

# CHINESE LITERATURE



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## A Young Hero

The following story is an excerpt from the novel *Red-Tasselled Spears on the Battlefield*, published in 1973 by the People's Literature Publishing House, Peking. It tells how the children of northeast China were tempered by fighting against the enemy during our War of Liberation. Chang Teh-hsin, the young hero, was born in the winter of 1933 in Taheishan Village on Liaohsi Plain. The son of a poor peasant family, he was cruelly oppressed and exploited by the despotic landlord Chin Lao-wan. After the liberation of his village in 1948 by the Communist-led People's Liberation Army, Teh-hsin joined the Children's Corps and soon became its leader, carrying out the tasks assigned him by the Party with intelligence and courage. While fighting the enemy one day, he was wounded.

The following chapters describe his struggle against the enemy after his recovery. At the end of the novel, he joins the PLA to fight for the liberation of our country.

— The Editors

It was autumn and the fields were a delightful riot of colour with their flaming sorghum, golden maize, brown bean-pods, and snow-white cotton.

The poor and lower-middle peasants of Taheishan Village were putting all their energy into this first harvest since the liberation of

their village. They had begun gathering in the fine crops immediately after the autumnal equinox.

That morning before sunrise, they'd gone to the fields, treading on cool dew-drops.

"Start cutting!"

With their sickles, they slashed large swaths in the fields and stacked the crops in neat sheaves. Their jubilant shouts echoed throughout the valley.

"Go all out!"

"Help our soldiers at the front win a big victory!"

Just then Chang Teh-hsin, leader of the Children's Corps, came walking along the highway on his way back from a long stay in hospital. When he saw this enthusiastic activity, he was drawn as if by a magnet. He left the road and headed across the fields.

Sharp-eyed Little Tiger spotted him and cried out, "Look! Brother Teh-hsin's back!"

The villagers looked up. Wiping the sweat from their brows, they called out cordially:

"As fit as ever, Teh-hsin?"

"What about Township Head Tsao? When will he be leaving the hospital?"

Bombarded with questions from all sides, Teh-hsin could only repeat, "I'm fine, thank you. And Uncle Tsao will be coming home soon too."

"What's the news from the front, Teh-hsin?"

"There's great news." His big eyes shining, he announced excitedly, "The PLA has won several important battles. It looks as if the whole northeast will be liberated before long. Are you ready for the coming campaign?"

"See, we're hurrying to finish the harvesting. Is it true that a big battle will be fought right here?"

"The district committee wants us to gather in all the crops as soon as possible so that we'll be able to concentrate on giving help to the front. When Grandpa Chao comes back, he'll call a mobilization meeting."

"A mobilization meeting? Well, let's get on with our work. We all want to support the front."

The peasants wielded their sickles with added vigour while Teh-hsin planted his red-tasselled spear in the ground, rolled up his sleeves, and began working too.

Grandpa Chao, head of the peasants' association, returned that very night and, as expected, promptly called a meeting. Flushed with excitement, he communicated the district Party committee's instructions to the villagers.

"Following the strategy mapped out by Chairman Mao, the PLA has liberated most of the northeast. Only Changchun, Shenyang and Chinchow are still occupied by the enemy. And each of these cities is completely encircled, so the enemy can't beat a retreat nor combine forces. We've got them on the defensive — they won't last any longer than autumn grasshoppers! Our job now is to do our part to meet the needs of the war and prepare for the liberation of the whole northeast."

After the meeting the villagers worked swiftly and conscientiously in the spirit of "meeting the needs of the war and preparing for the liberation of the whole northeast". Within a fortnight, all the crops had been brought to the threshing ground. The peasants' association made careful arrangements for the most urgent tasks — threshing and delivering the grain — and saw to it that manpower was well placed. Every family also dug underground hideouts. As the village was situated beside a river at the foot of a mountain, the militiamen utilized this favourable terrain to build fortifications. They also dug tunnels linking up the hideouts and leading to a gorge west of the village temple. They would be able to hide their grain and strike back hard if the enemy came.

On September 12, 1948 the great Liaohsi-Shenyang Campaign began. Under Chairman Mao's personal guidance, the heroic People's Liberation Army launched a strong offensive.

Then, abruptly, the situation in their area changed. Messengers came one after another, to warn them that the PLA was withdrawing temporarily from their locality to lure the enemy into a trap and "bag" them. After the PLA withdrew, the enemy could come at

any time. The peasants' association was to make plans for the rapid evacuation of the villagers and be prepared to cope with unexpected developments.

The PLA left. Then, one after another, groups of villagers, both militiamen and volunteers, set out to help at the front. There was a steady stream towards the west: carts and wheelbarrows loaded with grain and fodder rolled along; some of the villagers drove cattle; others carried stretchers. The rumbling of wheels, the clattering of horses' hoofs and the sound of voices and laughter intermingled and rolled westward like a river.

Wearing a red armband and carrying his red-tasselled spear, Teh-hsin was on his way west too, joyfully singing partisan songs and lending a hand whenever he could.

At the hospital he and Uncle Tsao had had a long talk that had helped him deepen his understanding of the revolution. Now all his revolutionary fervour was concentrated on their preparations for the coming battle. He had just finished helping an old man fix a harness when he spotted a young fellow struggling with a wheelbarrow stuck in the ditch at the side of the road. Although he pushed with all his might, the barrow didn't budge an inch. Teh-hsin ran over and pulled at the iron frame. It advanced slightly only to fall back into the ditch again. The young man wiped the sweat from his brow and urged, "Go ahead, little brother. I can manage." Thrusting out his chest, Teh-hsin smiled. Then he began tugging again. A woman in her forties stopped to help them by pushing at the wheel. Between them they got the barrow back on the road.

When Teh-hsin stood up, he recognized the woman. "Why are you here too, Aunt Li! Didn't Grandpa Chao ask you to hide the grain?"

Smoothing her hair back, Aunt Li responded, "We've already done that. I've come to find Grandpa Chao and ask him for our next assignment."

"He's up in front. Let's go together. I want to ask for something to do too."

They were making their way through the endless stream of people

and carts when the blast of an explosion ripped the air. Columns of smoke and earth rose nearby to the east of their village.

Gripped by fear and doubt, the villagers stopped. Militia leader Li Tieh-chu quickly reassured them, "Our men are testing mines, comrades." Relieved, the villagers went on.

Teh-hsin looked happily at the smoke billowing in the sky like dark clouds. "We're ready for you Kuomintang bandits! You'll get what's coming to you from us liberated people!" He quickened his step to catch up with Aunt Li.

Suddenly they heard the sound of a galloping horse.

"Probably a messenger." Teh-hsin ran ahead. A white horse emerged from a cloud of smoke and dust and raced towards Grandpa Chao. The courier jumped to the ground as he reined in. Saluting crisply, he produced a letter and handed it to Grandpa Chao. Then he vaulted into the saddle and whipped the horse on.

Teh-hsin and Aunt Li arrived as Grandpa Chao was opening the letter. "You've come at the right moment," he greeted them.

It was a message from the district committee. A long column of Kuomintang soldiers retreating from Shenyang had entered the "bag" our main force had prepared. As the militiamen's presence complicated manoeuvres, they were asked to withdraw to the mountains. The villagers not yet evacuated were to stay put. Some of the cadres would remain behind to protect them and keep an eye on the landlord's gang. They were also to observe the enemy's movements closely and keep garrison headquarters in Chingshih Mountain informed of the latest developments through the secret liaison post.

Grandpa Chao decided that he and Aunt Li would remain behind in the village. He entrusted Teh-hsin with the important mission of carrying the message to Houshan Village. "Give this to Uncle Chi in person — he's the head of the local peasants' association — then come back as fast as you can."

"Right. I promise to carry out my task." Teh-hsin squared his shoulders and saluted solemnly.

"Go back to the village and take my horse. You'll get there faster."

Teh-hsin took the letter but declined this offer. "I don't need a horse, Grandpa Chao. It's not far and I know a short cut. I guarantee you I'll get there fast." He strode off at a brisk pace.

"Wait a minute!" Grandpa Chao called him back and whispered, "The situation is very tense. I'm going to a meeting in the township to discuss the evacuation of our cadres. When you return, leave with the village cadres. Contact Aunt Li if there're new developments."

"Aunt Li?"

"Yes." Grandpa Chao smiled at Teh-hsin's surprise. "It's just been decided by our Party organization. Keep it a secret."

"Of course!" Teh-hsin saluted again, then turned and ran off.

Familiar Taheishan Mountain now appeared forbidding against a sky as black as the bottom of a frying pan. A murky pall had descended upon the land. No bird song could be heard. Eagles, hovering over the clouds, flew towards the approaching storm.

"I must hurry!" Teh-hsin thought and quickened his pace. He had soon crossed the mountain and entered a narrow valley.

Houshan Village was almost unrecognizable. The streets were deserted. No red flag fluttered at the end of the village. A dead silence reigned where once all had been so lively. In the distance sporadic rifle shots clattered across the valley. Then bullets hissed over Teh-hsin's head, the shots ricocheting from the cliffs above.

Teh-hsin crouched beside the road and scanned the valley. The enemy would be arriving soon. It would be dangerous to enter the village now, but he was resolved to accomplish his mission.

He took off his scarlet armband and slipped it into an inner pocket. Then he stole into the village, holding his red-tasselled spear with its point discreetly lowered. As he neared Uncle Chi's house, he heard his name called softly.

He turned round, but saw no one. Then a pile of sorghum stalks rustled and parted to reveal the ruddy face of a short stocky man in his fifties. When he climbed out, Teh-hsin saw his big hands and feet and his homespun white shirt and black trousers.

"Uncle Chi! Just the person I was looking for!" Teh-hsin cried, overjoyed.

Uncle Chi put his finger to his lips, then asked in a low voice, "Have you brought me a message, Teh-hsin? The villagers have all left for the mountains. I've been waiting here for instructions. Come to my place."

He led Teh-hsin into his cottage, where the boy carefully closed the door behind them. The rifle fire was coming in volleys now and at closer range. As Uncle Chi read the letter, then tore it up and threw it into the stove, the shouts of the enemy and the pounding of horses' hoofs increased in intensity. The Kuomintang troops were approaching.

"Come with me." Uncle Chi led Teh-hsin outside to a broken stone trough beside the door of a shed littered with household implements.

"You can hide here, Teh-hsin. I'll get something to cover you with."

"No, Uncle Chi," Teh-hsin protested firmly. "I'm only a boy. They won't



bother me. But you've work to do. You hide here. I'll cover you."

That made sense. After some thought Uncle Chi agreed. "All right. Tell them you're our son. Aunt Chi will look after you."

He lay down in the trough. Teh-hsin moved a bench next to it and spread a sorghum-stalk mat over both trough and bench, then scattered a layer of half-dried sweet-potato chips on it.

"Open the door when they knock, Teh-hsin," called Uncle Chi softly through the mat. "And keep calm."

"Don't worry, Uncle Chi." Teh-hsin took some sweet potatoes, and sat down beside the stone trough to slice them. It seemed to him that all other sounds had faded away except for the approaching hoofbeats. They seemed to be trampling his heart.

The enemy began pounding on doors. That loud hammering threw the village into a turmoil.

"They're coming," Teh-hsin steeled himself as footsteps approached. Aunt Chi came over and looked at him uncertainly, then sat down beside him ready to cope with the situation.

The enemy started banging on the courtyard gate.

"Open up! Be quick about it!"

"Mamal!" Frightened, Uncle Chi's little daughter came running out of the house and threw herself into her mother's arms.

Aunt Chi told her, "Remember, child. This is your brother. If they ask you where your father is, tell them you don't know."

"Damn it! Open up!" Soldiers hammered at the gate with their rifle butts.

"Keep calm and don't do anything rash," Teh-hsin warned himself as he went to the gate. Aunt Chi and the little girl followed close behind.

Teh-hsin had no sooner opened the gate than he received two hard slaps. His face burned and smarted. It was all he could do to control his fury.

"Why did you take so long to open the gate?"

"I didn't hear you knocking."

"Didn't hear me, eh?" A bearded soldier struck him, then, bayonet flashing, rushed past the sorghum mat into the house. Teh-

hsin breathed more easily when he saw that the mat hadn't attracted the soldier's attention.

But now other soldiers entered the courtyard and began overturning everything. After going through practically the entire stack of sorghum stalks, they swarmed into the house and searched every chest and cupboard, every nook and cranny. They were furious at not finding any valuables, nor anyone in hiding.

A whistle sounded from the street — the signal for the soldiers to assemble. Teh-hsin sighed in relief. He would gladly have fought the enemy with his red-tasselled spear, but he still had a task to carry out.

Swearing loudly, the enemy left. At the door, however, the bearded soldier turned round, his beady eyes scanning the courtyard. Slowly, Teh-hsin went back to sit down beside the mat.

The soldier's eyes suddenly came to rest on the mat. As he strode over, bayonet in hand, Teh-hsin tightened his grip on the chopper. His heart contracted. Uncle Chi had heavy responsibilities. He would give his life to protect him. If the soldier tried to raise the mat he'd spring on him!

Brandishing his gleaming bayonet, the enemy soldier looked at Teh-hsin, his eyes narrowed in suspicion, an ugly grimace on his face. He kicked and poked at things at random.

"Where's your father?" He glared fiercely at Teh-hsin. "Where's he hiding?"

"He's not here." Teh-hsin fingered the chips lying on the mat, and said casually, "Search again if you don't believe me."

In a rage, the soldier raked at the potato chips with his bayonet and kicked the bench over, knocking the chips on to the ground.

Teh-hsin's heart skipped a beat. He moved closer to the soldier, his chopper clasped behind his back, while Aunt Chi picked up a stick, keeping an eye on the gate. Just then another soldier came in.

"Hurry up. We've got to scale Taheishan Mountain before dark. We can't waste any more time here."

Angered by his fruitless search, the bearded soldier kicked at an earthenware jar as he left, smashing it to pieces.

Teh-hsin went to the gate and watched. When the soldier turned a corner, he closed the gate.

Uncle Chi had come out of his hiding-place. He smiled at the youngster. "Good for you, lad. Well done!" Then he warned him, "The enemy is everywhere now. Be careful on your way back. Tell Aunt Li that the liaison post has been transferred to the old kiln on the slope of the western hill outside our village." He made Teh-hsin get up on the trough to look as he pointed to the slope. "See that big poplar tree with a crow's nest? The kiln is right below it. You can't miss it. Aunt Chi will be there if I'm not."

"Right." Teh-hsin jumped down, pulled his red-tasselled spear out from under the trough and set off at a run for Taheishan Mountain. He wanted to race the enemy and warn Grandpa Chao and Aunt Li about what had happened in Houshan Village. He hurried on, thinking of his young friends and the new tasks awaiting him.

