having nothing to be ashamed of. Understand?"

"I understand, dad." Hsiao-ling covered her mouth to hide a smile, not laughing outright this time. Never before had her old man seemed to her so lovable. She inhaled a deep breath of fresh air and quickened her pace, advancing by her father's side along the broad, sunlit highway.

Illustrated by Chen Yi-fei

Red Army Bridge

Southwest of the Ching kang Mountains amid towering peaks a path like a fluttering ribbon clings to the sides of precipitous cliffs. Along this trail Chairman Mao led his Red Army men into the Ching kang Mountains. It dips down into a valley to the agitated swift waters of the Writhing Dragon River. On the other side is Red Bridge Village, on the Hunan border.

In the wee hours before dawn a small PLA unit on a training mission approached the village. Fading starlight reflected dimly on the snow. They gazed with pleasure at the silvery main peak towering before them. Chin Lien, the squad leader, extended his arms, as though straining to throw himself on the bosom of the mountains.

For several days they had been following the route of the old Red Army. Now they had come to what had been called the Soviet Areas.* Men, who had been members of the Children's Corps, today told their

*Referring to the revolutionary bases established under the leadership of the Communist Party of China during the Second Revolutionary Civil War Period (1927-1937).

grandchildren stories of the time when, under Chairman Mao's leadership, right here in these mountains, a single spark started a prairie fire.

Before the squad was the Writhing Dragon River. Suddenly Chin Lien uttered a soft command: "Down!" Every man instantly flung himself prone in the snow.

"What's wrong?" Impetuous Young Ma raised his head and looked. He saw nothing unusual. He heard only the roar of a waterfall and the gurgles of the twisting river. He started to rise. Chin Lien pushed him down again.

Footsteps crunched across the icy snow. Two figures advanced along the bank. "What are they doing out here at this hour?" Chin Lien wondered.

The man sat down on a rock, struck a match and lit his pipe. They could see his ruddy complexion in the starlight. He pointed at a foundation pile in the middle of the river and said to the girl who was with him:

"A memorial to the Red Army."

The girl was puzzled. "What's it doing in the river? The one I saw in the Ching kang Mountains is way up in the heights."

"It's a long story." Puffing on his pipe, the old man cast his mind back.

I remember that year well. The maple leaves hadn't finished turning colour when Chairman Mao led the Red Army to our village. But the trees seemed to respond, for the next day the maples were a fiery red, as if bedecked with thousands of tiny lanterns welcoming the new arrivals.

The Red Army men helped us cut bamboos and build houses, burn off brush and open new fields. They led our local militia—the Red Guards—into the mountains to fight the despots. Later, they crossed here and went into the Ching kang Mountains.

We were all poor then, and we had to wade the river often to go up the slopes and dig edible roots and cut bamboos. And we liked to visit the Red Army men up there who had become so dear to us. Tightening our belts and living on roots, we took the bamboos down

to the plains, where we exchanged them for salt which we could send to the Red Army.

A squad leader on guard duty by the river saw us crossing every day. He and his men erected a foundation pile in the middle and built us a stone bridge. We were able to use it to go into the mountains and to deliver grain to the Red Army.

Once, when the enemy attacked, the whole village crossed the bridge with the Red Army and went up into the hills. Together we planted bamboo stakes, rolled down boulders on the foe, beat drums and shouted, and drove them off. We brought Red Army wounded back across that bridge, and tended them in our homes.

The squad leader was one of the wounded. He stayed at my house. One night during a snowstorm, the Whites surrounded the village. We started to slip out, carrying the badly wounded, while the lightly wounded gave us cover.

We no sooner got across the bridge than the Whites opened fire. The squad leader told me to take the villagers and the wounded up into the hills. He remained at the bridgehead, holding off the foe.

Dawn was just beginning to break. As we climbed Purple Cliff, I looked back. He was still there. The enemy rushed up reinforcements. A machine-gun sputtered like fire-crackers. The squad leader staggered, then tumbled head first into the Writhing Dragon River. . . .

Though Chin Lien and his squad were lying in the snow, their hearts burned like fire. The old man stood up, beat the snow from his clothes, as if driving away an unhappy memory. "That bridge was dyed with the blood of our army martyrs," he said. "Thereafter, we called it Red Army Bridge. And our little mountain hamlet, which never had a name before, became Red Bridge Village."

"What was the name of the Red Army squad leader?" the girl queried.

"Chin Chen-yang."

The voices of the old man and the girl faded with them into a bamboo grove.

"Chin Chen-yang?" Chin Lien's heart trembled.



Young Ma broke in on his thoughts. "Squad leader, those two look very much like Grandpa Red Pine and his grand-daughter Mountain Maid."

"You know them?" Chin Lien rose, dusting the snow from his uniform.

"Yesterday afternoon you told me to escort that woman who had come to visit relatives in the mountains, remember? I accompanied her to Red Bridge Village. She's Mountain Maid's aunt."

Chin Lien brushed the snow from Young Ma's tunic. "You're a fast runner. Go after Grandpa Red Pine. Say our main unit is coming at daybreak. We'd like him to tell us about the people's struggles in the old Soviet Areas."

"Right." Young Ma happily snapped to attention, then took off like the wind. Chin Lien and the men walked down to the river's edge. They decided to wade across, as the Red Army used to. There was no bridge. On one of the rocks in the old foundation pile was carved: Red Army Bridge. Was that the memorial the old man mentioned? Why was only the pile still left? Where was the rest of the bridge? The PLA men waded back and forth through the racing waters but could see no sign of it.

On the opposite shore, in the undergrowth, they found some trimmed saplings.

"I've solved the mystery," said Young Ke, a short chunky lad who loved to pontificate. "According to my analysis, that old man and his grand-daughter cut these saplings on the mountain and brought them down during the night, probably for something their commune brigade is building — a storehouse, maybe, or an office or an animal shelter."

"Yes." Chin Lien touched the cut saplings covered with a thin layer of snow. "That's probably what it is," he said thoughtfully. "Old Grandpa is young in heart. We ought to learn from him. Before the main unit gets here, why don't we take these saplings into the village for him? What do you say?"

"Good," the men chorused. Each of them shouldered a sapling and they set off for the village of Red Bridge.

On the way they met Young Ma, racing back. Breathing hard, he panted: "Those two were Grandpa Red Pine and his granddaughter Mountain Maid, all right. They worked half the night bringing those poles out from the village. And they say there still aren't enough. They want to bring the poles they had been preparing for a cowshed, too."

"What? They want to take them to the river?"

"That's right."

Chin Lien rubbed the back of his head. "So we're not helping, we're hindering," he murmured.

"What do you mean?" Young Ma didn't understand.

"It's all the fault of my analysis," Young Ke said sorrowfully.

"Old Grandpa is anxious to get a bridge built before the main unit comes. He says the cowshed can wait, but the bridge must be finished," Young Ma added.

"This is an entirely new situation," noted Young Ke.

"The people are so concerned about our welfare. All the more reason we should **'support the government and cherish the people'**, as Chairman Mao says." Chin Lien's intelligent eyes shone. "Come on, let's get these saplings into the village."

"But squad leader —" Young Ke began.

"You're a clever lad. Why can't you see it?" Chin Lien said as they marched along. "How did the Red Army travel in the old days? Must we have a ready-made bridge? We'll build our own, just like they did, a bridge linking us and the people of the old Soviet Areas."

Young Ke, toting a sapling in line behind Chin Lien, finally understood. He slapped the pole smartly. "Right. We'll take these back to the village and build a cowshed for the brigade."

The sky was light now. Mist rose from the Ching kang Mountains. The river sang a merry song. Young Ma, on instructions from Chin Lien, waited for the old man on the bank. He read through the pages of his small notebook in the hazy sunlight. In the last few days he had learned a lot from the revolutionary past.