## 2

Dusk was falling as Teh-hsin approached his village. Great changes had taken place during his absence: No Children's Corps members on guard; no smoke rising from the chimneys; not a light to be seen in the village. On the highway, long lines of enemy cavalrymen were racing by, throwing up clouds of dust. The whole atmosphere was tense.

Teh-hsin leapt on to a big boulder and looked around, sizing up the situation. The enemy hadn't entered the village yet. He would go and find Aunt Li. He felt his red armband through his jacket, then nimbly jumped down from the boulder and hid his spear under it. He brushed the dust from his clothes and slipped into the village. The door of the peasants' association was locked. He tapped cautiously. The only answer, however, was the slight grating of the big padlock. He looked up. The "Taheishan Village Peasants' Association" sign had been taken down — probably by the landlord's gang.

"So you think it's going to be that easy to change things? Well,

you've got another think coming!" he muttered under his breath. He was about to leave when he heard a shrill voice.

"Ah, Old Man Heaven, at last you've opened your eyes! Now we'll see justice done. Heaven be praised!"

It was the wife of Chin Lao-wan, the vicious landlord who had run away before land reform.

Teh-hsin slipped around a corner.

The landlord's wife, dressed in a faded satin jacket and trousers, was walking past the peasants' cottages, gloating. "Come out and fight me now, you paupers! Skulking like rats in there, eh? Come on out! Where's your courage now? Ha! Ha! Taheishan Village still belongs to the Chins!"

"She's bold as brass now," thought Teh-hsin. "Only a few days ago she meekly admitted her crimes. But now that the Kuomintang have arrived, she's showing her true colours — yapping like a mad dog."

He picked up a broken brick and stole up behind her. Having given her a kick in the back that sent her sprawling, he flung the brick at her. She lay for some time without moving, until she was sure he'd left. Then she felt her bruised face and the gash on her lip. Rubbing her back, she swore fiercely after the retreating boy, "Little bastard! I'll get even with you, damn you!"

Teh-hsin was thinking, "You got off lightly this time. Wait till the PLA comes back. Then we'll settle scores with you."

He paused in front of a wall on which was written in bold characters: "Follow the Communist Party to win liberation." He seemed to see once again those stirring events after the liberation of their village: the day they denounced the crimes of the despotic landlord Chin Lao-wan; the story Instructor Sun had told him about the dedicated Communist Chang Szu-teh and about the red-tasselled spears; the meeting called by Uncle Tsao and Grandpa Chao to mobilize the masses to step up production in support of the men at the front. . . . All that seemed to have happened only yesterday. Yet now, in a flash, everything had changed.

As Teh-hsin stood there lost in thought, voices sounded on the other side of the wall.

"Have you already spoken with this officer?"

"Yes. He assured me his men will be here very soon."

"We must welcome them properly. What should we give them?"

"The officer understands our difficulties. He won't blame us if we don't give them any presents. I've had slogans written to welcome their arrival."

"And the list of the paupers' cadres?"

"I've sent that along."

"Good work. I suppose Brother Chin Lao-wan will be coming back too?"

"My father told me to come first. He'll be here tomorrow."

"Well, we're nearly out of the woods at last. Now that the Kuo-mintang army is here, let's see who dares to keep my houses and land!"

"We'll get all our property back — houses, carts, horses, everything! And our rent and our interest!"

"We must do a thorough job this time and kill every one of those dirty activists!"

"That's right. To get on in the world, a man must be ruthless."

"Ha! I never dreamed we'd get our own back so quickly."

Teh-hsin listened quietly in the dark. These men were landlords from neighbouring villages. And among them was Chin Yang-tzu, the son of Landlord Chin. They had all joined the landlords' revanchist corps. Shocked by what he'd just learned, Teh-hsin set off to alert the villagers. He was turning into a lane when someone slipped out and called softly:

"Brother Teh-hsin! So you didn't leave with the others."

"Why, Little Tiger! What are you doing here?"

"Aunt Li was worried about you. She asked us to be on the look-out for you. Cheng-tzu and Tu-tzu are here too."

The others suddenly emerged from behind a wall. Each had pieces of torn paper in his hand.

"What's that?"

"Reactionary slogans put up by the landlords. We tore them down right away."

"Where are Aunt Li and Grandpa Chao?" Teh-hsin asked with concern. "And what's the situation here?"

"Grandpa Chao planned everything: who should leave, what should be hidden, and so on. The militia and the young men have all gone into the mountains to fight in co-ordination with the main forces."

That reassured Teh-hsin. But when he remembered the conversation he'd just overheard, he became anxious again.

"Do you know that Chin Lao-wan is coming back and that the bloodthirsty landlords are planning to get their own back?"

The boys were indignant. Shaking his fist, Little Tiger vowed, "If it's blood they're after, we'll fight back and kill them all!"

"Right!" responded Teh-hsin. "But how will we fight back?"

Little Tiger scratched his head and wrinkled his brow, but couldn't come up with a good plan.

Nor could Teh-hsin. He decided they should talk it over with Aunt Li.

Aunt Li had a two-room stone cottage in the southeastern part of the village. On one side of her courtyard was a big pile of firewood, on the other side a new sweet-potato clamp, its sorghum stalk cover not yet plastered with mud. A smallish pig was still in the pigsty. The hens and a grey cock had already gone into the chicken coop to roost, but the door of the coop was still open. In the backyard there was a small vegetable plot with a well in the centre. Good-sized cabbages had been picked but left lying on the ground. A low mud wall separated the courtyard from the road leading to Huchia Mountain.

Aunt Li was not in, but she returned presently. Her first words to Teh-hsin were "Why did it take you so long to get back?"

Teh-hsin told her about his trip and all he'd seen and learned. "What are we going to do now, Aunt Li?" he asked anxiously.

"I know what the landlords are up to, don't you worry. As head of the Children's Corps, you're on their blacklist. You must leave at once."

"I want to stay with you and fight!"

Aunt Li's kindly face became stern. "This is the leadership's decision. Take the path to the north of the village and then follow the road leading to Chingshih Mountain. There, you'll be able to catch up with our militiamen." She led Teh-hsin to the door.

Dogs barked. Shouts rang out. It was too late. Kuomintang soldiers were entering the village from both sides.

Aunt Li made her decision quickly. "Go home, quick, Little Tiger and Cheng-tzu," she ordered. "You'll stay here, Teh-hsin. Your parents have already left."

A few minutes after the two other boys had slipped out, the sound of running steps echoed in the lane. The door was flung open. In rushed some enemy soldiers in yellow uniforms.

"How many people in your family?" demanded a soldier aiming his gun at Aunt Li.

"Myself and my son," she answered icily.

"Where's your husband?"

"Dead."

"Damn it! Another who's left with the Reds! Well, hand over anything of value you have."

"Choose yourself."

Some more soldiers rushed in. They pushed Aunt Li and Teh-hsin aside and ransacked the rooms. The chests and jars were empty.

"They've hidden everything, damn them." They smashed all the earthenware with their rifle butts, growling obscenities all the while. Then they dashed out into the courtyard. When they saw that other soldiers were already dragging the pig away, they lunged at the frightened chickens, making them flap away over the courtyard wall.

While the Kuomintang soldiers looted or wrecked everything they could find, Chin Lao-wan's wife and the landlords were busy "welcoming" them. Taheishan Village had become a hell on earth.

Aunt Li glared in silence at the plundering soldiers, then slammed the door after them. "You'll have to stay here tonight, Teh-hsin. Follow my instructions if trouble crops up."

"Do give me a task," urged Teh-hsin. "I'll do anything I can for the revolution."

Aunt Li took up some sewing. She stitched away steadily and calmly. With each stitch, Teh-hsin felt his confidence and strength grow. He soon became calm too.

Late that night, crisp shots sounded south of the village. Teh-hsin jumped up and rushed out of the back door. Putting down her sewing, Aunt Li followed him.

Teh-hsin leaned on the low wall and peered in the direction of the shots. The wind carried to him the faint sound of hoofbeats.

By the dim light of the stars, he soon made out a man on horseback. Another volley of shots rang out. The rider swayed in the saddle and fell some thirty metres from the house. The frightened horse circled round him, whinnying.

"He must be one of our men!" His heart pounding, Teh-hsin jumped over the wall, took a flying leap across a ditch, and dashed towards the man. Branches slashed his face and tree stumps bruised his feet. The wounded man was Grandpa Chao. Grasping him, Teh-hsin called his name softly.

Grandpa Chao's eyes were closed and his lips compressed. Aunt Li rushed up and felt his pulse. His heart was still beating. Teh-hsin helped her lift the wounded man onto her shoulder.

"The enemy will soon be here. Shoo the horse away," she ordered. Then, with unbelievable strength, she carried Grandpa Chao into the bushes.

Enemy motorcycles were approaching, their headlights sweeping a long stretch of the road. Enemy soldiers were shouting. The horse was now beside the road. Teh-hsin grabbed its reins and hit it hard on the rump, so that it ran forward. But it stopped again a few metres farther on. The motorcycles were now closing in. Vaulting upon the horse, Teh-hsin whipped it on, sending it flying up a ridge. Behind him a machine-gun rattled. Bullets flew over his head. He spurred the horse on, leading the enemy off the track. Once on the other side of the ridge, he rolled off the galloping horse and hid among the trees.

As enemy motorcycles and horsemen raced past him, he heard something crash to the ground. Two men began swearing.

"Hell! What foul luck."



"Get up! Drive on. We've got to catch that Red spy. He's got hold of information about our troop movements."

"But the headlight's smashed!"

"Never mind. Get going!"

The motor raced and they sped off.

So Grandpa Chao had precious information. But he's wounded, thought Teh-hsin. I must hurry back and relay the message for him. Seeing no one around, he stood up. Something rustled near by. Had he been discovered? He squatted down again and, cautiously parting the leaves, saw two green lights. Then some soldiers came rushing up.

"Who goes there?"

"Come on out!"

They fired a few random shots till a fox darted out from the woods and disappeared into the bushes. Then, cursing in disgust, the soldiers went off to continue their search elsewhere.

Teh-hsin slipped out from his hiding-place then and, avoiding the highway, hurried back to the village.

### 3

Aunt Li carried Grandpa Chao back through the trees, well away from the road. The sound of motorcycles and hoofbeats faded into the distance. Once home, she lost no time in dressing his wounds.

When Grandpa Chao came to, he saw he was lying on a *kang*. Struggling to sit up, he caught sight of Aunt Li and told her, "The enemy's after me because of the information I've got. I can't stay here."

"Teh-hsin's led them off the track."

"Good lad!" Grandpa Chao was torn between his concern for Teh-hsin's safety and the need to deliver the information as quickly as possible. "See that nothing happens to him," he said. "I must go now."

Another volley of shots rang out on the mountain. At the first step Grandpa Chao took, a burning pain shot up his leg and made him stagger. Aunt Li helped him back to the *kang*.

"You're too badly wounded. Stay in our hideout," she urged. "I'll get the information to the PLA."

Grandpa Chao shook his head at his helplessness. "What a mess! If only they'd hit me somewhere else."

Rifles cracked out on the highway. In the distance flames flickered.

Grandpa Chao cocked his head and listened carefully, analysing the situation. "Teh-hsin seems to have got away. The enemy's coming back to look for him." Then he briefed Aunt Li on what had happened.

Earlier that evening he'd slipped away and gone to a secret meeting-place where he reported on his work to Township Head Tsao. They parted at midnight. "I'll soon be leaving for the mountains," Tsao had told him. "It'll be rough going for you who're remaining behind. Be careful."

Grandpa Chao headed back, riding along mountain paths. He had almost reached the ferry five *li* from their village when ahead of him he heard the noise of men shouting, horses neighing and trucks honking. Headlights gleamed, lighting up the sky. It was the enemy. He hid his horse in the forest and stole down to the riverside to observe their movements. There were over five hundred men. The first group was fording the river, only three feet deep at that spot. Trucks filled with soldiers had already crossed over, while a few impressive-looking cars were waiting on this side, surrounded by mounted soldiers. They must be the personal guard of a high-ranking officer. But how could he find out for sure? Then he remembered the small boat hidden on the river bank not far from the ferry. He buried his pistol, marking the spot, then crept down to the boat. Having pushed it into the water, he climbed in and poled downstream. The splashing attracted the enemy's attention. Searchlights flashed on him while men on horseback clattered up shouting, "Who goes there?"

"The ferryman."

"What are you doing ferrying at midnight?"

"I ferry at night,  
And when it's light;  
Early or late

For fares I wait. . . ."

"Cut that! Come over here!"

Two soldiers jumped aboard and searched him. Then they inspected the boat, but found nothing suspicious. One of them muttered, "Why not take the boat?"

"No," objected the other. "Let's take him to the officers. Maybe they can use him."

"Get a move on, old fellow."

They made him pole the boat to the other bank. A few officers emerged from the cars, conferred a moment, then walked respectfully over to another car and helped out a high-ranking officer. They escorted him to the boat, which seven of them boarded. Four of them were generals. The stubby little fellow whom they addressed with such respect was their commander-in-chief. Two soldiers also came aboard and flanked Grandpa Chao, their rifles at the ready.

"Concentrate on your work, old man," they growled. "And don't look around if you value your life."

When they arrived at the opposite bank, the officers got into the waiting cars, which the trucks had ferried across. The cars were pulling away when an officer stuck his head out.

"Take the old man along," he ordered. "Have him show you the way."

They soon came to a village at the foot of Huchia Mountain. There, they drove straight into a landlord's courtyard. Sentries were posted at each end of the village and at all the cross-roads. No one could leave the village without permission. Grandpa Chao and a young man they'd press-ganged had to chop fodder for the horses. As he worked, Grandpa Chao had a good look round. Antennas had been put up. Wires criss-crossed the courtyard like spider webs and stretched out beyond it into the darkness. Jeeps and motorcycles kept arriving. It looked as if this was the enemy headquarters. "To kill a snake, strike at its head." He had to inform the PLA. At the first opportunity he took a horse, threw the oilskin on its back over his shoulders, and slipped out. He raced past three sentinel posts and was three *li* away before the enemy realized what had happened and began to give chase. He stopped near the ferry to retrieve his pistol, then galloped down the highway. He had almost reached the village when he was wounded.

"This important information must be sent to Chingshih Mountain," he told Aunt Li. "The sooner the better."

Whistles shrilled. Only the soldiers from Huchia Mountain had been pursuing Grandpa Chao, but now those stationed in Chin Lao-wan's courtyard had also received orders to catch the "spy".

Not knowing what had actually happened, the exhausted soldiers slouched out into the quiet streets. Yawning and rubbing their eyes, they searched the whole place, creating a great commotion in the village.