"You really fly, Young Ma. The minute my back was turned, you were out of sight." Grandpa Red Pine emerged from the bam-



boo grove. A gang of young people, who had come to build the bridge, followed. Mountain Maid tossed down a pole.

"That's funny," she said. "The more we bring, the less there are."

Grandpa Red Pine dropped his own burden to the ground. He counted the poles. "There's something wrong here. Mountain Maid, how many trips have we made?"

"Our squad leader and the men have taken some back," Young Ma explained.

"Oh?" the old man said, half irritated, half amused. "No wonder the more we bring the less there are."

"He said to tell you there's no need to build a bridge."

"But we must," the old man expostulated.

"The way the Red Army travelled, that's how we're going to go. Tell me, Grandpa," the boy asked straightforwardly, "Were you going to build the bridge specially for us?"

"Of course," replied Grandpa warmly. "The people of Red Bridge Village no longer have to go up the mountain across the river to dig roots and cut bamboos for a living. If we want to go to the Ching kang Mountains, there's a new bridge a *li* out of the village that connects with a broad highway. You just get on the bus. In the time it takes to smoke a pipe, you're there. Late yesterday afternoon we heard that a large PLA unit was going to follow the dangerous trails the Red Army took and go up in the Ching kang Mountains. So I got hold of Mountain Maid and we immediately began moving out poles for a bridge. The water is icy in this weather. It's no time for wading."

"The Red Army was able to cross, so can we. We're the people's own soldiers." These words were from Chin Lien, who had come up from behind. He had returned with Young Ke for another pole.

He stepped forward and grasped Grandpa Red Pine's callused hand. "The cowshed is nearly finished, Grandpa," he said. "We just need one more pole for the crossbeam."

Young Ke stooped to pick up the pole at Grandpa's feet. The old man stopped him. Turning to Chin Lien, he said: "Comrade squad leader, how can you manage without a bridge?"

"We'll follow in the footprints of the old Red Army. Our steps are firm."

Young Ke snatched up the pole and took off at top speed. "See you later, Grandpa," he called back mischievously.

Chin Lien changed the subject. "We overheard the story you were telling Mountain Maid a while ago. Why is only the foundation pile left of that Red Army Bridge?"

"Whatever became of that Red Army squad leader?" Young Ma asked eagerly.

"Who knows?" The old man sucked noisily on his pipe. "After the Whites left, I was the first to come down the mountain. I walked along the rushing river, calling his name — Chin Chen-yang, Chin Chen-yang. But nobody answered. I walked till my legs were tired and my throat was dry. Stopping for a rest, I drank some water, and fell asleep. Suddenly, I awoke to find hairy hands clutching me. I was surrounded by a platoon of Whites."

Grandpa Red Pine angrily rapped the ashes out of his pipe against the rock on which he was sitting. "They tied me up and took me to Red Army Bridge. I thought they were going to kill me. But when we got there they removed the ropes. The platoon leader handed me a packet of dynamite. He told me to go down and blow up the bridge."

"Blow up the bridge?" Grandpa's auditors exclaimed in startled chorus.

"That's right. They couldn't do much against our forces in the Ching kang Mountains, so they wanted to destroy the bridge leading to them." The old man smiled contemptuously. "But they were too scared to do it themselves. They wanted me, a young Red Guard, to do it. Fine. I raised the dynamite packet, pulled the firing string and flung it at them. The platoon leader, terrified, fired at me and missed. I jumped into the river and swam and floated ten *li* downstream before coming out. Every joint in my body ached with cold. I couldn't walk. I found a cave and hid there for over a month, living on herbs and wild fruit. Finally, I set out and went to the Ching kang Mountains. But the Red Army was already gone. When I returned to the bridge, that was gone, too. The Whites had blown it up."

Chin Lien rushed over and grasped the old man's work-toughened hands in his own. He gazed at this hero who had boldly defended Red Army Bridge. "Grandpa," he cried in an agitated voice, "that Red Army squad leader you think of so often is alive."

"He is?" The old man's beard trembled with emotion.

"He also escaped from the tiger's maw by jumping into the river. He was rescued by the peasants, who nursed him back to health."

Later, he caught up with our army and took part in the Long March.”

Chin Lien recounted the tales his grandfather had told him of his battle experiences.

“So he’s your grandfather! Where is he now?” the old man pressed.

“He’s still in the army, his arm is still scarred from that wound. The leadership keeps urging him to retire, but he refuses.”

“We all think of him, here. Please tell him for us, we hope he’ll come back and see how Red Bridge Village looks today.”

“I certainly will,” Chin Lien assured Grandpa Red Pine heartily.

Like a ball of fire, the sun rose over the Ching kang Mountains, turning the clouds to golden damask and enkindling the undulating heights to flame. In the distance, bugles sounded. Chin Lien and the old man could see a vast army moving towards the Writhing Dragon River in their rapid advance to the Ching kang Mountains.

Illustrated by Huang Chia-yu

The Old Hunter of Grey Rock Farm

My first encounter with him was at the end of summer. We foresters were on our way to Logging River. After a long bus journey we went by foot, carrying our baggage and equipment along a path through the forest. Soon we were sweltering, but our destination was still twenty miles away.

Team Leader Hsueh had told us that the hottest time of year here was early autumn. He was absolutely right. The whole forest seemed to be dozing, even the wild flowers were drooping. After carrying heavy loads for a mile or two we were bathed in sweat, panting for breath.

Our team leader halted before a great slab of rock to give us a chance to cool off. “I guess we’ll have to spend the night at Grey Rock Farm,” he said.

We sat on the rock which was overgrown with moss as soft as any carpet. Stroking it with one hand, Hsueh asked, “Do you know how Grey Rock Farm came by its name?” We were waiting for an explanation, but he changed his mind. “Come on. We must hurry,” he



urged. "You'll hear the story from Old Kao when we reach the farm."

We came to a stream, so clear that one could see the pebbles at the bottom. Since it was time for another rest, we put down our baggage and all had a good bathe. The evening sunlight had dyed the forest golden. A cool breeze ruffled the water. Very soon we felt much refreshed.

I was enjoying the scenery when Young Huang nudged me, pointing some distance away to where two stags were drinking upstream.

"Too bad we haven't a gun with us!" someone said.

The stags heard us and were off in a flash, heading swiftly for the mountains.

"Even if you had a gun you might not get them," remarked Hsueh as he watched the stags in flight. "Of course, if we had Old Kao the hunter here. . . ."

Even as he was speaking we heard two consecutive shots from the east. Then the two stags which had been running away lurched forward and dropped dead.

"Both stags bagged. What a crack shot!" I exclaimed.

"It must be Old Kao. It couldn't be anyone else," Hsueh commented.

I had just reached the spot where the stags lay when someone came up behind me. I turned and saw an old hunter. He had white hair, a white beard and thick, bushy eyebrows over shrewd bright eyes. A dagger was stuck in his leggings and a yellow kit-bag hung from his right shoulder.

"Are you Grandpa Kao?" I asked him cordially.

He prodded the dead stags with his foot, his face quite expressionless. Only his thick lips moved as he inquired, "Is this your first trip here?"

In my two years of forestry work I had met quite a few hunters and found them rough fellows but very friendly to strangers. This old hunter seemed so taciturn, however, that I just answered briefly, "Yes."

"Hm. I heard you people were coming."

I said nothing.

From his kit-bag he took a rope with which he started tying up his game. I saw a young tree near me and tried to snap it off at the base with my foot.

"What the devil are you doing?" This angry shout made me jump.

"Don't you need a pole to carry those stags?" I asked.