Meanwhile Teh-hsin slipped over Aunt Li's back wall. The house was in complete darkness. His heart skipped a beat. "Were they intercepted on the way back?" he wondered. He walked round to the front. It didn't look as if the enemy had come, for everything was just as it had been when he left. He put his ear to a crack in the door, and was listening intently when the door opened. "Aunt Li!" he whispered. At once she pulled him inside, stepping out herself for an instant to scan the surroundings. Then she quickly bolted the door, drew the curtain and lit a lamp.

"Thank goodness you're back, lad. I need your help. We must hide Grandpa Chao."

Grandpa Chao laid one hand on Teh-hsin's shoulder and looked at him with concern. The boy's clothes were spattered with mud, his face was bleeding from scratches.

"I thought you'd got away, Teh-hsin," he said. "Why did you come back? It's too dangerous here."

"You have important information for the PLA, Grandpa Chao. I thought I could be of some use now that you're wounded."

"How did you learn that?"

"I overheard the enemy talking about it."

"Please get into our hideout, Grandpa Chao," Aunt Li pleaded. "I'll carry out your mission." When she had blown out the lamp, she and Teh-hsin helped Grandpa Chao to the well in the backyard.

"It's a dried-up well, Teh-hsin. Take this pole and slide down. You'll see two big slabs of slate on one side. Pull them out."

Teh-hsin removed the slates, revealing a hideout. He helped Grandpa Chao clamber down into it, then gave him a rope and a stick so that he could climb out later on. After quickly replacing

the slates he swarmed up again and, having removed the pole, poured several bucketfuls of dirty water into the well.

There was a pounding at the gate.

"Open up! Quick!"

"Listen carefully, Teh-hsin." In a whisper Aunt Li told him what Grandpa Chao had seen. "If I can't get away you must get this information to the PLA at all costs — and as fast as possible."

Crash! Enemy soldiers broke into the courtyard and dashed up with levelled bayonets, blinding the two with their flashlights.

"Damn paupers! Why did you bolt the gate?"

"He must be hiding here."

Teh-hsin replied slowly, "Everybody bolts the gate at night. You've already taken our chickens and our pig away. We've nothing left to hide."

"Oh yes, you have — a man! Where can he be if none of you have hidden him? He can't have vanished into thin air!"

A soldier who seemed to be in command collared Teh-hsin. "Where is he, you whelp?"

Teh-hsin widened his eyes and asked in feigned surprise, "What do you mean? We haven't hidden anyone."

The soldier slammed Teh-hsin's head against the door and threatened, "Out with it or I'll kill you."

"We haven't hidden a thing. It's all out in the open — everything we have."

The soldier shoved Teh-hsin, sending him reeling. "Search the place!" he ordered.

The sorghum stalk cover was soon torn from the sweet-potato clamp. When they'd finished going through the haystack, the whole courtyard was littered with bits of hay. Then they came to the well. Standing round it, the soldiers barked, "What's this?"

"It's an abandoned well," Teh-hsin replied coolly.

They shone their flashlights down it. A stench rose from the stagnant water at the bottom. When they left at last, they led the mud-bespattered boy away. Aunt Li set out at once towards the west, stealing along the village street in the shadow of the trees.

The roar of motorcycles and the pounding of horses' hoofs approached again. The enemy had caught the abandoned horse. Searching for the rider along the way back, they discovered bloodstains at one end of Tabeihsan Village. It was encircled and the search began.

Led by the vicious landlord Chin Lao-wan, the revanchist corps and the Kuomintang soldiers tramped from house to house looking for cadres and for activists in the land-reform movement. In all they arrested over a hundred villagers, including youngsters like Tu-tzu and Ying-tzu, whom they drove to the landlord's compound. Teh-hsin was dragged there too. Beams of blinding light lit up the courtyard, where helmeted soldiers menaced the villagers with their rifles and two U.S.-made machine-guns were mounted on the roof, giving the place the look of a slaughtering ground.

Chin Lao-wan and the enemy battalion commander entered side by side. Pistol in hand, the officer stood on the steps and shrilled:

"We're the government's crack troops. You've seen how the Communists flee before us. You can't count on them any more. Get wise, and come over to our side. We're giving you a last chance. Don't let it slip."

Chin Lao-wan added, "If you're wise, here's your chance to make good. Answer the commander's questions — that's your only way out. Think it over and act wisely."

The officer coughed and began yelling again: "According to reliable information, a wounded communist spy is hiding in your village. If you've sheltered him or know his whereabouts, speak up."

Eager to retrieve his property, Chin put in, "And where are your cadres and the grain? And all my property? Out with it!"

Not a sound was heard. The villagers glared at the enemy in contempt.

Brandishing his pistol, Chin stepped towards them, scanning their faces.

"Damn it. You all shouted and bellowed loudly enough at the accusation meeting. Why shut up like clams now? Where's that wounded spy?"

Silence. Nothing but silence. Glaring at the landlord, the villagers shielded Teh-hsin from the enemy.

Through clenched teeth Chin hissed, "Not one good citizen among you. Not a single one! You've all been contaminated by the Reds. Every one of you ought to be killed!"

He turned to the battalion commander. "You must act decisively. You don't know these paupers. If you let them go scot-free, they'll run riot again as soon as your back is turned. You must kill a few today to put the wind up them."

Before the officer could give any orders, a soldier hurried up to report: "A call from headquarters, commander."

The officer rushed inside to pick up the receiver.

"Well, did you catch that spy?" roared a voice at the other end. "Did you get him or didn't you?"

The battalion commander rapped out nervously, "Report! I sent troops out after him immediately on receiving the order. The whole village is so tightly patrolled that even a drop of water couldn't leak out. Right now..."

"Make it short. The commander-in-chief wants to know if you've caught him or not!" the man at the other end bellowed. "According to our analysis of the situation the spy has to be in that village. If you don't produce him within twelve hours, we'll have your head instead!"

"Yes... of course. Tell the commander-in-chief that the spy will be at headquarters within twelve hours — if he's here." He hung up and hurried out. Chin had disappeared. "Where's Chin?" he roared.

"His wife sent for him. Probably to chase after his property again."

"Silly fool! What does that matter! The vital thing now is to find that spy at once!"

Brandishing his pistol at the villagers, he howled, "Where's that communist spy? Out with it, quick!"

He stepped forward to grab hold of Tu-tzu. "Have you seen that wounded old man, child? Tell me where he is and I'll let you and your family go."

"What wounded old man? You've arrested our one-armed grandpa, haven't you?"

"Don't be so smart, you little brat." The commander pushed Tu-tzu away and walked over to Ying-tzu. "Don't be afraid, little girl. If you tell us where the spy and the cadres are, we won't beat you. And you'll get lots of goodies."

Neither his threats nor his tricks had any effect on the children. Ying-tzu shook her head innocently.

Hopping mad, the officer howled, "Listen, you devils! You've got five minutes to disclose the whereabouts of the spy and the village cadres. Otherwise. . ."

Burning with indignation, Teh-hsin felt he had to take action. The heroic staunchness of the villagers filled him with renewed strength and confidence. He felt more deeply than ever before that he was part of the battling masses of the collective resistance.

Watch in hand, the battalion commander glared round, waiting for someone to step out. But wherever he looked, indignant eyes glared back. Like a hungry wolf, he pounced on the one-armed man and dragged him out by his jacket. Fixing his wild eyes on the old man, he barked, "You know where he is. Why don't you speak up?"

Teh-hsin's heart contracted. This highly respected old man was an activist in the peasants' association. Before the village was liberated his life had been worse than that of a beast of burden. His whole family had been killed by Chin Lao-wan. The Communist Party and Chairman Mao had saved him. Was he to be maltreated again by the enemy?

"What do you want me to tell you?" the old man cried in indignation. "How you kill, burn and oppress the people just as Chin Lao-wan did before you!"

"Shut up, you old bag of bones. Trying to start a rebellion, eh?" The officer lashed the old man's face with his whip.

The enemy was thirsting for blood.

The officer paced about like an ant in a hot frying pan. Halting abruptly he looked at his watch, then howled;

"Machine-guns ready!"

With a clang the soldiers fixed bayonets on their rifles. Cocking them, they circled round the unarmed villagers.

Pointing at the one-armed man, the battalion commander ordered, "Come out in the middle. You!"

The old man's lip curled contemptuously. He stepped slowly forward.

Then the ruthless officer pulled Tu-tzu and Ying-tzu out too.

Looking on, fifteen-year-old Teh-hsin was in the throes of an important decision. Chairman Mao's teachings, as well as the examples of countless heroes and martyrs and the lessons learned from revolutionary elders, had taken root and blossomed in his heart. Eager to devote his life to the people and the revolution, at this crucial moment he resolved to step forward to stop this slaughter and safeguard Grandpa Chao and Aunt Li. If he could gain time for them to send the information out, victory would be assured.

"Stop! Don't kill them!"

Like a thunderbolt, Teh-hsin shot out from the crowd, hatred flaming in his eyes.

"Teh-hsin!" Tears in their eyes, the villagers tried to cluster round him but were held back by the bayonets.

The battalion commander was so startled that he didn't know what to do. He finally stammered, "Who . . . who are you?"

Standing erect, Teh-hsin announced firmly, "I'm one of the village cadres — the leader of the Children's Corps. You can talk things over with me."

The officer looked him over.

Just at this point Chin Lao-wan re-entered the courtyard. When he saw Teh-hsin glaring at the officer, his old grudge flared up anew. He waddled over, brandishing his pistol. Surveying Teh-hsin, he hissed, "Haha! Got you at last!" He seemed about to gobble Teh-hsin up, but then thought better of it. Laughing viciously, he thought: I'll let him live a few days more. Before long I'll wipe out his whole family with him.

He went up to the battalion commander and whispered in his ear. The officer nodded and rapped out an order, "Take this Children's Corps leader and these two other kids away and lock them up."

Then he turned to Chin. "This is *your* village. Can you pick out the wounded spy and the cadres among these people?"

"I'll try." Chin nodded vigorously. After scrutinizing each face in turn, he reported, "There are no cadres here. But all of these paupers need a good thrashing. They're rotten to the core!"

But with a wave of his hand the officer shouted, "Let them go! — These paupers must get spades, picks and timber ready to build fortifications tomorrow. Anyone who leaves the village without permission will be shot."

Controlling their anger, the villagers left in silence.

When they'd all gone, Chin burst out, "You should have cut them down on the spot! Why did you free them, commander?"

"Personal vengeance is all *you* can think of! But we've more urgent problems. First, we must locate the spy. And then we need manpower to build fortifications. After our victory you can do what you like with this rabble."

Teh-hsin was pushed into a room. Enemy soldiers surrounded him. Head high, the boy looked around fearlessly. A hissing kerosene lamp hanging from the ceiling lit up a place he knew well. The office of the peasants' association until a few days ago, this room was now the enemy's torture chamber. Hatred welled up in his heart. Eyeing the soldiers disdainfully, he racked his brains for some way to outwit them.

The battalion commander sauntered in and leaned against a table. He toyed with his pistol while drumming on the table with his other hand. Then he had a guard fetch a chair for Teh-hsin.

"Please sit down, Children's Corps leader."

Looking away, Teh-hsin answered him quite calmly, "There's no need for that. Just go ahead if you have something to say."

Showing no sign of temper but still tapping on the table, the enemy officer stared long and hard at the boy.

"It seems you're the one who's hidden him?" he began slowly.

"Yes." The answer was crisp.

"Where?" drawled the officer.

Silence.

The officer stalked up to Teh-hsin. This time he shouted:

"Where? Speak up!"

"He's gone, long ago," was the composed reply.

"Gone? Where to?" Drawing back a few steps, the officer banged his pistol on the table and bellowed, "To the east, west, or north?"

"To the south."

The enemy started. "To the south? Why go south?"

"Why not?" Teh-hsin retorted.

"He couldn't have gone south — we're in the south." He felt the futility of his own words and pounded the table. "Tell the truth, you bastard!"

"I'll let you have the truth. The People's Liberation Army is everywhere — east, west, north and south. You can't escape. Better surrender now."

"Trying to outsmart me, eh? What blasted nerve!" Dashing over, he pressed his pistol against the boy's chest. "Come clean," he hissed, "or I'll shoot."

Teh-hsin laughed contemptuously. "A coward doesn't join the revolution or become the leader of the Children's Corps."

Bringing his fist crashing down on the table, the enemy officer shouted: "Guards! Flog him!"

A few soldiers dashed in. Throwing Teh-hsin to the ground, the bloodthirsty brutes lashed him with their whips and belts.

"Where's the spy?"

"Gone, long ago."

"Is that the truth?"

"Yes."

"Go on, beat him harder!"

Blows rained down on him again — his body was covered with welts, his jacket torn. He lay there bloody but his spirit unbroken.

The battalion commander plumped down dejectedly on a chair and scratched his head, at his wits' end. Finally, after ordering the soldiers to take the boy away, he called for Chin.

The officer's expression showed clearly that he had learned nothing from Teh-hsin.

"So you couldn't get anything out of that bastard, eh?" Chin laughed sardonically. "All these paupers are under the Reds' influence. You've got to wield both the carrot and the stick with these devils."

"You've had plenty of experience in dealing with them. You must help me."

"At your service. I'm ready to give my all for the Kuomintang." With that the landlord suggested, "There's a widow here who might know something."

"Where is she?"

"I had her arrested as she was trying to leave the village."

"Oh!" The officer's face lit up. "Is she a cadre?"

"I don't think so. But her son's the militia leader."

"Is he a Communist?"

Chin shrugged. "I've no idea. He might be. They keep their membership a secret, you know."

"She's just an ordinary woman then. What can we get out of her?" His hopes deflated, he flopped down on a chair and hurled his hat on the table, then started scratching his head.

"I think she can be useful to us," Chin hastened to add. "This Widow Li is very close to that whelp Teh-hsin. I have a plan. . . ."

Teh-hsin woke up before dawn, his whole body aching. It was too dark to see a thing. "Where am I?" he wondered. Still in their torture chamber or in the lock-up? And what about Aunt Li? He pricked up his ears. Someone was sobbing softly. Turning his head slightly, he asked in a whisper, "Who's there?"

"Brother Teh-hsin!"

He rolled over on his side despite the pain and groped in the dark till he touched Tu-tzu and Ying-tzu. "So you're here too. Where are we?"

"In the mill." Caressing Teh-hsin, Tu-tzu asked, "Does it hurt a lot?"

Teh-hsin shook his head. "It's nothing. Did they beat you? And how are things outside?"

They shook their heads in silence.

Ying-tzu began crying over Teh-hsin's wounds again.