"You call yourself a forester," he fumed. "Don't you know that in a few years this sapling will make useful timber? We need all the trees we can grow to build socialism." Still glowering he went over to the tree, firmed the earth around it and stroked the stem as if soothing an injured child.

I turned to go but he stopped me. "Wait. Give me a hand."

Before I knew what he wanted he had slung his gun over my shoulder. "Take that for me," he said curtly.

He raised a hand to greet my mates who had joined us, then stooped to hoist the game over his shoulder and strode off down the path.

As we continued on our way I could not suppress a feeling of annoyance. "Why is that old hunter so surly?" I asked Hsueh.

"Well, he's like a thermos flask — a warm heart under a cold exterior. Each time we come he entertains us well. Since he's bagged two stags today, you can be sure he'll give us a good meal."

This prediction proved correct. The old hunter worked fast. No sooner was the larger stag simmering in the cauldron than the smaller was skinned and cleaned too. We had a regular feast of venison.

Soon after the heavy meal we turned in. I was sleeping beside the old hunter when I was roused by the sound of hurried footsteps. I heard someone ask, "Grandpa, why are you still up?"

The old hunter answered gruffly, "I can't sleep so I'm doing some reading. If we don't study, our minds grow rusty. Do you want me for something, team leader?"

"Yes. There's a bear making a big nuisance of itself. Not satisfied with destroying our crops, it's after our honey too. Last night it stole five beehives. . . ."

"We'll soon put a stop to that," growled the old man putting on his coat. He slung his gun over his shoulder. "Let's go." The two of them tiptoed out.

Since I had always wanted to see some bear hunting, I quickly got up and trailed after them. It was a moonlit night, enabling me to see clearly where they went.

The old hunter soon spotted me.

"Well!" He eyed me narrowly as I approached. I simply smiled and said nothing. "All right," he conceded. "But since you're here you must obey orders. Don't move till I give the word."

I nodded.

We ambushed ourselves at the foot of a tree beside a pond full of rushes. It seemed hours before anything happened. Then a black ungainly shape came lumbering towards the maize field. Once there, it started pulling off the corn-cobs. I began to fidget. What were we waiting for? The old hunter sensed my impatience. Laying a hand on my shoulder he whispered, "We mustn't fire till we're sure of getting him, otherwise he'll charge us."

I waited in mounting tension. Then the bear emerged from the maize field and lurched towards us. It halted by the hives. Rearing up on its hind-legs, it grasped one hive with its right paw, stuffed this under its left armpit and started moving off. After a few steps it stopped, put down the hive and sat on it. It was just about to lick the honey out when the hunter's rifle cracked twice. The bear let out a howl and crouched down, panting hard.

"Careful! There's fight in it yet," the old hunter warned me.

I watched the bear as it pressed its massive black paws over its belly wound and glared around in search of its assailant.

"Now watch out," warned the old hunter. And springing to his feet he charged. His quarry reared up ready to attack. In that split second the gun cracked again, aimed at the tuft of white fur on the beast's chest. It gave a grunt and crashed heavily to the ground. The hunter with his glittering knife cut out its gall-bladder.

"I'll give this to our commune hospital. It's good medicine," he explained.

We went back by moonlight to the farm. Lying on the *kang* there I was so warm that I threw off my deerskin bedding.

"What's your name?" the old hunter asked me.

"Shih-tou (rock)."

"I like that name," he answered cheerfully. "My grandson's called Shih-tou too. Judging by your accent, I take it you're from the south?"

"My family's in Shanghai. I finished high school four years ago and was sent here to work. Actually I was born in the northeast, but my mother took me away when I was a child and she went south with the army during the War of Liberation."

"Do you like it here?"

"Very much."

"That's good. Young school graduates should work for a time in the countryside. That's Chairman Mao's line. It's the right path to take."

Early next morning the old hunter helped the farm cook prepare our breakfast. We set off for Logging River before sunrise, and from there went on to other places. This was my first encounter with the old hunter Kao.

Later, when I discovered that Grey Rock was the new name for the Valley of Bears about which my mother had so often spoken, I regretted not having made inquiries about a man whom she wanted to locate.

Six months later we returned to Grey Rock Farm. This time there was sleet and snow all through the night. Near noon, the snow stopped. A northwest wind started blowing from the mountains, whirling the snow on the ground so that it gleamed like silver powder in the sunlight. In the distance we heard the rumble of tractors, the rasp of saws, the chopping of axes, the crash of falling trees, together making a grand medley of sound. It was the "golden season" for felling timber.

The old hunter was pleased to see us. "So you're back. How time flies!" he remarked. He called to the cook, "Hey, Old Chang! We've guests here. Stoke up the fire and boil some water to pluck a brace of pheasants."

"Pheasants!" I exclaimed. "Where are they?"

"Outside." The old hunter picked up a string bag and his gun and went out. I followed him into the whirling snow and cutting wind, realizing that the pheasants had yet to be caught.

Sure enough, as we climbed a ridge we flushed a couple of birds.

"No you don't!" growled the old hunter as they took flight. He raised his rifle and fired, bringing both pheasants hurtling down to lie motionless on the snow.

He threw me his bag. "Go and get them."

As I slung the heavy birds over my shoulder I asked, "Can I have the feathers?"

He just looked at me with a question in his eyes.

"My mother's always wanted a whisk made of pheasant feathers," I explained. "To remind her of the days when she fought with the guerrillas in these mountains."

"All right, I'll make your mother a whisk," he volunteered readily. "No one should ever forget those years of fighting."

"Yes, my mother kept an old deerskin as a memento. The one I'm using now," I rejoined.

When supper was ready, the old hunter was nowhere to be seen. Old Kung the local Party secretary said, "We won't wait for him. He's always on the go. That old fellow can't stay idle for a single moment." With a reminiscent smile he added, "I haven't been here long, but I've heard a lot about him. He's quite a legendary figure here. He joined the Party during the war, and fought as a guerrilla in this region. It was he who gave this place its new name. It used to be called the Valley of Bears, but he changed the name to Grey Rock. He was one of the founders, too, of this Grey Rock Farm. He's retired now but he won't stay at home and rest. He says, 'It irks me having nothing to do, so I potter around shooting wild beasts in the hills. This is my way of continuing to make revolution.' He takes such an interest in everything on our farm that we tease him by calling him Busybody Kao or Our Caretaker."

"So you're telling tales about me again." We heard the old hunter's voice outside the door. When he came in we advised him not to work too hard or miss out meals, but he only laughed and countered, "I just caught a couple of hares for Old Chang. He needs a pair of fur gaiters for his bad leg."

He had barely finished his meal when we heard a sort of bellowing far off in the dark valley. Like a soldier who has spotted the enemy,

the old hunter sprang up from the *kang*. "That's a wild boar," he told us. "We must kill it before it does more damage."

The weather was first-rate for hunting, with a bright moon and a strong wind to dispel our scent. I followed the old hunter as he went to track down his quarry. When we came to the big grey rock he called a halt and sat down to smoke one cigarette after another. I couldn't make head or tail of this delay.

"We'll wait here for him," said the old man, reading my thoughts. "He'll soon be coming this way from that mound over there."

Sure enough, before long we heard a rustling in the forest. The sound became clearer and clearer. Then we caught sight of a wild boar flecked with white, a good three hundred pounds in weight judging by its size. It was coming our way. I nudged the old hunter. "Let him have it!"

Crouching behind a bush, we heard the boar getting closer. "See the way its flanks glisten?" Old Kao whispered in my ear. "It likes to rub pine-resin on its coat then roll in the sand, then rub on a fresh layer of resin. Its hide is so thick, it's pretty well bullet-proof."

"How shall we get it then?"

"A shot through the muzzle is the best bet." The old hunter patted my shoulder. "You stay put. Don't move."