Taking her hand Teh-hsin said, "Crying won't change anything, Ying-tzu." After a pause, he went on, "Uncle Tsao says that tears won't soften the enemy's heart; nor can they wash away our sufferings. We're members of Chairman Mao's Children's Corps. We can't fight the enemy with tears." Raising his head, he looked fondly through the gloom at his companions. "Don't forget that. We can't let the Children's Corps down!"

Ying-tzu dried her tears. Thinking of the questioning and the beating Teh-hsin had endured, she asked with concern, "Tell us how you managed to stick it out, Brother Teh-hsin."

Teh-hsin thought for a moment. "It's difficult to explain. . . . Well, Ying-tzu, remember the story of the young heroine Liu Hu-lan? Shall I tell it you again?"

"Yes, please." The two nestled closer to him. Teh-hsin began speaking slowly. . . .

"Gazing fearlessly at the enemy's chaff-chopper dripping with blood, Liu Hu-lan shouted 'Down with the Kuomintang reactionaries! Long live the Chinese Communist Party!' Then she strode calmly towards it."

Their large eyes fixed on Teh-hsin, the two children listened raptly.

"I'll follow Liu Hu-lan's example too," Tu-tzu vowed. "I'll never bow my head — not even if a knife is placed at my throat!"

"Me too," declared Ying-tzu. "I'll not shed a single tear in front of the enemy."

"Right," Teh-hsin encouraged them. "We must never show any weakness!"

The door opened with a clang. "Chang Teh-hsin. Get moving. And make it quick!"

When he entered the torture chamber, Teh-hsin saw Aunt Li. Blood ran from her wounds. "She's been arrested too!" His heart ached for her.

"Aunt Li!" The boy darted towards her, but was caught and held back by two soldiers.

"Where's that spy?" the enemy stormed at Aunt Li. "Are you going to try to run away again now?"

"Certainly!" Aunt Li answered forcefully.

"Ha! You're going to be locked up and shot. *You* won't get away."

"I will if there's a breath of life left in me." Aunt Li looked meaningfully at Teh-hsin.

Teh-hsin nodded in understanding.

Blows rained down on Aunt Li. Teh-hsin trembled. Tears streamed down his face.

When he was only three days old, Chin Lao-wan had wanted to kill him simply because he had been born on the same day as the landlord's son, which that old money-grabber considered an "ill-omen". Aunt Li had rescued him and brought him up, sharing the little food she had with him. She had clasped him in her arms to warm him during the bitter cold. . . . Aunt Li had been a mother to him.

Struggling to free himself from his captors, Teh-hsin shouted, "Let her go! You let her go!"

The battalion commander walked over. "I'll let her go, and you as well if you give us the information we want."

"You get away!" cried Teh-hsin, giving him a shove. "Think you can get me to knuckle under like that? No! I love Aunt Li, but I know why you're torturing her. You'll learn nothing from us."

"Good for you, my child." Aunt Li nodded approvingly. Then she rounded on the enemy. "Are you wild beasts — torturing a mere boy! He knows nothing. *I'm* the one who has the information you want." Pulling herself free, she charged at the battalion commander.

Jumping out of reach, he hastily ordered his men to take Aunt Li away, then tried once more to intimidate Teh-hsin.

"Stop playing the fool, Chang Teh-hsin. Do you want to die young? The power is in our hands now."

Teh-hsin laughed disdainfully. "That's not true. You're surrounded by the PLA — as good as done for."

Pounding the table in a frenzy, the enemy officer bellowed, "Take him away!"

Two soldiers led Teh-hsin away. Although day was already breaking, light poured out of the windows in the compound. Only those in the two wings and the flour mill — where the captives were kept — were pitch black. When they reached the mill, one of the soldiers undid the padlock and roughly shoved Teh-hsin inside. Then with a flow of obscenities, he locked the door again and the two men went off.

"Brother Teh-hsin!" Tu-tzu and Ying-tzu ran up and grasped him by the arm, examining him from head to foot.

"Did they beat you again!?"

Teh-hsin shook his head.

"Then what did they want you for?"

Teh-hsin told them that the enemy had arrested Aunt Li, then described how they'd questioned and beaten her. When they heard that, his two friends were aghast. Full of hatred for the enemy, they asked anxiously, "What can we do, Brother Teh-hsin?"

Teh-hsin didn't answer. He was busy trying to think of a way to escape. He had to get the information out as quickly as possible. After reflecting for a while, he had a brilliant idea. The militiamen had dug underground hideouts in the compound — one of them was right under the flour mill. And a tunnel under the stable next to the mill led to Little Tiger's house outside the compound wall. The militiamen had begun to extend this tunnel to the hideout under the mill, but hadn't quite finished it, when they received the order to withdraw. Teh-hsin's heart suddenly felt lighter. His eyes shining, he quickly pulled Tu-tzu and Ying-tzu over and whispered to them:

"It doesn't look as if Aunt Li can get away now. That means we must carry out her important mission. We must find some way to get out."

"How?"

"I've just remembered that there's a hideout under the millstone here. With a little digging, we can tunnel under the compound wall. If we manage to get outside, we'll find a way to send the message."

"That's a good idea!" the other two exclaimed. "How could we have forgotten that hideout! Let's get cracking."

"That's it! We must set to work quickly," Teh-hsin approved.

Then Tu-tzu thought of another difficulty. "We don't know what's happening outside the compound. Suppose there are enemy soldiers posted there too?"

That question set Teh-hsin to racking his brains again. Then he craned his neck and gazed up at the tiny window — the only one in the mill. It was high up under the eaves. So although the sun had risen, it was still dark inside. Well, so much the better — their guards wouldn't see what they were up to. Teh-hsin pulled a long spike out of the wall and used it to fasten the door. After observing the enemy's movements through a crack in the door, he asked Tu-tzu to help him remove the stones covering the entrance to the hideout. Ying-tzu was to keep watch at the door. If the enemy approached, Tu-tzu would warn him by knocking on the millstone. Picking up a broken plough-share left in a corner, Teh-hsin leapt into the hideout and groped his way to the end of the uncompleted tunnel. Lifting the plough-share high, he cut into the damp soil with all his might, oblivious to his pain, thirst and hunger. His only thought was to dig faster. After a while Tu-tzu came down to replace him, and he went up to stand guard and rest. Taking turns, they dug on, racing against time. Teh-hsin had gone down for the fifth time and was tunnelling away when suddenly he heard a dull thudding sound coming through the wall of earth before him. He stopped and listened hard. It was the sound of digging. Who could it be? he wondered as he sped up his work, inching forward. Then a big chunk of earth fell to the ground. A ray of light poured in through a tiny hole. The digging stopped at once on both sides. With bated breath, Teh-hsin peered through the hole. He saw a small dirt-smudged hand holding a half-burnt candle. In its flickering light he made out a perspiring plump red face. Two big eyes were gazing intently through the hole. What a joy it was to see that familiar face! Recognition on both sides was simultaneous. The two boys exclaimed softly in almost the same instant:

"Little Tiger!"

"Brother Teh-hsin!"

They quickly widened the passage. When the tunnel was completed, the two little comrades-in-arms rushed forward and hugged each other. Each wanted to know what had happened to the other.

Little Tiger had hidden in the tunnel with Cheng-tzu when the enemy overran the village. Though Chin Lao-wan had led his men to search Little Tiger's house several times, they'd failed to find either the boy or his father. Furious, they'd smashed everything and wrecked the place. When the enemy assembled the villagers in the compound, Little Tiger had watched from behind the crumbling wall of his house. After Teh-hsin was locked up in the mill, Little Tiger and Cheng-tzu decided to extend the tunnel, hoping to rescue their friends and other villagers. They'd been digging hard without stop for half a day.

Teh-hsin and Little Tiger were still talking about their experiences when Tu-tzu and Cheng-tzu arrived from opposite ends of the tunnel. Their happiness at being reunited was too great for words. But they immediately put their heads together and began planning their next move.

"What's happening outside?" Teh-hsin asked anxiously.

"Chiang Kai-shek's troops are stationed everywhere in the village," Cheng-tzu replied. "All the villagers have been driven to the eastern end of the village and made to dig trenches. Led by Chin Lao-wan, a group of bandit soldiers are continuing the search for valuables and cadres, but they haven't discovered our tunnel. Only a minute ago I climbed back up to my house and had a look at the soldiers billeted there. They were sleeping like logs. So I filched two hand-grenades. Look!" Lifting up his jacket, he displayed two black hand-grenades. At the sight of them Little Tiger reached out eagerly, and Cheng-tzu gave him one.

"What time is it now?" Teh-hsin asked.

"Nearly evening."

"I must get ready," Teh-hsin told them. "As soon as it's dark I'll leave the village through the tunnels and get the information out."

"Let me come too, Brother Teh-hsin," exclaimed Little Tiger. "I'll cover you."

"No, the enemy has the village closely guarded," Teh-hsin objected. "Too many of us would attract attention. The rest of you keep watch at the entrances of the tunnels while I slip out of the village. After I've left, go straight to the tunnel under Cheng-tzu's house. You'll be much safer there."

He reflected calmly a moment, then told Little Tiger the message to relay in the event that he himself was caught. He went on to say solemnly, "If I'm not back by dawn tomorrow morning, Little Tiger, you'll know I've failed to get the information through. Then you must carry out the task. Go to the slope of the mountain west of Houshan Village and find Aunt Chi at the old kiln. It's under the tall old poplar tree with a crow's nest. No matter what happens, this information must be sent to the PLA as soon as possible."

Just then they heard a knocking. It was Ying-tzu, warning them that the enemy was coming. Guiding Tu-tzu, Teh-hsin quickly crept out of the tunnel and covered the entrance. After brushing the dirt off each other, they unfastened the door, taking care not to make a sound. Then they rolled over and over in a heap of chaff until they were covered with it, after which they lay there quietly awaiting the enemy's arrival.

With a clang the door was unlocked and flung open. Two wide beams of blinding light poured in, making the youngsters shut their eyes. Two soldiers strode in. Sweeping the room with their flashlights, they made a search. "Well, bag of bones, how come you're drooping?" they taunted Teh-hsin. "Lost your nerve?"

His eyes tightly closed, Teh-hsin did not answer. Thinking the boy's spirit had been broken, the enemy soldiers grinned and swaggered out. At the doorway they yawned and stretched before staggering off.

As soon as the soldiers had gone, the children got ready to leave. Teh-hsin decided to use the hand-grenade to play a trick on the enemy and cover their withdrawal. He wedged it under the door and lengthened the fuse string with Ying-tzu's hair ribbon, which he fastened to the door. Then they slid down into the hideout one after the other. Having run through the tunnel, they reached Little Tiger's house, where they stopped to eat some toasted sweet potatoes. Little Tiger

insisted that Teh-hsin take some raw ones with him. Unfastening the grenade fixed to his belt, Cheng-tzu gave it to Teh-hsin. "You may need it on your way, Brother Teh-hsin."

With the help of his young comrades-in-arms, Teh-hsin raced from tunnel to tunnel, playing "hide-and-seek" with the enemy till he came to an exit right before his own door. He hid there, waiting until two more enemy patrols had gone by. He was about to continue when he caught sight of a dark figure limping towards his family's sweet-potato clamp. This dismayed him, for in that clamp was the entrance to the tunnel leading outside the village. But the enemy can't know about the entrance, he thought. That man must be one of our people. Nevertheless, he remained vigilant. Gripping the grenade, he gave chase.

It was pitch dark in the clamp. Crouching at its edge, he called in a whisper, "Who's there?" No answer. He leapt down lightly, groped along the bottom and quickly found the heap of sweet-potato vines in one corner. Drawing the vines aside, he removed the millstone under them and crept into the tunnel. He put the stone back in place before continuing his silent chase.

Crouching, Teh-hsin advanced, feeling his way along the tunnel wall. He heard a low cough up in front. It sounded like Grandpa Chao. Teh-hsin quickened his pace. Then he heard the click of a gun being cocked.

"Who's there?" a low voice asked.

Teh-hsin recognized that voice. "It's me, Grandpa Chao." He hurried over. Groping in the dark, he caressed the old man's hands, face and wounded leg. "I never thought I'd find you here, Grandpa Chao! How did you get here?"

"When you didn't come back, I thought something must have happened. At dawn I felt better so I left the well for another hiding-place where I stayed all day. As soon as darkness fell, I came here through the tunnels. Where's Aunt Li, Teh-hsin?"

"She was caught by the enemy on her way out of the village."

"So she wasn't able to get the information out. I must go myself, at once."

But while caressing Grandpa Chao, Teh-hsin had felt his burning forehead and sweat-drenched clothes. He knew that the old man's wound was still bleeding and his good leg was trembling.

"You won't be able to get far with that wound, Grandpa Chao," he pointed out with concern. "You'll be safe in this tunnel. Stay and rest here. I'll take your message to the PLA. I guarantee to carry out the mission successfully." Producing the sweet potatoes Little Tiger had given him, he handed them to Grandpa Chao.

Grandpa thought it over a moment and then said, "The situation's getting increasingly tense. We'd better go together. Take the potatoes. We'll have a look outside the tunnel before deciding how to carry out the task. Well, let's get going."

The old man and the boy clambered out of the tunnel, one close behind the other. After covering the tunnel entrance, they crawled towards a clump of bushes where they hid. Only ten metres of open ground separated the bushes from Western Valley. If they could reach the valley, they would be safe. But as they were making a dash for it, with Teh-hsin supporting Grandpa Chao, they were spotted by an enemy patrol. White beams of light cut through the darkness and converged on them. Machine-guns began chattering. Bullets ripped the mound before Grandpa Chao, throwing up geysers of smoke and earth.

With a sweep of his arm, Grandpa Chao told the boy, "Run towards the northwest, take the short cut to cross the mountain. I'll cover you. Go quickly!" Teh-hsin started off, then rushed back to Grandpa Chao.

"Take this, grandpa." Tears in his eyes, he thrust the hand-grenade into the old man's hand.

His eyes fixed on the enemy, Grandpa Chao stood immobile. He seemed to have stopped breathing. The grenade ready in his left hand, he urged softly, "The enemy's coming. Run for it!"

Teh-hsin wiped his tears away with the back of his hand, then turned abruptly and raced towards the path leading to the other side of the mountain.

Grandpa Chao fired two shots to draw the enemy, then retreated step by step towards Western Valley.

Shouting, the enemy soldiers charged, firing wildly. But Grandpa Chao, calm as ever, made full use of the terrain and aimed carefully as he retreated. Determined to make the little ammunition he had — only thirty bullets — last long enough to allow Teh-hsin to put a good distance between himself and the enemy, he did not stay in one place for long. He limped towards Western Valley, firing a few shots each time before moving on, leading the enemy by the nose. When he reached the valley, he began climbing Western Mountain, dragging his wounded leg. He had planned to escape along the mountain paths, but the enemy were close on his heels. Reinforcements had arrived too. The mountain was soon encircled. The enemy began closing in, yelping, "Take him alive! Take him alive!"

Grandpa Chao aimed at them calmly, knocking them down one by one. But his ammunition was running low. He soon fired his last shot. Thereupon he took out the hand-grenade and climbed up a cliff to the summit of Western Mountain.

The enemy converged on him from all sides, coming closer and closer until they reached the foot of the cliff. Then row upon row of soldiers encircled the mountaintop.

"You won't get away now!" they snarled.

Erect at the summit, Grandpa Chao looked down at them disdainfully. "I've lived in these mountains all my life," he cried. "So long as the mountains remain, I'll never run away! We're not like you scoundrels who talk big, but are weak and cowardly."

Recognizing his voice, Chin Lao-wan hastily turned to the battalion commander. "He's an important cadre — chairman of the peasants' association. We must take him alive!"

Anxious to capture someone to prove to his superiors he'd caught the spy, the commander barked orders to his men to charge. Several squad leaders whose eagerness for reward money overcame their instinct of self-preservation led their men up the cliff.

On that barren peak, there wasn't a single stone to throw down at the enemy. Grandpa Chao stepped back to the edge of a huge rock. After making sure all was ready, he calmly sat down and waited.

The enemy arrived. Pointing guns and bayonets at him, they howled and charged.

Grandpa Chao suddenly shouted two slogans, raised the grenade in his right hand and pulled out the fuse. Smoke came shooting out. Panic-stricken, the enemy fled in all directions, some leaping over the cliff, others rolling down the slope. . . .

As Grandpa Chao was drawing the enemy away towards Western Mountain, Teh-hsin raced along in the other direction, taking the short cut. He'd just reached the top of a ridge, when the shooting ceased on Western Mountain. All he could hear was the howling and cursing of the enemy. Then Grandpa Chao's voice resounded from the peak:

"Long live Chairman Mao! Long live the Chinese Communist Party!"

A flash of flame. A thunderous blast. In consternation Teh-hsin cried out, "Grandpa Chao!" Hot tears streamed down his cheeks. His heart brimming over with sorrow, he stamped his foot, then dashed swiftly down the ridge, determined to avenge his dear ones.

After running some distance he stopped to look up at the sky. The Pleiades had already risen overhead. It was nearly midnight. Looking round, he saw he'd reached the highway at the foot of the mountain. Which way should he take to Chingshih Mountain? If he took the highway right under the enemy's nose, he'd have less than ten *li* to go. There was also a roundabout path far from the highway and the enemy patrols, but that meant scaling another mountain and marching seventeen *li*.

Time is precious, he thought. I must deliver the information as soon as possible. Just then, he heard the roar of motors behind him. He turned and saw a long string of headlights moving swiftly towards him. As the convoy of enemy trucks approached, a plan occurred to him. "Hide in a truck and run the blockade!"

He ran to a place where the road twisted and narrowed. Figuring that the trucks would have to cut their speed there, he hid behind a boulder and waited. Soon the convoy came rumbling along and, sure enough, slowed down. As the last truck was going by, he dashed out, grabbed the back of the truck with both hands, and nimbly leapt on to it. The truck was piled with lumber for fortifications. Pull-

ing with all his might, he managed to move some boards aside and slipped between them.

As the convoy was approaching the blockade, enemy sentries challenged it:

"What unit are you?"

"The supply department," a voice called from the first truck.

"Your destination?"

"Position No. 4."

"Slow down. Inspection."

This put Teh-hsin on his guard. Not knowing how the sentries would check the trucks, he prepared himself for the worst, ready to run for it if necessary. The trucks slowed down to a crawl, but didn't stop. Sentries swarmed out along the cliffs on either side of the road. They flashed their lights on the trucks as they went by and waved them on.

When the convoy had left the blockade far behind, Teh-hsin slowly raised his head and scanned the landscape hazy in the moonlight. Ahead, the road wound in and out before going up a hill. Since part of the stretch on the hill had been destroyed, the trucks would have to make a detour through a wood. That would give him a chance, he decided, to jump off.

The first trucks had begun climbing the slope. Teh-hsin was ready. When the last truck left the highway and jolted along the dirt track through the wood, he seized his opportunity. Grabbing a sturdy branch overhead, he remained suspended in mid air an instant. Then he coiled his legs round the branch and quickly crawled to the trunk. As soon as the truck had rumbled off, he slid down and ran northwest as fast as he could, keeping close to the foot of the mountain.

Suddenly long thunderous explosions rang out from the convoy of trucks. Dark figures sprang from the hill opposite and darted towards the road. A tall man stopped in the middle of the road and motioned to a spot behind him. "Tieh-chu, post your men here. If the enemy trucks try to get away, stand fast."

A voice answered, then several dark figures flashed past.

Teh-hsin jumped out of the shadows and dashed toward the tall man, shouting, "Uncle Tsao! Uncle Tsao!"

The man stopped in surprise to stare at the running boy. Only when Teh-hsin came near did he recognize him. Extending his arms, he embraced the youngster warmly. Teh-hsin was so exhausted, his strength seemed to flow out of him. He collapsed in Uncle Tsao's arms.

"Teh-hsin!" Uncle Tsao crouched beside the boy and shook him anxiously. "What's the matter?"

"Teh-hsin?" Several militiamen gathered round in concern. "What's wrong? Has anything happened in our village?"

Teh-hsin raised his head. When he saw the militiamen's guns, he realized they were about to go into action. He sat up quickly and told them what Grandpa Chao had learned about the enemy's headquarters, then briefly described what had happened in the village. At the end, he was unable to hold back his tears. "Aunt Li has been arrested by the enemy, Uncle Tsao. And Grandpa Chao..."

Township Head Tsao suppressed his rage. "You've come just in time, Teh-hsin," he said to comfort the boy. "This information is of top importance. Our Liberation Army has arrived and the offensive will soon begin. Don't worry, we'll wipe out those bandit troops and avenge our dear ones." He told one militiaman to take Teh-hsin to their mountain hideout; another was to report the information to the PLA. Then he went back to direct operations.

Teh-hsin lay in a makeshift hut. He'd had a good long drink of water and a hearty meal, his body felt all fagged out. But he couldn't sleep.

"Teh-hsin!" called a familiar voice outside.

"Here!" Teh-hsin quickly rolled out of bed and turned up the wick of the small oil lamp. He was about to go outside when the straw door-curtain was lifted — in came three fighters. Even in that dim light he recognized them at once: Instructor Sun, Messenger Hsiao Kao and the medical orderly.

"Uncle Sun!"

"I just found out you were here, Teh-hsin. I was told about what's happened in the village too. Lie down and rest." Uncle Sun pushed the boy back into bed. He asked Hsiao Kao to give Teh-hsin the food they'd brought, then had the medical orderly dress his wounds.

Teh-hsin told them he'd already eaten and asked eagerly, "When will you go to beat Chin Lao-wan and Chiang Kai-shek's bandit troops? Don't let them get away, Uncle Sun!"

Uncle Sun assured him the enemy would not escape. The main force of the Liberation Army had taken Chinchow and barred the way so that the enemy could not flee to the central plain. Now the main force had returned to reinforce the troops that had prepared the trap. They were all moving in to "bag" the enemy. On receiving Teh-hsin's information, PLA headquarters had immediately ordered their vanguard which had reached the vicinity of Taheishan Mountain to march to Huchia Mountain. From there they would strike at the enemy's lair and destroy their headquarters, hastening the enemy's doom. Instructor Sun was to lead two companies of fighters to Taheishan Village to rescue the people from their bloodthirsty oppressors.

"We'll soon set off for Taheishan Village, Teh-hsin," Uncle Sun continued. "You've had a long hard trip and you're hurt. You must stay here and rest."

But Teh-hsin had no intention of resting at a time like this. He replied resolutely, "I'll join in the battle, Uncle Sun."

"Beating those reactionaries in a pitched battle is the PLA's task, Teh-hsin," Uncle Sun said persuasively. "You've done splendidly, but now you're wounded and worn out. You must rest here. There'll be plenty of new tasks for you later on."

"No, Uncle Sun. You must take me with you and let me join in killing the enemy. I want to capture Chin Lao-wan with my own hands. I must avenge Grandpa Chao." Tears welled up in Teh-hsin's eyes. Seeing that Uncle Sun was still set against letting him go, he persisted, "You PLA fighters won't leave the battlefield when you're only slightly wounded. Why should I? I'm just a bit tired. I can still run fast. I guarantee you I won't fall behind during the march."

Deeply impressed by the boy's eagerness, Uncle Sun agreed to let him join them. He told Hsiao Kao to get a horse ready for Teh-hsin, but the latter refused to ride. He marched right behind Uncle Sun.

It was almost dawn when guns cracked and cannons boomed from Taheishan Mountain. The general offensive had begun. Fierce gunfire shook the morning sky like a hurricane. Whining shells rained on the enemy.

Guided by Teh-hsin, Instructor Sun and his men took the short cut across Taheishan Mountain. Then they were flying towards the village.

The panic-stricken invaders were preparing to flee. Like mad dogs, the desperate Kuomintang battalion commander and Chin Lao-wan were planning a massacre before they pulled out.

"Those damned paupers! Even if I'm to die myself, I won't let them live on in peace." Chin Lao-wan ground his teeth. "I'll take as many of them as I can with me!"

"Yes, true men must be ruthless." The enemy officer leered. "You mean. . ."

They plotted in a dark corner for a while. Then they ordered their troops to move in stealthily and surround the villagers pressed into labour battalions in the east of the village. Chin Lao-wan had horses brought out for his wife and children, who waited by the side of the road ready to flee after the slaughter. The landlord was just about to give the order to begin the massacre, when he remembered that Teh-hsin and Aunt Li were still locked up, one in the mill, the other in a small dark room. He sent a few men back to kill them first. On entering the compound, the soldiers rushed to the mill and hastily undid the padlock, giving the door a forceful kick. A thunderous blast split the air, blowing them to pieces.

On hearing the explosion, Chin Lao-wan was not disturbed, thinking that it was the work of his men. But a long time passed and his men still had not returned. He hurried anxiously to the compound to have a look.

Too impatient to wait any longer, the Kuomintang officer rushed to a mound where his men set up machine-guns and got their hand-grenades and bayonets ready. The soldiers on guard round the villagers withdrew to the two sides, leaving an opening in front. Then they drove the villagers towards the opening.

But the villagers saw through the enemy's plot and raised their picks and shovels to resist. The officer, panicking, ordered his men to take aim.

Suddenly machine-guns chattered from the mountain. The officer was shot dead.

"Charge!" That thunderous battle cry shook the earth.

Led by Instructor Sun, the PLA fighters charged down like tigers. Bullets hailed on the hated enemy. The bandits dropped their weapons and ran in all directions.

At first the villagers did not understand what had happened. They stood to one side watching in amazement. But when they realized the PLA had arrived, they shouted and leapt for joy. Then, raising their shovels, they pursued the fleeing enemy.

Supposing that Aunt Li was still a prisoner, Teh-hsin decided to go to her rescue. He first ran to the foot of the mountain to retrieve his red-tasselled spear. Having pulled it out from under the boulder which had been his look-out post, he raised it high and rushed toward the compound. As he entered the gate, he spotted a fat man hurrying towards the back of the small wing where Aunt Li had been locked up. He sped after that portly figure. Peeping round a corner, he saw it was Chin Lao-wan!

Intent on killing Teh-hsin and Aunt Li, Chin Lao-wan had waddled to the door of the mill. But the sight of the soldiers' mangled bodies sent cold shivers down his spine, so terrifying him that he dared not open the door of the room where Aunt Li was imprisoned, for fear that the same fate awaited him there. Looking round, he saw some sticks of dynamite. He placed them at the foot of the back wall, about ten metres from the wing, lit the fuse, and scuttled off.

Teh-hsin raced over and picked up the smoking charge. He hurled it with all his might towards the far corner of the compound wall, then quickly flattened himself on the ground. A deafening explosion ripped the air. A long section of the wall collapsed. Picking up a rock, Teh-hsin ran to the door of the wing, smashed the padlock, and threw the door open. Aunt Li emerged. Teh-hsin rushed towards her crying, "Aunt Li!" But instead of greeting him, she pointed at the back wall and shouted, "After him! Don't let him get away!"



Teh-hsin turned and saw the landlord clambering over the wall. He darted off in pursuit. Panic-stricken, Chin Lao-wan slipped and fell to the ground. And the next instant the boy, having vaulted over the wall, swooped down on him.

At dawn victory was theirs — after a fierce battle the enemy was wiped out. Instructor Sun quickly assembled his men and they marched off to new battlefields.

The general offensive soon ended in victory early in the winter of 1948. That winter had brought more warmth and joy to the villagers than any spring they'd known.

A holiday mood prevailed throughout Taheishan Village. Their hearts brimming over with love and gratitude for the people's army, the villagers streamed to the PLA encampments. Like little swallows, the children sang and danced in the streets of the village. Red-tasselled spears resting on their shoulders, the Children's Corps marched down the village street in long ranks, singing *The Red-Tasselled Spear*. They headed straight for Western Mountain.

The day after the battle, the villagers held a solemn ceremony in memory of Grandpa Chao and buried him at the foot of the high cliff where he had heroically laid down his life. That cliff became his tomb stone. On it they carved the words "Immortal Martyr", thus commemorating his outstanding contribution to the revolution.

Filled with inexpressible sorrow and respect, the members of the Children's Corps stood motionless before the cliff while Teh-hsin told them how fearlessly Grandpa Chao had fought the enemy, how heroically he had died. "Victory doesn't come easily," Teh-hsin concluded. "It's won with the blood and lives of countless revolutionaries like Grandpa Chao. We must transform sorrow into strength and take up the tasks left by our martyrs. We must battle on and march ahead along the path crimson with their blood until victory!"

During those stirring days of victory, a trial was held in Taheishan Village. The despotic landlord Chin Lao-wan was haled before the local government to answer for his crimes. At the villagers' request, Township Head Tsao sentenced the landlord to death — and he was forthwith shot. As for his wife, she was put under strict surveillance.

After this trial the recruiting of new soldiers for the PLA went ahead with a swing in the township, every street and lane being posted with colourful slogans:

"Continue the revolution! Join the People's Liberation Army!"

"We'll send our sons to serve the people, defend our homeland, and destroy Chiang Kai-shek!"

A long red placard bore the names of all the new recruits. The first name on the list was Chang Teh-hsin.

When the Children's Corps heard the news, all its members flocked to Teh-hsin's house to congratulate him. Little Tiger was to replace Teh-hsin as leader of the Children's Corps. Gripping the red-tasselled

spear Teh-hsin had given him, he pledged in ringing tones, "Don't worry, Brother Teh-hsin. Go to the front and leave this job to us. We'll follow your example and carry out the tasks assigned us by the Party. We'll be alert sentries for the revolution."