He stood up and stepped towards the boar, only four or five metres away. The beast stopped dead in its tracks, then scenting an enemy lowered its head to charge. Standing at the foot of a pine tree, the old hunter took careful aim. But when he pulled the trigger, nothing happened. He was in one hell of a spot!

The boar charged, knocking the gun from his hand with its tusks. The old hunter side-stepped, then swarmed up the tree. With an angry grunt the boar circled round the pine.

The old hunter climbed up higher and got hold of a bird's nest. Then he took off his jacket, bundled it round the nest and hurled this down as a decoy. As it fell with a thud on the grass some distance off, the boar whirled round and charged at it.

Before I could jump up to get the gun, another man appeared as if from nowhere. Quick as lightning he grabbed the rifle, ejected the dud cartridge and inserted a new one. I saw with relief that it was

Party Secretary Kung who had come after us. Meanwhile the old hunter had slid down from the tree. He took the gun. Old Kung and I stepped back.

The boar, angry at having been fooled, turned back and charged more furiously than ever, its malevolent eyes fixed on Old Kao, its sharp tusks ready to gore him. As it hurtled towards us, the gun barked. With a last howl the boar crashed down, sending snow spattering in all directions.

"That was a near thing!" exclaimed Kung.

"All in the day's work." The old hunter was in a good humour. "I've been in tighter spots than this before."

The Party secretary left us, to fetch a pole and rope to carry the boar.

The wind had dropped now. The forest seemed asleep as we sat down again on the grey rock.

"Scared?" the old hunter asked.

"A little," I admitted.

"Our country needs men who can weather storms," he encouraged me with a smile.

In an expansive mood after his triumph, he told me several anecdotes about hunting and some of his most hair-raising escapes.

Suddenly remembering my mother's request, I changed the subject to ask, "Did you know most of the old hunters in the Valley of Bears, Grandpa?"

"Yes. But some of them have died." He lit another cigarette.

"I'm looking for news of someone."

"What's his name?"

"Sung Lin."

The old hunter darted a quick look at me. "What do you know about him?"

"Well, it's a long story..."

I was born one night over twenty years ago in a tumble-down stable in the Valley of Bears in the middle of a snowstorm. That was during the War of Resistance Against Japan, when my mother was a health worker in the guerrilla forces. A few days after I was born, the Japanese and the local puppet troops attacked this area, and her unit had



to move away at night to Logging River. Since my mother could not take me with her on the march, she entrusted me to a liaison man. And he, using a password at a pre-arranged place — a big grey rock — handed me over to a hunter named Sung Lin, an underground worker. The hunter wrapped me up snugly in his sheepskin jacket and presented a deerskin and a couple of pheasants to the liaison man. “Give these to this child’s mother,” he said. “She mustn’t catch cold. These pheasants will make a nourishing broth for her.” Then the hunter slipped out through the enemy cordon and passed me on to another comrade in a safer area, telling him, “This baby has no name. Let’s call him Shih-tou after the rock where he was put in my charge.” Some time later this other comrade discovered my mother’s whereabouts and sent me back to her. All this my mother told me afterwards.

Later on my mother heard something about the hunter. He had fallen ill after smuggling me through the enemy lines. He was a staunch, brave fighter. Once, when the Japanese and puppet troops were running away, he had barred their way single-handed and held them at bay for more than an hour. After his bullets were spent, he charged the enemy and was wounded in close combat; but our troops arrived in the nick of time to save him. We had no idea where he was working now, or whether he was still living. . . .

As I told my story, the old hunter seemed lost in thought. Then he shrugged and hitched up his old sheepskin coat.

“Your mother never met that hunter?”

“No. She always wanted to meet him so as to thank him.”

“Your mother’s name was Chiang Hao. Right?”

I gaped in astonishment. How did he know? . . .

“What’s your mother doing now?”

“She’s now head of the surgery department in a hospital.”

“And your father?”

“He fell in the war.”

“So!” He looked at me with shining eyes. “I’ve been trying to trace you too, but never managed to get any news.”

“Then you are. . . .”

"Sung Lin."

"What an amazing coincidence!" I sprang to my feet in excitement.

"Every time I come here and sit on this rock," said the old hunter, "I think about that baby Shih-tou. But I never knew whether he was alive or dead or what sort of man he had turned out to be. . . ."

Abruptly standing up he patted my shoulder. And pointing at his old sheepskin coat he joked, "If not for this sheepskin, that baby wouldn't have lived to see this day or grown into such a sturdy young fellow." Then more seriously he asked, "Have you joined the Party?"

"Not yet. I'm a Youth League member. I've applied to join the Party."

"Good. You must try harder. Never forget that we owe our good life today to the Party." He paused to straighten my cap, then added, "Next time you write to your mother, send her my greetings."

I could not sleep for a long time that night. The old hunter was wide awake too. He sat beside me smoking, from time to time smoothing my deerskin or stroking my head with his rough, powerful fingers. His presence warmed my heart.

At dawn the next day when I opened my eyes the place beside me was empty. I looked up. The old hunter was painstakingly making a whisk of pheasant feathers, a present for the comrade-in-arms whom he had never seen.

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

Sketches

Li Jo-ping

Heroic Wangchiawan Village

From Shihchai Mountain we gaze towards Peking,
Our hearts filled with memories of Mao Tsetung;
For in these hills where once our leader lived
A hundred flowers bloom. . . .

Wangchiawan is an out-of-the-way commune in northern Shensi. As yet it has no highway open to traffic but from all sides winding foot-paths converge on the village where, in 1947, our great leader Chairman Mao made his headquarters to direct the War of Liberation.

One day last August we visited this village. There was a breeze on the plateau as we set off on foot that morning along a broad highway still under construction. After a while we turned off into a verdant ravine through which Chairman Mao and the members of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party had once passed. The farther we went, the deeper the ravine. Soon the cliffs on both sides were as sheer as if sliced by a sword. When we climbed up in order to reach a bigger valley, a red sandstone mountain suddenly loomed into view. This was the well-known Shihchai Peak. We had reached our destination.

Wangchiawan Village nestles halfway up the mountain in a gully beneath which the Shuangyang River winds. Across from the village

rises Shihchai Peak. Hillside plots and terraced fields bearing rich crops covered the surrounding slopes. Hybrid *kaoliang* and neat rows of maize grew in serried ranks, the scent of ripening millet hung in the air. Not a foot of land on the mountainsides or in the valleys was uncultivated. The luxuriant crops seemed one vast tapestry of yellow, green and red.

Having no time to fully enjoy this beautiful scene, we turned and started uphill. Little paths criss-crossed the slope, leading to a row of cave dwellings that girdled the mountainside like a white belt. I was eager to find out which ones Chairman Mao and the members of the Central Committee had lived in.

Our guide led us to an ordinary cave compound — a fair-sized yard with six rooms, some large, some small, hollowed out from the loess cliff. Originally a poor peasant family had lived here. When Chairman Mao and the Central Committee arrived, the old peasant owner offered them the use of two large rooms and one small one in the centre. Chairman Mao stayed in the second room on the left, which was simply furnished with a wooden table and two small blocks serving as stools. But the most interesting thing in the room was the little square table about one and a half feet wide and one foot high standing on the *kang*. For it was on this table that Chairman Mao had signed directives, prepared documents, pored over telegrams and written many glorious works.

Chairman Mao lived here from mid April to early June, 1947, during the difficult days of the War of Liberation. From this cave dwelling he personally directed the Northwest Field Army and kept Chiang Kai-shek and Hu Tsung-nan's bandit troops, ten times more than ours in number, constantly on the run in northern Shensi. His brilliant strategy enabled our troops to win victory after victory, changing the whole situation on the northwest battlefield. At the same time Chairman Mao directed a powerful drive against the enemy on all fronts so that, in less than a year, all PLA forces in the liberated areas switched from the defensive to a general offensive.