Teh-hsin was overcome with joy — the day he'd been waiting for had come at last. He would soon be a regular fighter of the Chinese People's Liberation Army. Stirred, he looked fondly at the smiling faces of his young comrades-in-arms. "Though I'll soon be far away, we'll all be working for the revolution, following the sunlit road of the Party. We'll encourage and learn from one another at our different posts, advancing shoulder to shoulder."

Early one morning, gongs and drums sounded all over the village — the new recruits were leaving for the front. Revolutionary songs, music and gay laughter rang out everywhere. Young girls and boys waved colourful silk and satin streamers, dancing joyously to the stirring accompaniment of gongs and drums. The old villagers turned out to see the youngsters off, now shaking hands with one, now patting another on the shoulder, telling the new recruits what they hoped and expected of them.

Teh-hsin's father came over leading his favourite chestnut horse. He made the boy mount it and then spoke straight from his heart, "Be a good fighter and a credit to us poor and lower-middle peasants. Never let down the Communist Party and Chairman Mao!" Teh-hsin nodded resolutely.

Young Teh-hsin, who was wearing a faded army cap, puttees, and a red belt round his black padded jacket, had a red and white striped towel round his neck. A red silk sash flashed across his chest and a big scarlet flower was pinned to his jacket. His boyish, ruddy face was graver than usual. His large shining eyes were gazing into the distance. At last he had become a real PLA fighter!

His mother came running up with a bulging satchel. His younger brother kept leaping and jumping around him, cheering from time to time. Teh-hsin took two piping hot eggs from the satchel and pressed them on his brother, who shook his head. "No, mother boiled them for *you*. Keep them."

Ying-tzu bounded over. Tears welled up in her eyes when she saw Teh-hsin in the saddle. Afraid he might notice her moist eyes and laugh at her, she didn't dare look at him. But he bent down and warmly clasped her hands.

When Teh-hsin rode out of the village, he saw a vigilant Little Tiger at his post, red-tasselled spear at the ready. Little Tiger waved. "Goodbye, Brother Teh-hsin. Let's try to outdo each other in our work."

"Fine!" Teh-hsin waved back happily.

"Teh-hsin! Teh-hsin!" Aunt Li ran up and presented him with a pair of cotton shoes she'd made herself. As chairman of the peasants' association — Grandpa Chao's successor — Aunt Li was busy saying good-bye to the new recruits, among whom rode her own son T'ieh-chu.

The villagers accompanied the new recruits for a good distance then it was time to part. Standing at the head of the villagers, Aunt Li spoke on behalf of all: "Don't worry about the work in the rear, lads. Leave it to us. We'll do it well. Follow the Party and Chairman Mao, study hard, and become good soldiers. Then you'll battle well and win greater honour for the people."

The red sun had risen in the east irradiating the crowd of joyous villagers and Taheishan Mountain above. More beautiful and more majestic than ever, the snow-clad mountain looked like a white lotus flower in full blossom.

A mountain eagle soared high overhead, flying towards the far horizon.

*Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien*

*Wang Chin-nien*

### The Adjutant

Dawn. Dense fog shrouded the undulating mountains.

Three hours from now the general attack would begin. The command post of the howitzer regiment was a scene of tense activity. In this coming manoeuvre the regiment's task was to concentrate its fire to destroy the "enemy's" defences on the opposite mountain slope and clear the way for the tanks and infantrymen. And this was more difficult than the usual bombardment drill of an artillery company as it meant co-ordinating the fire of a whole regiment.

After the pre-battle meeting Regimental Commander Kao Chien left the command post and walked along a trench. He was in his forties, a hefty man with a good tan on his face. His deep-set eyes showed determination and courage. He stopped on reaching a plot of grass at the end of the trench and, facing the whitening east, inhaled deeply. Looking around, he began pacing the dewy grass. To those who knew him, this meant that the regimental commander was thinking hard.

The political commissar, the deputy regimental commander and the deputy political commissar had all attended the meeting at which Kao Chien briefed them on their instructions from the higher command. The main purpose of this manoeuvre was to give the new cadres more experience and improve their skill in commanding as well as to check on the regiment's work in training them. Kao had then made a bold proposal: He would give the over-all command of this manoeuvre to his new chief-of-staff young Shih Chin, originally to have been his adjutant; and he himself would serve as Shih's adjutant.

The son of a miner, Shih Chin was twenty-seven. Since joining the army he had made a conscientious study of Marxism-Leninism and Chairman Mao's works, and proved a good commander of the third company. Kao Chien had helped and guided him in person.

This proposal won quick approval. Only Deputy Regimental Commander Kung Wen made no comment. He and Kao had both worked as farm hands for the landlord in their village and later joined the army together. Now he sat there with lowered head drawing hard on his cigarette.

"Hum, this looks like another 'contradiction' between us," Kao told himself.

Kao Chien had always paid special attention to training young people, even more so since the Cultural Revolution. Every time the regiment promoted a new cadre he talked with him in person. He often impressed on those in charge of organizational work the great significance of training new cadres. And he always concluded with "This is a big task — it should have top priority."

But Kung failed to see eye to eye with him on this point. Every time Kao brought the subject up, he used to shake his head and brush it aside. "Let's wait a bit," he would say. This was not due to any ulterior motive, for Kung was a conscientious officer completely devoted to the Party's cause. In his thirty years in the army he had always fought shoulder to shoulder with Kao Chien, never sparing himself and winning many citations in the war years as well as in the defence of our post-Liberation socialist construction. His motto was, "The Party's cause is my life." That may have been the reason for

his reluctance to place heavy loads on "young shoulders", his invariable advice to "wait a bit".

All this came out in his attitude towards Shih Chin. During his three months' recent hospitalization owing to an old wound in the back, a new fighter had told Kung that in the upsurge of the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius the third battalion, commanded by Shih Chin now chief-of-staff, had failed to follow the regimental study schedule but had made their own different plan. . . . Kung Wen was displeased and went to take this up with Kao Chien the very day he came out of hospital. Kao was not in, but Kung saw on his desk the marks the three battalions had received in the latest firing drill. The first and second battalions had both got "5" — full marks. But the third battalion had got only a "4". Kung's anger mounted. "Well, what did I say? The first and second battalions have older commanders who know what they're doing. How can young bamboos carry heavy loads?" he fumed. But here was Kao giving the command of the regimental manoeuvres to Shih Chin. How could they avoid another "contradiction"?

Kao Chien, pacing the grass as he thought the matter over, now gave a confident laugh. "Contradictions don't matter," he told himself. "We'll solve them."

A heavy rumbling reached him from the valley. Thirty and more tanks of a neighbouring unit were advancing along the mountain highway to the front.

"The action will soon be starting. Seems I'll have to go to the artillery position to have a talk with Old Kung," Kao Chien murmured. He was on the point of returning to the trench when he saw Shih Chin coming from the observation post of the third battalion. Shih's bloodshot eyes told Kao that this young man had skipped his sleep again.

Shih Chin saluted. Taking off his cap out of habit, he reported, "I've made a round of the three battalions, commander. The fighters are ready for action. Even the logistics personnel are in high spirits. I'm waiting to learn from you as soon as the artillery opens fire."

The young man's enthusiasm warmed Kao's heart. "So you're set on learning," he said equivocally.

"Yes, commander. Teach me as much as you can."

Kao advanced a step. "You'll learn no matter in what way I teach?"

"Certainly!" Shih waved his cap.

Kao nodded with a broad smile. "Come with me to the position to see the deputy regimental commander."

"What's the subject you've set?" Shih asked eagerly.

"As to that. . . ." Kao clapped Shih on the shoulder. "You'll know when the time comes."

## 2

"When the time comes?" As he sat in the speeding jeep, Shih tried to fathom what his commander meant. He asked Kao who was sitting in front, "Won't you explain, commander. . . ?" But he spoke so softly that Kao, deep in thought, didn't hear him.

Presently Kao turned his head and saw that Shih was making marks on a military map with a well-sharpened red and blue pencil. He kept looking out of the window and then at the map in his hand, imprinting the terrain on his mind.

"I want to consult you on something, chief-of-staff," said Kao.

The word "consult" embarrassed Shih. "Give your orders, commander," he answered quickly. "I'll carry them out a hundred per cent."

"Do you think a man walks faster with a load or without one?" Kao stared hard at Shih, waiting eagerly for his answer.

"With a load, of course," Shih answered without thinking.

"Ha, good for you! Well, in order to speed up *your* progress, the regimental Party committee has decided to let you command this exercise. The two of us are to change places. I'll be your adjutant."

Shih gave an exclamation of surprise and crumpled the cap in his hand. He felt warmth coursing through him. It all became clear to him now: the Party committee's decision to let him shoulder heavy loads and Kao's talk of consulting him.

"No hesitation. Accept it unflinchingly." Kao, half turning, looked at him gravely yet confidently.

Shih thought for a moment, then meeting Kao's eyes firmly he answered deliberately, "I'm sure you old comrades can help us to steel ourselves quickly, commander. But this is an important manoeuvre. Suppose..."

Kao turned away from him to look ahead as he overruled this objection. "No suppositions. You must command this battle well. No failure is allowed. Understand?"

"Yes!" Shih's voice rang out from the back seat. "Don't worry, commander. I guarantee the manoeuvre's success!"

### 3

Soon they arrived at the artillery position. Shih Chin wanted to seek out the deputy chief-of-staff and learn his tactics. Kao agreed but told him to meet him later at the deputy regimental commander's office.

The artillery position of the three battalions curved from east to west in a basin surrounded by mountains. Mounted on emplacements deeply entrenched in the earth, the guns' barrels — two metres long — were out of sight while their exposed muzzles were concealed with pine branches, other parts with camouflage nets. In this hectic spell before action the faces of all the fighters were streaming with sweat, as the crews cleaned their shells, improved their emplacements or, singing work-chants, cleared their bores by ramming. Two hundred metres away, gun-carriages with caterpillar tracks were concealed in a copse where their drivers were busy camouflaging them too. The covers on the anti-aircraft guns on top of the cabins had been peeled off, and the gunners manning these guns stood there scanning the sky alertly. The whole regiment's howitzers and gun-carriages assembled together really made an impressive sight!

Kao Chien found Kung Wen at the second battalion. Usually they greeted each other with a friendly punch. This had become a time-honoured custom both during their fighting years and later when they were safeguarding our socialist revolution and construction. But neither of them raised his fist today.

Standing by a gun-carriage, Kung Wen accepted the cigarette Kao offered him. "I knew you'd be coming," Kung said. "I know your habits..."

"Yes, I'm afraid I'm set in my ways," Kao chuckled. "But, seriously, what do you think of my proposal? Come on, get it off your chest."

Instead of answering, Kung struck a match and unhurriedly lit his cigarette. "You're too impatient, Old Kao. Why rush them so fast? We should wait a bit..."

"We can't wait, mate," said Kao. "We mustn't be afraid of rapid changes and go slow to avoid trouble. If we do, that shows our minds are still poisoned by Lin Piao's stress on 'qualifications and experience'. Should we train new cadres boldly or timidly? This issue is part of the struggle between two political lines."

Kung was not convinced. Tapping the ash from his cigarette he drawled, "You're talking platitudes. I know all that..."

"No. I don't think you do..." Kao cut in. "You *should* know it, an old comrade like you who's fought for thirty years under Chairman Mao. Although we've won tremendous victories, it doesn't mean that the revolution's succeeded. We're still a long way off from communism and we need lots of fresh blood to carry on our work. As early as in 1938 our great leader Chairman Mao pointed out that **'it is our fighting task to train large numbers of new cadres in a planned way'**. And our Party issued an explicit directive on this at the Tenth Party Congress. We veteran revolutionaries should take the lead in carrying it out." By now Kao was quite worked up.

"Well, it's easier said than done," Kung rejoined at last. Although he found Kao's reasoning quite convincing, he felt he was right to pour cold water like this. Drawing hard on his cigarette, he went on, "I'm not boasting of my experience, but I've fired more shells than they've even seen. How can they take over? One slip and the whole manoeuvre might be spoiled."

Kao felt that he needed to do much more ideological work to change the views of his old comrade-in-arms. He was on the point of speaking when Kung, recalling something, burst out angrily,

“While I was in hospital I heard. . .” He went on to complain that Shih Chin had not followed the regimental study schedule and pointed out that the third battalion had got a “4” for firing practice.

Kao was both astonished and furious — astonished that Kung should hold these two things against Shih, and furious with him for attacking Shih without making investigations. Nevertheless he gave Kung a patient explanation.

The study schedule for repudiating Lin Piao and Confucius had been sent to the companies and Shih had followed it; but, feeling that it was too abstract, he had supplemented it by taking one of his companies to visit the old home of Confucius, where they saw how viciously the “Sage’s” descendants had exploited the poor. The visit had given great impetus to the company’s criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius.

“So that was it!” Kung looked deflated.

Before he could say more, Kao laughed and continued, “You mis-fired, mate. And your other shot missed the target too, because your range-finding wasn’t accurate.” He went on to explain why the third battalion had got a “4” instead of full marks.

During that exercise, the artillery was ordered to demolish a concentrated group of “enemy” tanks. Shih had commanded the battalion correctly and capably. But one piece of artillery had had to stop firing because of a faulty emplacement. As a result one “enemy” tank got away. And so the third battalion got a “4”.

Pointing at Kung’s nose, Kao reminded him, “Don’t forget that in our first battle after joining the army you threw your grenade without pulling the fuse. Yet that doesn’t stop you from commanding an artillery unit now.”

“Don’t rub it in.” Kung blushed. “That was a real battle. But we’re training our troops in peacetime now.”

“We just can’t wait, Old Kung,” Kao persisted. “Our revolutionary tasks are heavy and we’ve still a long way to go.”

Kung’s silence suggested that he was convinced. But in fact he was too pig-headed. After a pause he said, “Well, though we can’t wait, we mustn’t pull at the seedling to hasten its growth either.”

The exercise was about to start. In regimental headquarters Shih Chin, his cap camouflaged with pine twigs, stood at the command post observing the “enemy position” through field-glasses. He was so thrilled and tense, he could hardly hold the glasses steady.

“Keep calm!” he admonished himself. “The commander’s right here.”

Concentrating on the “enemy” minefield, without turning his head the young officer asked: “Commander, isn’t it time to give the ‘get-ready’ order?”

No answer.

Most probably the commander hasn’t heard me, his mind must be on something else, Shih Chin thought. So he repeated his question.



Still no answer.

He put down his field-glasses and spun round.

"Why, where's the commander?"

"He's just left with one of the radio operators," answered a man who was checking his own transmitter.

"Where's he gone?" Shih Chin tore off his cap.

"I don't know."

"Why didn't you tell me before?"

The man, straightening his aerial, couldn't help smiling. "The commander told me not to. He said he'd get in touch with you by radio."

Shih Chin broke into a sweat. "Didn't he promise to stand by me as my adjutant?" he thought. "Yet now..."

Abruptly he waved his cap and ordered the radio operator: "Put me through to the artillery position and ask for the deputy regimental commander!"

Kung Wen was checking up on the preparatory work of the three battalions. He had carefully examined some of the guns, looking through the range-finders, lowering the barrels, and peering into the bores from the breech end. But still he had certain misgivings, especially when he remembered that Chief-of-Staff Shih Chin was in command this time. So he kept glancing in the direction of the command post, saying to himself: "Kao, old mate, it's up to you now."

Then the call came through from Shih Chin.

"What? Gone... taking a transmitter?" Kung Wen's face changed. Pounding the table he burst out: "Old Kao, you... what're you playing at!?"

Just at that moment his radio operator called: "Deputy commander, quick. It's the commander speaking."

Quickly Kung Wen put down the receiver and in one stride reached the transmitter. He snatched the earphone and mouthpiece, shouting: "'Peking, Peking'! This is 'Tientsin', this is 'Tientsin'!"

Simultaneously through the earphone he heard Shih Chin call urgently to Kao Chien: "'Peking, Peking'! This is 'Shanghai', this is 'Shanghai'..."

And where, meanwhile, was Kao Chien? Without informing anybody, he had concealed himself in a copse with his radio operator. He then set about getting in touch with both Kung and Shih.

The wireless contacts were finally made. Kao Chien heard two voices asking the same question at the same time, with Kung's voice much louder than Shih's: "'Peking, Peking', where are you?"

As both men were evidently very put out, Kao Chien readily replied: "Don't worry, you two. I'll explain..."

The fact was that after returning from a tour of the artillery position, Kao Chien had made over the command to Shih Chin and then paced to and fro behind him. Soon, however, he discovered that Shih Chin kept eyeing him, even when issuing a simple instruction to his men. Obviously he was looking to his superior to correct him if he made a mistake. That set Kao thinking: "Now that I've put the weight of responsibility on this young man, I ought not to stay by him as if I would help him out whenever necessary. Being at hand seems well meant, but in fact it inhibits him." He had therefore decided to slip away, leaving the young officer a free hand.

Kao Chien, having reeled off this explanation, added: "'Shanghai', just go ahead boldly. 'Tientsin', I'm sure you agree."

The commander's words made a warmth course through Shih Chin's body. Eyes wet with emotion, the young officer unwittingly tightened his grip on the cap in his hand. "Commander, don't worry," he said to himself. "I'm determined to complete this difficult task the Party has given me."

Of course, Shih Chin was still anxious to know where his superior was. But before he could ask, one of his aides came over. "Report, chief-of-staff," he said, "the army commander orders: Start loading!"

"Good!" Shih Chin nodded gravely and then cried: "'Peking, Peking', it's 'Shanghai' speaking. The order to load has come."

"'Shanghai, Shanghai'. Let me repeat: You are in full command now."

"Don't worry, 'Peking'," replied Shih, excited yet resolute. "I'll carry out the order at once; I'll relay it right away." The next thing Kao heard in his earphone was the young officer giving the order.

Hearing Shih Chin's firm voice, Kao Chien glanced at his watch



and thought jubilantly: "Good. Snappy and accurate. A man of large calibre."

Crack, crack, crack! Three green signal flares fizzled out in the sky. The onslaught began.

Kao Chien, crouching among the bushes, spontaneously took up his field-glasses.

The shrilling and whining of shells flying through the air were followed by deafening explosions. In a flash the three "enemy" targets were turned into a sea of fire. Their main defence belt, two hundred metres wide, was under merciless bombardment. Forts, wooden piles, wire entanglements, communications trenches and

other installations were pulverized. Some "enemy" mines, triggered off by bursting shells, exploded in swift succession. As the barrage went on, acrid smoke billowed up to the sky.

The "enemy" position was devastated, in flames. . . .

Watching the fierce bombardment, Kao Chien exulted, nodding his head. "Good. Well done, young man. You're showing your mettle. It seems no matter how heavy a load may be, these 'young bamboos' are completely equal to it. No one's born a veteran, a tough, seasoned old bamboo."

Presently three red signals went up. The gunfire came to a sudden stop. Before the last shrapnel hit the earth, the tanks and infantry were already sweeping forward like the wind.

Shih Chin's voice sounded again in Kao Chien's earphone: "'Peking, Peking', it's 'Shanghai' speaking. I've ordered our men to deploy deep. Please wait for us at the junction on Highway No. 8."

"'Shanghai, Shanghai'! 'Peking' understands, 'Peking' understands." Kao Chien's measured reply expressed complete trust in the young officer.

Just as Kao Chien was about to remove his earphone, Kung Wen's voice boomed over it. "'Peking, Peking', where are you anyway?"

"Me?" Kao chuckled. "Well, now I can tell you."

Shih Chin was listening, too.

When "Shanghai" and "Tientsin", several miles apart, learned of the commander's whereabouts, both left their field radios to hand over the map. Both let out an exclamation of surprise. "He's at the front — the target area!"

Kao Chien was now standing at the assembly point on Highway No. 8, a junction where three roads met. There a soldier wearing a red armband was waving two small flags up and down, right and left, smartly directing the passing troops.

Rumbling along the middle of the road were tanks, lorries, field guns, armoured cars — all heavily camouflaged with pine branches. On the two sides of the road were big contingents of infantrymen and sappers, all advancing according to their battle plans.

When Shih Chin arrived there by jeep, he jumped off before it had stopped. The young officer was profoundly stirred now that he understood completely why his veteran commander had slipped away and gone to the target area. It was to give him a free hand so that he would dare to act boldly; at the same time Kao would be able to hold the fort in case of an emergency. For the spot where he had stationed himself was barely two hundred metres from the heart of the attack, near enough to see clearly just where the shells fell and, if need be, correct the angle of fire in good time.

Shih Chin saluted Kao Chien, then tried to wipe the sweat and dirt off his face for him. Kao stopped him with a laugh. "D'you take me for a child?" Shih withdrew his hand, only to wipe his own eyes which were moist.

Very soon Kung Wen arrived. When he approached the two of them, his heart was in a tumult. Gripping the hand of his old comrade-in-arms, he could not utter a word.

Kung Wen turned to Shih Chin and caught him by both shoulders, fixing his eyes on his face as if he had made a new discovery: In this young man lay inexhaustible energy.

"The facts prove that 'young bamboos' are able to carry heavy loads," he admitted with feeling.

At once Kao Chien gave him a punch. "Old mate, it's because they possess revolutionary vigour and mettle, and hearts courageous enough to take up big tasks. We shouldn't underestimate these 'young bamboos', should we?"

Kung Wen nodded agreement and returned his punch. "It seems you're prepared to use all your old cunning to train these youngsters, toughen these 'young bamboos'."

The three of them joined hands and burst into laughter.

A motorcycle and sidecar screeched to a halt before Kao Chien, and a communications officer jumped out. "Report, commander, the troops are in marching formation."

"Good." Kao Chien had a look at his watch. "Time is pressing. Chief-of-staff, lead the way in the command jeep. I leave Plan No. 2 entirely to you. You're in full command."

Shih Chin glanced from Kao Chien to Kung Wen, then answered with brisk resolve: "Very good! The order will be carried out." With that he jumped into the jeep again and swished off.

Gazing after the receding jeep, Kung Wen heaved a sigh of relief and nodded gently.

*Illustrated by Huang Chia-yu*

## The One-Legged Raftsman

In the mountainous areas of northern Kwangtung people used to say, "Never cut firewood in spring; never raft logs in winter." But the earth-shaking Cultural Revolution that stirred up a new high tide of socialist construction made this a thing of the past. As railway networks advanced across our vast motherland, as mines were opened and factories built all over the country, timber was needed everywhere. Well aware of this, the raftsmen just couldn't sit idle, waiting for the high-water season to come in spring.

One day six timber-rafts came speeding towards the place where four streams converge to form the Oukiang River. Two days before, the commune office had informed four brigades upstream that these urgently needed cedar logs were to be brought down to the confluence of the streams and then sent to the timber-yard at Wu-shui. Luck was with them, for it had rained the day before and the river had risen. The rafts from three brigades were already at the meeting place. Those from Greengage Brigade, a Yao nationality village, had not yet arrived as they had further to go.

After mooring the rafts, the men went to the cabin that served as the timber inspection station. They warmed themselves by the fire,

then sat smoking as their food heated. They were to set out as soon as the others arrived.

Old Yu, in charge of the station, warned them that they were going to have trouble getting through. The night before, logs needed for pit props had floated down and jammed at a narrow place just below. The men rushed out to have a look.

At the sight of that tangled mass of logs, Shih Ku-tzu, a young raftsmen from Hsiwu Village, got aggravated.

"What village had that fine idea?" he grumbled.

"We can't complain," objected Pan Lao-szu, an old man from a Miao village. "Like us, they're taking advantage of the high water to ship supplies to the mine. Let's eat and then set to freeing the logs. It won't be all that difficult."

The north wind was southing. It looked like snow.

In the cabin the men ate, then sipped tea by the blazing fire, chatting freely and swapping experiences, oblivious to the bad weather outside.

"Hey, what do you fellows say to this one? Can a one-legged man raft logs?" Old Pan asked suddenly.

"What!?"

"I mean someone who's lost his left leg."

"I wouldn't mind having three legs to help keep my balance when I shoot the rapids," quipped Young Shih. "If a one-legged man can raft, then fish can climb trees!"

"I can hardly believe it either," continued Old Pan, "but Party Secretary Feng of Greengage Village insists that they have such a man in their brigade."

"You mean Feng Chin-liang? Well, he'd never tell a lie!"

"He told me the whole story only the other day," put in Old Yu.

Their faces lit up with interest. "Let's hear it, Old Yu. Come on," they urged eagerly.

Old Yu took a look at the river, then pulled his chair up to the fire and began.

"Two years ago when the plane-trees were in blossom, a demobilized sailor called Chao Ta-mang returned to Greengage Village. His left leg had been blown off by shrapnel during a battle to safeguard

our motherland. After his wound healed, he refused to go to a home for disabled veterans. Fitted out with an artificial leg and a pair of crutches, he went back to his native village. Great preparations were made to welcome him home. Girls swept the path leading to his door over and over again. The brigade members repaired his room, built a *kang*, and made ready a supply of water and firewood. Then neighbours travelled thirty *li* to meet him."

"Hasn't he any relatives there?"

"No. His parents were tortured to death by the village despot when he was only a baby. He was brought up by the Party and Chairman Mao." Old Yu fell silent a moment, then resumed his story. "Some time after his return, he married Ah-chuan."

"Married!?" Young Shih's eyes were wide with curiosity. "Who's Ah-chuan? And how did they come to marry?"

Old Yu stopped to fill his pipe. The raftsmen were so engrossed that none of them noticed it had begun to snow.

Not only was Ah-chuan pretty, but she had high political consciousness — she was secretary of the brigade Youth League branch. As she was Ta-mang's next-door neighbour, the local Party branch assigned her the task of helping him with his household chores, carrying water, collecting firewood and so forth.

"Brother Ta-mang," she told him, "call me any time you need me. I'm young and strong, and can't be fagged out."

"Fine, then cut me some bamboo right away, will you?"

"Bamboo? What are you going to do with that?"

"Split it lengthwise to plait cables. The spring flood waters will soon be here and we'll need plenty of cables for lashing logs together."

"You've hit the nail on the head!" Ah-chuan clapped her hands. "The brigade cadres have been worrying about that."

So on the third day after his return Ta-mang set to work. He sat by the river, making cables. The soft spring breeze caressed his cheeks and the gentle sun bathed him in its warmth. He had only to look up to see the red flags fluttering like flames against the green slopes flanking the river. The hillsides were dotted with shimmering saplings, each planted within a mud-ridged half circle. From a dis-

tance, they looked like iridescent fish scales covering the slopes. Amidst the chopping of axes and the rasping of saws rose the clear voices of the girls' tree-planting team. As they walked along the winding ridge in single file, the girls waved emerald green cedar saplings, like so many brushes painting the azure sky. Suddenly the long-drawn-out yell "Let 'em go!" drowned out the girls' clear singing. Almost at once logs shot down the chute on the steep slope, like a succession of arrows. The rumbling reverberated in the valley. Leaves whirled in the air. The logs splashed into the river, tossing up columns of glittering spray. Ah, small rivers like this were surely the life-blood of their mother forest, running through it like veins! Ta-mang bent down, scooped up some water and gulped a mouthful. It was warm and sweet. A surge of strength radiated from his heart. Looking up, he saw rafts racing by. A young raftsmen hailed him:

"Come with us, Brother Ta-mang!"

"Coming!" Ta-mang staggered forward, but only managed two steps before falling.

The next day when Ah-chuan went to the riverside to wash clothes she found Ta-mang there, gazing at the swift-moving stream.

"What are you thinking about, Brother Ta-mang?"

"About the sea." He arched his ink-black brows.

"The sea? It's far away."

"Not that far. Raft down the river and you'll soon see it..."

"Do you want to raft?" The girl fixed puzzled eyes on his artificial leg.

From then on, Ta-mang no longer wandered along the riverside. At night, Ah-chuan often heard the thumping of his artificial leg on the wooden floor. He kept at it for hours on end.

Suddenly there would be a bang — a table or chair knocked over.

"Ma! Brother Ta-mang's fallen again!" Ah-chuan would exclaim.

"He wants to walk without those crutches."

"He's sure to succeed. Where there's a will there's a way!" the girl replied warmly.

Ah-chuan and the other young people often went to see Ta-mang. He led them in studying Chairman Mao's works, preparing the wall newspaper and writing critical articles. Occasionally he told them



stories about the sea. Then his words poured out like an endlessly gushing spring. Ah-chuan had never seen the sea, but Ta-mang's stirring descriptions and rapt expression painted for her a vivid picture of the tide rushing in and the petrels soaring swiftly towards the clouds. She could hear the heart-stirring chug of torpedo-boats cutting, prow high, through the heaving billows. Then she understood Ta-mang's deep feeling for the sea, his longing to see it again.

Several months passed by. One morning Ah-chuan, wearing a new kerchief, stepped into Ta-mang's room.

"Brother Ta-mang, why don't we set up house together — cook our meals in the same pot? Do you agree?"

"Ah-chuan!..." Ta-mang raised his eyebrows. "Have you thought this through? You know that I..."

"And how did it happen?" she cut him short. "I regard it as an honour."