The Wangchiawan villagers recalled with emotion many incidents from those unforgettable days when they had lived and fought beside Chairman Mao.

Chairman Mao paid constant attention to the welfare of the people. As soon as he arrived, he called on the organizations of the Central Committee and guards unit to help the villagers with their spring sowing and to combat drought. He used to chat with the peasants whenever he had time. His old peasant host saw Chairman Mao every day and more than once, seated on blocks of wood beneath a willow arbour, they discussed the war together. When it was necessary for the Central Committee to move to another place, Chairman Mao instructed his staff and the army units to help the peasants prepare for an enemy attack, cache stores of grain and train a self-defence corps. When Chairman Mao heard that a few villagers, evacuating their homes, had headed by mistake for a danger zone, he sent men a long distance to bring them back so that they could move away safely following the route taken by the Central Committee. The Wangchiawan villagers will never forget how Chairman Mao loves the people.

With tears in his eyes an old poor peasant told us: "When Chairman Mao stayed in our village, he had China's welfare at heart, the future of the whole country depended on him. But he lived just like one of us, ate the same millet, elm-leaves and noodles, the same pickled-lucerne broth as my family. . . ."

The local people also recalled that when Chairman Mao and the Central Committee first arrived there, everyone realized that this "Third Detachment", as it was called, was a special unit — it had so many men on horseback or armed with Mausers, so many pack animals, telephone wires and flashlights. From this they guessed that it was an important detachment, but none of them revealed this. Even the children kept it strictly secret. The villagers on their own initiative patrolled the mountains. They posted scouts near the enemy-occupied areas, kept a careful watch on suspicious characters and sent information about enemy activities to the guards unit. . . . In a word, the heroic Wangchiawan people formed an invisible wall around their little hamlet to prevent any news of the presence of Chairman Mao's headquarters there from leaking out. Although Chiang Kai-shek's forces knew that Chairman Mao and the Central Committee were still in northern Shensi, they never discovered their whereabouts. Help-

less as blind men in the mountains, the enemy search parties drew a blank every time.

Twenty-four years have passed since Chairman Mao and the Central Committee left Wangchiawan. During these long years, how have the Wangchiawan villagers fared and what has happened in this revolutionary village?

We descended to the bottom of the ravine and using the stepping-stones crossed the Shuangyang River. A young man posted at a bend of the stream waved a little red flag when he saw us and shouted: "Look out! We're blasting!" At once we halted. In another instant a column of smoke billowed up to the sky and the boom of an explosion reverberated in the hills — the commune members were making a sluice in an embankment. We picked our way to the work site and found ourselves on the rim of a broad dam spanning Yushan Valley like a rainbow. Deep and clear, the artificial lake stretched as far as the eye could see. We had never seen such a vast or beautiful expanse of water in the mountains of northern Shensi.

The cave dwelling where Chairman Mao once lived overlooked this lake. A special construction team formed of more than a hundred heroic sons and daughters of Wangchiawan had done a stupendous job in changing the mountain slopes into arable land and building a dam to make this reservoir. Among the members were a daughter-in-law and a grand-daughter of Chairman Mao's old host, the militia squad leader who had once served as guide for the "Third Detachment", and men and women who when they were small children had sat together with Chairman Mao at meals. Most of the team, however, were young people born shortly before or soon after the "Third Detachment" left Wangchiawan. Last year, under the leadership of the village Party branch, members of the team put forward a bold plan to change Yushan Valley and build a water-storage dam there. The month of June is the start of the rainy season in northern Shensi, when mountain torrents pour down on to the plateau. The fearless people of Wangchiawan, working hard to race against the flood season, waged a decisive battle in Yushan Valley.

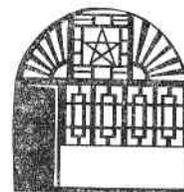
Veteran revolutionaries said: "We must change this valley into a valley of happiness. Because this is the place where Chairman Mao

directed the war in northern Shensi. It's a valley with a revolutionary tradition."

The young men and girls declared: "Chairman Mao can rest assured, we're determined to change this valley into a valley teeming with fish and rice."

In less than a year, Yushan Dam with a storage capacity of several million cubic metres of water was in the main completed together with an irrigation canal. The young people of Wangchiawan were now making a drainage system and raising the level of the dam to protect this large reservoir which was making irrigation and fishery possible on the plateau.

Listening to the older generation's reminiscences and the lofty ideals of the younger generation, we felt that the dam, the lake and every ear of the rich crops on the mountain slopes or down in the valley was infinitely lovely and dear to us. The revolutionary seeds sown by Chairman Mao and the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party had borne rich fruit here. Through the past twenty-four years of class struggle, especially during the storm of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the old-timers have been forged into staunch fighters as firm and aspiring as towering Shihchai Peak, while the youngsters are growing up like the wild red lilies which bloom all over the mountains.



Red Lantern in the Rain

Weather in the mountains is as fickle as a baby's smile. Although the sky was flushed with pink clouds at sunset, by ten it had started to rain. Listening to the patter of raindrops on the thick foliage outside my windows, I tossed and turned in my bed, preoccupied with the tasks tomorrow would bring. And scenes I had witnessed on my trip into the mountains with Young Wang kept flashing before my mind's eye. . . .

Early morning. Multi-coloured clouds cast a glow over the rain-washed hills, so fresh and green that they seemed to be dripping emeralds. Young Wang of the commune's supply and marketing centre and I, carrying on our backs big hampers filled with goods, made our way along the winding highway up into the mountains with peaks wrapped in white clouds.

Wang was a young school graduate who had recently returned to work here, his native place. He was quite well built and strong. The

expression on his pleasant round face was one of honest simplicity so characteristic of mountain folk. As we trudged along, he kept pointing out the wonders of the region to me, a newcomer fresh from the city.

"There!" he said, "Look at those fine terraced fields. That was a barren slope just a year ago. And here, on this stretch, slender green saplings were planted only last spring." The glow in his eyes and the note of pride in his voice impressed me with the tremendous warmth and love in the heart of this young man, the son of poor peasants, for every hill and dale, every blade of grass on his native soil.

After a few turns, there was a sharp gradient as the road entered a pass. In the distance loomed a towering mountain. Pointing to a hilltop mantled in golden sunlight, Wang exclaimed, "Look, there's the village of Hsinli Production Brigade." Looking in that direction I stared intently at the place where the village nestled, for I was hoping that this brigade would help me fulfil an emergency assignment.

I had come to buy matting for the building of a work shed urgently needed by a key construction project. Because the work was progressing at a much faster rate than had been expected, our supply of matting had run out and we were about a thousand pieces short. I had been sent to ask help from the comrades at the local commune's supply and marketing centre, who were right at the grass-roots. Arriving in quite a flap the night before, I had found the man in charge of the centre away in town. The only person around was this Young Wang.

I quickly explained what was needed, trying to convey my sense of urgency, but Wang listened without a word. He ruffled his hair as he thought the matter over, then suddenly slapped his thigh.

"I'll tell you what! Let's go to the old Party secretary of Hsinli Brigade tomorrow. He'll find a way to help us."

"Are you sure he will?" I asked doubtfully.

"Oh yes, if we can find him, the old secretary will solve our problem. That's certain."

So early this morning we had taken this road into the mountains, carrying along in hampers on our backs some goods needed by the commune members working on an irrigation project.

"Just look at all those terraced fields," Wang said exuberantly. "The old secretary and the others began to clear this ground when it was still under ice and snow." His eyes on the rippling green paddy, the young man went on to describe how the old secretary had led his brigade members in cutting through the mountains to bring in water, explaining that the sides of this mountain had never been used to bear crops because they were overgrown with wild vegetation. By then I began to notice that whenever Wang talked about Hsinli Brigade, he inevitably brought up the name of the old Party secretary, always with great respect. Gradually the image of a splendid old Communist took shape in my mind, a veteran who worked steadily as he led the poor and lower-middle peasants in a resolute battle against nature.

We went along the narrow valley until our way was blocked by a stream. Wang, quickly taking off his shoes and socks, rolled up his trouser-legs and plunged in. He had barely taken a few steps when he turned and shouted to me, "The current's very swift. It's difficult to cross with such a heavy load. You wait there for me. I'll come back and help you when I've put my hamper down on the other side."

But why should I wait for him to help me? I took off my shoes, rolled up my trousers, and plunged in too. The stream was not really deep, but the pebbles at the bottom, overgrown with green water-weeds, were so slimy that it wasn't easy to get a footing. The full hamper on my back made me so top-heavy that I hardly dared to move another foot forward. Although treading gingerly, I lost my balance and swayed, hamper and all. A pair of strong hands steadied me from behind just at this tricky moment. Turning round, I saw a middle-aged man beaming at me.

"New to our mountains, are you?" he said.

"That's true," I admitted, nodding.

"Here, let me take that hamper." Without waiting for a reply, the man began to unhitch it from my back. But how could a young fellow my age let an older man do this? I tried to grab it back, protesting, "Old uncle, let me carry it myself."

"I'm quite used to carrying loads. Come along." He pushed away my protesting hands, slung the hamper onto his own back, and made straight for the other side of the river.

"Stay where you are, old secretary! Let me take it!" Wang shouted as he splashed back from the other bank towards us.

Old secretary! So that was who he was. I crossed the river close behind him.

He seemed not much over fifty. The white towel tied around his head did not quite cover the greying hair underneath. His weather-beaten face with its deep wrinkles wore a kindly but determined expression. His blue jacket was faded but clean. All this gave the impression of a homely but strong character.

Wang told him I had come from the Native Products Company in town. "Welcome to the mountains!" The Party secretary gripped my hand in a warm handshake. I came to the point at once, telling him what I needed.

After silently calculating for a bit, the old secretary said without further reservations, "All right. The commune Party committee told us that we must do our utmost to support major construction projects. Just leave this matter of finding one thousand pieces of matting to the poor and lower-middle peasants of our brigade."

I nearly jumped for joy, hardly knowing how to thank him enough. "Shall we ask the construction unit to send a truck here early tomorrow morning?" asked Wang, also very pleased.

The old secretary was thoughtful as he gazed at the winding highway across the mountains. "There's been a landslide a little farther up," he said. "Trucks won't be able to come in tomorrow."

Wang and I gave an exclamation of dismay.

The old secretary noticed our disappointment. "Never mind," he said cheerfully. "To support our country's industrial construction, we must overcome this small difficulty. I'll go down to the production teams right now to collect the matting. It can be delivered to your marketing centre today by ox-carts. I guarantee that early tomorrow morning you can ship it out by truck." With a brief nod, he strode off swiftly up the mountain by a short cut.

"That's just like him," Wang told me with admiration in his voice. "When something is needed, he looks after it right away." We watched the old secretary disappear from view at the bend of the path before we picked up our hampers and resumed the journey uphill.

When we reached the irrigation work site, we sold our goods in no time at all. Then we went on to the brigade office where two ox-carts loaded with rolls of yellow matting were already waiting for us.

Recognizing Wang, a young carter said, "The old secretary asked me to tell you that there are eight hundred pieces here. We're to start out now, he'll be along by and by with the last two hundred."

"Where's the old secretary himself?" asked Wang.

"He's gone over the hill to Tientangpa where he knows there are another two hundred pieces of matting that can be carted out."

I looked up at the sun which was slanting westward. Unless we started out at once for the marketing centre, we'd be late getting back and that would affect Young Wang's work the next day. We left a note for the old secretary thanking him for what he had done and asking him to send us the rest of the matting early the next morning. Mountain roads are too winding to use for carting at night.

We climbed into the first ox-cart and as the drivers flicked their whips the carts started down the mountain road. All along the way, the young carter was full of praise for the old secretary. He told us how the latter had gone from one production team to another to collect the matting for us, without even stopping for a bite at noon.

He went to three teams before he collected those eight hundred mats and took them along the highway to the brigade office. When the ox-carts left the narrow valley, I turned back to gaze at the towering mountains, wondering on which meandering path the old secretary was tramping at the head of his brigade members as they rushed the remaining two hundred mats to the highway. . . .

I was roused from my reverie when Young Wang on the next bed turned over in his sleep. Only then did I realize that the wind had blown the windows open and rain was pelting in. I jumped out of bed to close the windows. As I did so, I caught sight of a small, flickering red light moving along at the foot of the mountains shrouded in darkness. It seemed to be coming nearer. I stood staring in amazement. Indistinctly, the low rumbling of cart-wheels reached my ears.

Who could be travelling in the wind and rain so late at night? Suddenly a thought struck me. Could it be the old secretary? I quickly roused Wang, then dressed and ran outside. Right then, the wheels of an ox-cart ground to a stop by the gate. The old secretary jumped down and came towards us. Under the shaft of the cart, a storm-lantern swayed in the wind and rain, its red light still flickering.

Wang and I rushed over to the old secretary, both deeply moved. One on each side, we took him by the arms and helped him into the room. Then we discovered that his jacket was soaking wet and rain-drops sparkled in his grey hair.

Wang brought a towel and a dry jacket. I poured a cup of hot water for the old secretary. "It's so dark tonight. Why did you bring the matting in all this rain?" I asked.

The old secretary smiled, his eyebrows lifting as his eyes twinkled. "Chairman Mao tells us to **'take steel as the key link'** in developing industry. Though we live in the mountains, we must think of the whole country."

"Why not send a younger man?"

"The young fellows did fight to come in my place," he admitted, beaming with good nature. "But they'd worked all day on the irrigation project. I couldn't let them grope their way around at night." He drained the cup of water and added, "Get along with your unloading now. I must be getting back."

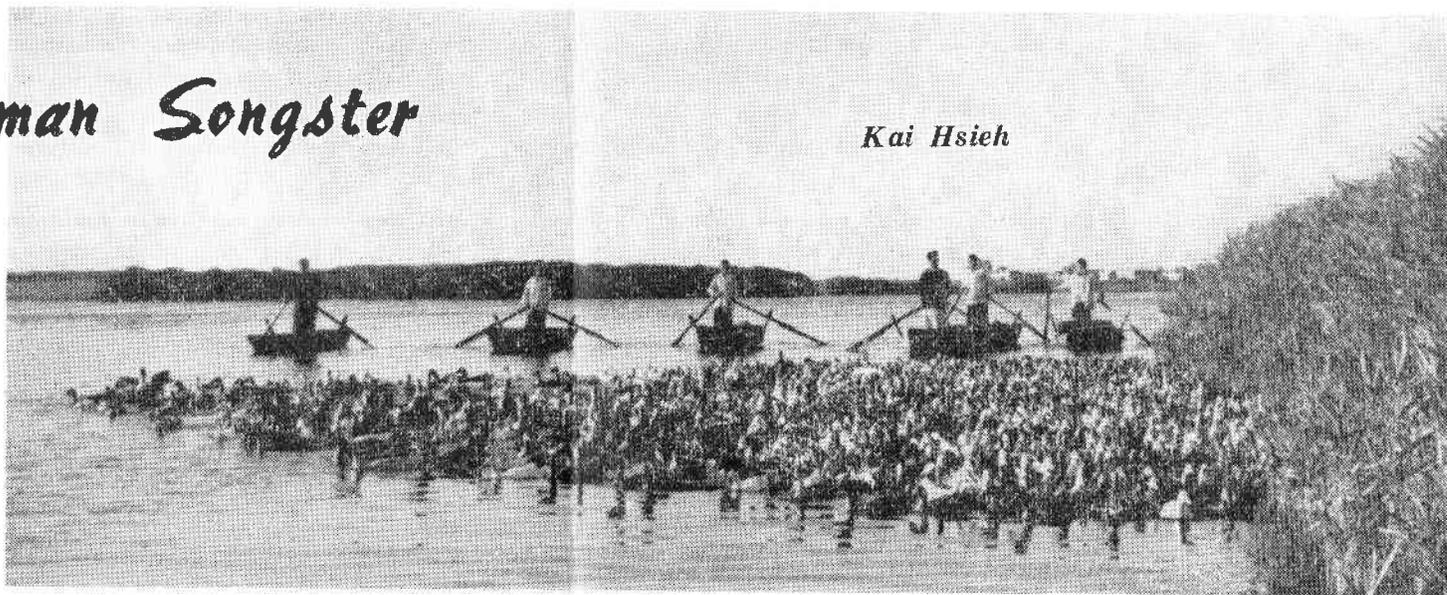
Going back? Wang and I absolutely refused to let him go, insisting that he spend the rest of the night with us. "You can't keep me here," he joked. "I have to be at the irrigation work site tomorrow morning. We're having a rally to debunk Liu Shao-chi and other swindlers like him. What a rotten bunch of careerists!" He strode out of the room and began to unload the cart.

By the time I had carried the last roll of matting into the storeroom, the old secretary, accepting the raincoat Wang offered him, had climbed back into the ox-cart. Giving us a final wave, he drove off.

Wang and I stood in the doorway for a while, our eyes following the figure of the old secretary till the sound of the cart-wheels died away. Through the rain, the red lantern still flickered as it was carried farther and farther into the mountains.

A Fisherman Songster

Kai Hsieh



A hundred miles south of Peking lies Lake Paiyangtien, a vast expanse of water dotted with reedy marshes and skirted by paddy fields. For years more than a hundred thousand fishing folk have lived and toiled by this lake. During the War of Resistance Against Japan this was a well-known guerrilla base of the Eighth Route Army led by the Chinese Communist Party.

One of the fishermen here is named Li Yung-hung. He always carries a pair of bamboo clappers and a small megaphone. When he and the other fisherfolk are resting after fishing or planting rice, he sings his mates songs and ballads of his own making, using these clappers as accompaniment. His songs are known throughout this lake district.

Li Yung-hung's family had always been poor. When he was a child, his parents eked out a living by hiring a dilapidated boat with which to go fishing. When he was ten, he went to work as a hired hand for one of the local landlords. In 1937 war broke out, the Japanese imperialists advanced on this district, and the Kuomintang forces fled south. In 1940 the Eighth Route Army came to this area

to fight the Japanese. They organized guerrilla detachments here and started literacy classes for the poor fisherfolk. That brought about a big change in Paiyangtien. Li Yung-hung went fishing as before in the daytime, but in the evenings he attended a literacy class and learned to read and write. To express his joy and gratitude to Chairman Mao and the Communist Party, he made up this verse:

We fisherfolk are happy men,
Our army's come to Paiyangtien;
Ended is our misery,
Schooling for the poor is free.

When the fishermen heard this they clapped and cheered, for it expressed what was in the hearts of them all. This was Li's first attempt at versifying. Its favourable reception made him determine to make up more songs.

Li took an active part in the war against Japanese aggression, heading a small guerrilla contingent in the village. During these years he wrote and sang many songs to spur the people on to fight the enemy.

The year 1942 saw the publication of Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art*. Li Yung-hung made a careful study of this glorious work, which gave him the correct orientation for his writing. He made up his mind to use his songs to fire the people with enthusiasm and strengthen their resistance to the invaders.

By then Li Yung-hung was in close co-operation with the famous Goose-feather Corps, a guerrilla detachment operating on the lake. One day this corps ambushed and wiped out a Japanese contingent passing that way, killing more than thirty Japanese and puppet troops. Drawing on his own experience of active combat, Li wrote the following lines:

Goose-feather Corps,
Guerrillas without peer,
Unseen we strike,
Then swiftly disappear;

Li Yung-hung sings a new ballad



The Goose-feather Corps in action

We battle here,
Within the reedy lakes
And pick off Japs
Like shooting ducks and drakes.

Paiyangtien abounds in waterfowl. And the Japanese aggressors were as defenceless as the wild ducks, unable to escape from the guns of the sharp-shooters.

Li often makes songs to fit in with the main tasks of the Party at different periods. In 1958 a large tract of paddy fields at Paiyangtien was in danger of being flooded. Whenever he had a free moment while helping his comrades combat the flood, Li composed new ballads — more than one hundred stanzas in all — with which to encourage the flood fighters. He said: “So long as you like to hear my songs and they give you more strength to get the work done ahead of time, no matter how tired I feel I shall go on singing.” And these ballads of his did help to boost morale.

Things have grown better and better for Paiyangtien under Party leadership. During the fishing season, Li Yung-hung fishes in the

daytime and sleeps on his boat at night. One evening, thinking of the increase in the local production of fish, rice and reeds and comparing this with the past, he felt too excited to sleep. He dashed home in the pouring rain, took up his pen and wrote the following song:

Paiyangtien's a treasure-trove,
Trove of reeds and fish galore,
Silver fish in every lake,
Golden reeds at every door,
Wealth that once the rich men owned
Now belongs to all the poor.

Every verse Li writes is the fruit of his hard work and the wisdom of the masses. Time and again he alters his manuscripts, never content to do a slipshod job. Over the years he has developed the habit of reading his new compositions to his mates and asking their opinion. The first part of his long *Fisherman's Ballad* is called "The Song of Sorrow". In this he wrote:

The fishermen's life was full of pain,
Fishermen's tears their clothes did stain.

Hearing this, his mates remarked: "Before Liberation we fisherfolk cast our nets with tears in our eyes. Salt water from our eyes, fresh water from the lake — who could tell where one ended and the other began?" Li thought this comment over carefully and rewrote these lines as follows:

Like water gushing through a net
The tears gushed from our eyes;
Through long sad years these countless tears
Did make the water rise.

Further on, in the section entitled "The Song of Sweetness", he wrote:

With joy we thank the Party,
For it has led the way,
Breaking the bonds of tyranny,
Freeing us from our penury,
Bringing us greater happiness
With every passing day.

Some of the fishermen complained that these lines did not bring out vividly enough the spirit of the fisherfolk who had now stood up. Li racked his brains for a long time trying to improve on this. One day on the road he met an old man, beaming all over his face and standing erect to hail him cheerily. This old fellow had previously been so weighed down by his troubles that he had looked like a hunchback; but now he seemed to be growing younger and more vigorous every year. Inspired by this significant change, Li rewrote the last lines as follows:

Old hunchbacks bowed by misery
Are standing straight today.

Fisherman's Ballad with its three sections "The Song of Sorrow", "The Song of Struggle" and "The Song of Sweetness", gives a graphic picture of the life and struggles of the fisherfolk, their blood and tears, their fighting spirit and their joy in the new society. This long ballad epitomizes the life of the people of Paiyangtien during the past half century.

This ballad, published in 1960, attracted wide attention. Some colleges even invited Li to give lectures on the writing of popular bal-





Li Yung-hung writing songs in his spare time

lads. However, these new honours did not go to his head. He often says that the masses are like Lake Paiyangtien, and he is only a drop of water in this great lake. He keeps firmly in mind Chairman Mao's teaching in the *Talks* that the life and struggles of the people provide literature and art with an inexhaustible source, their only source, and he frequently reminds himself not to be like the duckweed floating on the water but like the pink lotus with its roots deeply imbedded in the mud at the bottom of the lake. All his songs are based on the life

of the masses and his personal experience of the old society and the new.

For thirty years Li Yung-hung has been writing songs in his spare time. Since the cultural revolution he has written with even greater enthusiasm. He is now at work on another long ballad *Red Caltrop*. This tells the story of a poor fishing girl named Red Caltrop who becomes a Communist, reflecting the courage of the people of Paiyangtien in the war against Japan and in socialist construction and portraying a new heroine of the people.

Because Li Yung-hung lives among the masses, sharing their sorrows and joys, his songs smack strongly of real life and are militant and full of vitality.

For three decades and more, Li Yung-hung has written tirelessly for the revolution. He says: "The life of the people is a treasure-trove for writers. Singing for our fisherfolk is the task I have set myself, and one I am proud of." This is why Li Yung-hung is a singer loved by the working people of Paiyangtien.

ON "JUJUBE GROVE VILLAGE"

Jujube Grove Village, a collection of fifty-four short poems by Li Ying, was published in 1972 by the Peking People's Publishing House.

These poems reflect the revolutionary spirit of China's working people who are battling with heaven and earth to build socialist villages in the countryside and to create a better life for themselves. They reveal the transformation of China's rural communes since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Their down-to-earth quality and closeness to real life make them intensely moving.

One of these poems, "Echoes of Laughter", conjures up the picture of an old peasant who loves our new life from the bottom of his heart. Even at night when all is still the village pulses with such vitality that this former poor peasant of more than seventy, who was ground down in the old society, feels young again and, comparing past and present, is moved to strike a match and take a look at Chairman Mao's portrait. Here Li Ying vividly depicts the deep gratitude of the poor peasants to their beloved leader.

How many people are singing in their sleep,
How many are laughing, lying on new mats...

These few words convey the happiness of the masses.

"Weaving Baskets" turns simple daily tasks into poetry. The surroundings and the characters, their work and their aspirations, are naturally interwoven here. If we call this poem a lyrical intermezzo in praise of self-reliance, then "Trying Out the New Canal" is a spirited allegro march.

Other poems such as "Delivering Fertilizer", "The Ploughing Song", "Keeping Watch Over the Wheat" and "Draining Flooded Fields" make common farming tasks significant and inspiring, painting a magnificent picture of the fight put up by the masses to "remodel hills and streams with hands of iron".

However, these poems do not simply portray work on the land; for that would not give a typical or adequate reflection of our splendid people's communes today. The poet sees much farther and does not restrict himself to descriptions of farm labour. Thus poems such as "On the Road to the County Town" show factory workers supplying pumps, fertilizer and insecticide to their peasant brothers, indicating how industry is helping agriculture and how the towns are helping the countryside. "Travelling Doctors" and "The Village Supply Centre" portray the medical and commercial workers who go to the rural districts to serve the peasants. Similarly "Home Leave", which relates how a soldier on leave helps the peasants harvest their crops, reveals the fine tradition and working style of our people's army and the people's love for it. These poems from different angles reflect the relationship between town and countryside, between industrial and agricultural workers and between the army and the people, showing the profound changes and developments brought about in recent years.

"Passing the Orchard" is a thought-provoking poem. By introducing two youngsters who go back to the village to farm after finishing school, it debunks Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line on education and lauds the victory of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

Li Ying is a member of the People's Liberation Army who has written poetry in his spare time for years. The steeling he received

in the cultural revolution has raised his ideological level, and this is clearly reflected in his writing. His poems today are characterized by freshness, conciseness and graphic depiction of the masses.

Chairman Mao while calling upon literary and art workers to go deep into the ardent struggles of the masses has also instructed us to learn their language. He points out that **“the people’s vocabulary is rich, vigorous, vivid and expressive of real life”**. In recent years Li Ying has been living in the countryside and has learned to use the peasant’s language. This has made his writing more expressive. Using the language of the common people, in this collection he has presented us with a magnificent pageant of rural life, carrying his readers into a world of enchantment.



Commemoration Activities in Peking and Throughout China

Three New Colour Films

Three new colour films of the revolutionary modern Peking operas *On the Docks*, *Song of the Dragon River* and *Red Detachment of Women* have been showing in Peking and elsewhere in China since May 23 to mark the 30th anniversary of the publication of Chairman Mao’s *Talks at the Yen’an Forum on Literature and Art*. Released at the same time were sixteen new science films, documentaries and animated cartoons.

Two National Exhibitions

A national fine arts exhibition and a national photographic exhibition opened respectively at the Museum of Chinese Art and the National-



ities Palace of Culture on May 23 in honour of the 30th anniversary of the publication of Chairman Mao's *Talks*.

The fine arts exhibition displayed more than 270 works including traditional Chinese paintings, oil-paintings, graphic art, serial pictures, New-Year pictures, posters, *gonache* and scissor-cuts.

The exhibition of over 400 photographs comprised three sections: Chairman Mao's great revolutionary practice; the struggles in the War of Resistance Against Japan, the Liberation War and the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea; China's socialist revolution and construction and stills from model revolutionary theatrical works. The exhibition vividly reflects the Chinese people's militant course of revolution and construction under the wise leadership of the Party and Chairman Mao.

PLA Art and Photographic Exhibition

An art and photographic exhibition put on by the Chinese People's Liberation Army opened on May 23 at the Military Museum of the Chinese People's Revolution.

The more than 360 examples of fine arts and over 330 photographs on display were selected from about 1,300 works of art and more than



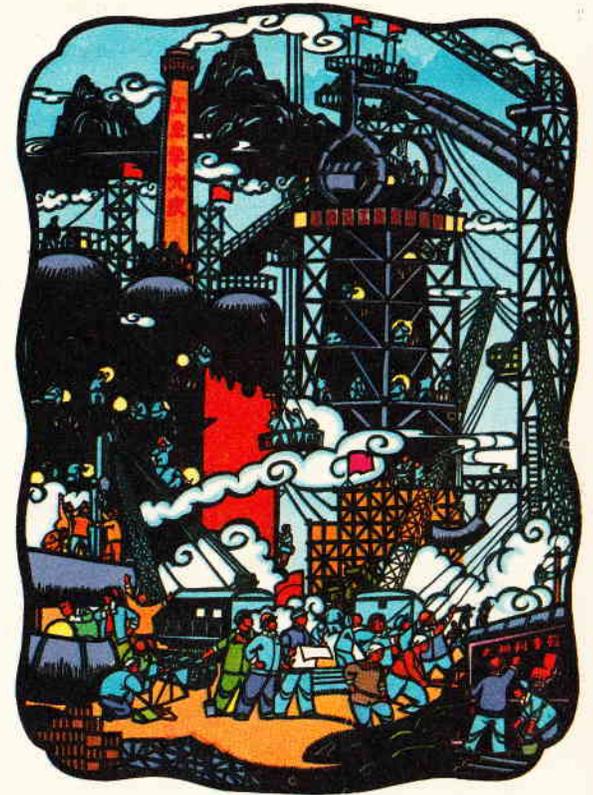
2,000 photos recommended by various PLA units. Most of them portray life in the army. With a wide variety of themes, forms and styles, they show the high standard attained by the PLA artists and photographers who have kept to Chairman Mao's line of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers and taken an enthusiastic part in mass art and photography activities.

Across the Land

China's various provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions have organized large-scale drama festivals, fine arts and photographic exhibitions and other amateur literary and art activities in honour of the *Talks*. Many new literary and art publications have also come off the press during this time.

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WORK IN FULL SWING
(scissor-cut)
by Liu Chen-ting (worker)
SPRING PLOUGHING
(scissor-cut)
by Huang Pang-shih ▼





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