"The honour belongs to the past. Think of all the trouble I'd give you."

"You've never given me anything but encouragement and strength" was her solemn reply.

And so they became husband and wife. From then on, they were always together, studying, attending meetings, discussing how to make revolution and raise production in the brigade. Every day, before and after work, the villagers saw Ah-chuan supporting Ta-mang as he practised walking up and down the path strewn with brilliant pebbles. Before long, Ta-mang was able to walk alone. Ah-chuan followed close behind, smiling at his hesitant steps. The villagers eyed the scene with the same pleasure as if their own child were walking for the first time. Party Secretary Feng gripped Ta-mang's hand.

"Stick it out, Ta-mang! Perseverance is victory."

One day when Ah-chuan came home after work, Ta-mang was nowhere to be seen. She decided to fetch some water but the buckets were missing. Puzzled, she made for the riverside. There sat Ta-mang, two broken buckets beside him. She ran to help him up.

Ta-mang kept on trying. The buckets got smashed time and again. When Ah-chuan hid them, he always managed to find them. When she urged him to give up, he wouldn't listen — not even when she pretended to be angry. And eventually Ta-mang succeeded in bringing back two buckets half-filled with water.

Ta-mang was gradually able to take part in some of the field work. From hoeing and ploughing, and planting saplings, he went on to felling trees and driving carts. The previous summer he had been elected team leader and become a member of the brigade Party committee.

One evening Ah-chuan found Ta-mang musing by the river. He put a paper boat made from a cigarette packet into the water and followed it with his eyes, his thoughts far away: he was itching to handle a punting pole and take a raft down the river. In logging, rafting is one of the most difficult jobs. How could he be team leader

if he could not shoulder the most arduous tasks? He began training hard to be able to stand steady on a pitching raft — he hopped along the irregular bank, ran in ditches slippery with moss, skipped rope with school-children, trudged miles to Swan Timber-yard to play basket-ball. . . . Ah-chuan was positive he'd succeed. One day he would shoot the rapids on a raft as wild as a stampeding horse!

Old Yu paused to knock the ashes from his pipe and drink some water.

"And *did* he succeed?" It was Young Shih who broke the silence.

"It goes without saying." Old Pan rose to his feet and tightened his belt. "Comrades, we've been sitting around for quite a while now. Let's go and break up the log-jam."

"Why not wait for the Greengage men?"

"We'll do it before they arrive. That way we'll be able to continue our trip sooner." Old Pan set his turban straight, pushed the door open with his shoulder and led the men down to the riverside.

Two rafts were racing down Chinling River, one scooting before the other. As they approached a low wooden bridge, the raftsmen, as if displaying their skill, using their poles as levers, vaulted high over the bridge like soaring swallows, then dropped lightly back on to their rafts.

"Well done!" Old Pan applauded.

In a wink, the rafts touched land. Having planted their poles in the river-bed the raftsmen swung on to the bank. One was a man in a grey cap, oilskins and rubber boots. The other, a woman, wore a black turban, cotton-padded jacket and sandals.

Seeing that they were strangers, Old Pan questioned them, "You're. . . ."

"From Greengage Brigade," the woman replied.

His heart full, Old Pan asked eagerly, "Do you know Chao Ta-mang?"

"Chao Ta-mang? Do *you* know him?"

"Yes, of course. . . . That is, I heard his story just a moment ago." Old Pan chuckled, then urged with concern, "Now go inside and warm up. Have something to eat too. We're going to break up a log-jam."

"I'll come with you." The man arched his eyebrows.

Old Pan looked him over; his eyes came to rest on the rubber boots. "No, young fellow," he replied. "You go and rest."

"You want me to sit cosily by the fire while you others work? Nothing doing!" With a smile, the young man turned and led the way, his steps steady and even.

Snowflakes were whirling; the north wind howled. After half an hour's hard work, they still hadn't made any headway, for none of them had a hook. His brows knitted, Old Pan looked round.

"There's only one way out — wade into the water and pull the logs free."

He had no sooner finished speaking than a splash was heard. The young man from Greengage Village had jumped into the waist-high water.

"Come out of there! Quick!" Young Shih shouted. "The water's too cold."

Another splash followed. Old Pan had joined him. The two men gripped a log stuck underwater, and by tugging at it hard managed to pull it out. Then the jam broke up with the speed of an avalanche. The logs floated downstream like a flock of sheep.

Old Yu went ahead to stoke the fire. When the men who had jumped into the river arrived, a hearty blaze welcomed them. The others began helping them off with their wet clothes.

"Take your boots off and warm your feet," Old Pan urged the young man.

He nodded. First he took off his right boot and emptied out the water. Then, after a moment's hesitation, he raised his left foot, shoved his hands into his boot and pulled it off together with his "leg".

"Ta-mang!" cried Old Pan.

Moved and amazed, the others gazed at Ta-mang. They had all heard his touching story. And now that the hero of the story was standing before them, these simple mountain folk did not put their feelings into words. But, to them, the value of their daily task increased a hundredfold at the thought of the well-nigh superhuman efforts Ta-mang had made before he could shoot the rapids.

Old Pan put on his dry clothes, then shouted towards the door, "You can come in now, Ah-chuan."

"How come you know my name?" Ah-chuan entered with a smile.

"I only had to take one glance to know." Old Pan winked.

The eight rafts had left the confluence of the four streams behind. Now, strung out, they were advancing two by two along the smooth stretch of the river. Ta-mang and Ah-chuan led the convoy. They stood abreast, gazing round in silence. Trucks laden with Red Guards on their way to the countryside sped down the highway along the river. Under a banner inscribed "**In agriculture, learn from Tachai**", commune members bustled about carrying manure in baskets on their shoulder-poles and loading it on to carts. PLA men were intent on target practice. An enormous streamer "Long live the victorious Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" hung from a towering pylon. In the distance, under opalescent clouds lay the azure sea. A ten-thousand-ton freighter had just weighed anchor; and countless seagulls were wheeling round it, chasing the white-caps thrown up by its prow.

"Look, Ah-chuan! The sea!"

"Yes, Ta-mang." Ah-chuan smiled.

Yes, they saw the sea — the sea of life, of labour and struggle.

*Illustrated by Tang Ta-hsi*

## Seizing Time

A shipyard had sent me a telegram with an urgent order for crankshafts. I held it, my heart beating fast. The first quarter of a year was just like the first battle of a war. Its success would boost the whole plant's morale. So it would have been better to stick to simple assignments. A crankshaft is a tricky thing to forge for it calls for high precision. Better not to give the workers such a tough assignment so early in the year. But if we couldn't supply those shafts by the end of the quarter, ten 20,000-ton freighters wouldn't be able to sail at the scheduled time.

I looked at the calendar. It was March 24. Near the end again! The end of a month, a quarter or a year was always the busiest time. Not only was my calculator busy, my telephone kept ringing too.

"The first metal-working shop has doubled its output during the first quarter!" someone called up to report.

"Good!" I jumped to my feet in a flush of excitement.

Good news poured in by the phone.

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Chiang Tzu-lung is a worker in a heavy machine-tool plant in Tientsin.

“The second metal-working shop has surpassed its output for this time last year!”

“The metal-structure workshop has finished seven months’ quota in the first two months!”

I gazed up at the production chart on which the arrows were shooting upwards. Suddenly, those figures seemed to turn into pile after pile of shining forged parts and brand-new machines.

People say time is precious. But only emancipated workers know its true value. Since the Fourth National People’s Congress, our plant has been changing all the time, advancing by leaps and bounds.

“Even though I’ve got a calculator, I still can’t keep up with the pace of the workers. What’s wrong?” I murmured to myself.

A sudden guffaw crackled over the phone for I had forgotten to put down the receiver. It was Old Wei, a veteran worker.

“You reckon time by rote; we seize it. Where you use addition we use multiplication.”

This former blacksmith was talking mathematics, but I didn’t understand a word so I asked for an explanation.

“When you draft a plan or calculate output figures, you take one man as one pair of hands — no more — and then simply add up the working hours. You should use multiplication. The Fourth National People’s Congress has given us extra drive. Didn’t Premier Chou say in his report that we should build up an independent and relatively comprehensive industrial system by 1980, and within this century our country will be advancing in the front ranks of the world. That’s bucked us up no end, so we’re going all out.”

Now I understood better. Taking up the blueprint for the crankshaft and the urgent telegram, I hurried to find Old Wei.

On my way I looked into the first workshop. There, the members of a shock group were discussing animatedly how to answer the call put forward by the People’s Congress.

“To race with time, hard work alone isn’t enough,” said Big Ma, a tall and robust miller. “We’ll have to find short cuts. Take the hundred-toothed gear wheel for example. When we used a milling tool with only one cutting edge, it took two days to make one. But then our group leader tried using a multi-edged cutter. People are



quite right to call her a ‘miraculous miller’. She turned out five multi-edged milling tools in one day. What’s more, when they were checked they were well above norm.”

“Our group leader’s sharp as a knife herself,” commented Little Tsui, one of the plant’s best singers, looking thoughtful. “She’s devoted to her work, unafraid of hardships, able to overcome any difficulties. To her, every minute counts. She wants to fly on the wings of time to a greater ideal.”

"You're right," put in Big Ma. "She told me we ought to combine revolutionary drive with a scientific approach. Hard work, good equipment and working overtime aren't enough. She wants to automate our machines so that one worker can take care of two, three or four at a time. That'll help streamline production."

A girl welder who had been silent now spoke up, "Ideological progress can spur on production.' That's what she said yesterday."

Just then their group leader appeared, welding tongs in hand. She was turning twenty, slim but vigorous, like young bamboo.

"Little Li," she called in a voice which was calm but forceful, "let's go up the crane and finish the job."

They got into the cage and went up to the top where a jib stretched out towards the sky. Before long, there came the sound of hammering and the flashing of arc welding. Sparks cascaded like fireworks in the night sky during a festival.

The foundry was another stirring scene with its flaming cataracts of molten iron. Old Wei was busily blowing a whistle to direct his men. He had to keep this whistle clamped between his teeth all day, for only so could he make himself heard above the thunderous roar of the hydraulic press, the shop traveller and furnace. The red bamboo safety helmet he was wearing showed that he was in charge of operations. Stocky as an anvil, he was in his forties, with high cheekbones and a strong chin. Under his bushy eyebrows his eyes shone.

Directed by his whistle, the shop traveller lowered a huge forged piece to the ground. I immediately took advantage of the interval to thrust the blueprint and the telegram at him. He asked Wang, his deputy, to go on discharging the furnace and began to study the blueprint.

Crash! A big bolt on the furnace door cracked in two. The door jammed and couldn't be budged. I hurried over behind Wei. All the workers gathered around.

"This furnace is an old crock," Wang complained, lighting his pipe calmly. "It should have been overhauled the year before last. It would have collapsed long ago without Old Wei's good maintenance. Now we'll have to close it down and change the door frame."

"No!" Old Wei shouted springing forward.

"What shall we do then?" Wang asked in surprise.

"Repair it at once." The fire lit up Wei's face.

He sent a young worker to fetch another bolt and then, the whistle between his lips, began to think how to fix it to the door frame while the furnace was hot.

"Old Wei," pleaded Wang, "we finished this quarter's task long ago. Why go to all this trouble?"

"What task? The task put forward by the Fourth National People's Congress? Or the bigger task of building communism?" His thick eyebrows knit in a frown. Though his voice was not high, his tone was firm. "We can't put up for the night wherever we are, we have to reach our destination, Comrade Wang."

"What's the hurry?" Wang persisted. "It's normal to close down for a few hours for an overhaul."

"A few hours? Generous, aren't you! Time belongs to the revolution, we've no right to waste even one second!"

Though complaining, Wang went into action. He would not think of letting Old Wei, ten years his senior, climb the hot furnace. Whacking his pipe against his palm he prepared to clamber up. Wei was pleased to see this, his furrowed brows unknit.

"Building socialism needs speed," he commented. "Fast troops are invaluable."

When the young worker ran in with a new bolt, Old Wei took it and got everything ready quickly. Then he climbed on to the furnace in spite of the workers' protests, saying, "There's no time to waste."

"Time!" This word shot through me like electricity. Old Wei had already added three years to the life of this furnace. Now unavoidably it had broken down. It was quite right to close it down for an overhaul. Why did he say, "No time"? What did he mean by the word "time"?

One hand gripping a spanner, Old Wei was wielding a hammer with the other; he had to balance himself on the narrow top of the door frame with his feet. The time factor was a challenge — he was racing against time.

Suddenly his whistle sounded from the top of the furnace. It



was the signal to take out the steel ingots. At once all the foundrymen went into action.

As soon as Old Wei got down, I pulled him into the office, urging him to change his clothes. This former blacksmith was like a furnace himself, with a fire blazing inside. One heard his whistle blowing all day long, but he himself seldom spoke. Wherever there were problems or difficulties, he was on the spot. When the young came

up against obstacles he would help to sweep them away. This had won him his name: Old Steel.

Having finished forging the ingots from the furnace, Wang and the other workers swarmed into the office. Noticing the blueprint of the crankshaft on the desk, Wang cried, "That'll be a hard job! We'll need two days plus the time Old Wei snatched back for us just now."

Yes, it was true. A crankshaft with its complex structure was one of the most difficult things to forge, and the process took time.

"The whole country has only one standard time, one big clock," Old Wei said. "And our small clock should follow the speed of that big one."

"This is a hard, thankless job, just not worth the time it'll take us," Wang argued.

"We're not working hard for thanks," Old Wei countered quietly. "We're working to build socialism and consolidate the proletarian dictatorship!"

"It's easy to talk! It's near the end of the month already." Wang stood up, thrusting out his hand to show his calendar watch. "Don't you realize what date it is today?"

"But time's not indicated by your watch," Old Wei countered, "nor is it shown by any clock on the wall. You have to look for it in our workers' hearts."

"In our workers' hearts!" I looked up, puzzled.

His wrinkled face glowed as if illuminated by a rising sun. People said that Old Wei had changed considerably since the movement to repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius. He had formerly looked cold, though he had a warm heart. Now he was like a furnace, red hot inside, scorching outside. He had become vigorous, full of life.

The workers agreed with him and went to prepare for the new task. A young man came up to me and exclaimed with a wink, "Get the trucks ready! We'll give you the shafts on time."

I smiled. But in my heart I was still wondering what Old Wei meant by that allusion to "clocks". It reminded me of a story.

In 1962, our plant's head bought a whole set of clocks which were regulated by a master clock. We hung it at the entrance to the plant and the others in every workshop office. When the master clock ticked, so did they, moving at the same speed. The head of the

plant checked the master clock himself every day and nobody was allowed to be late or leave early. But time was wasted all the same. We didn't fulfil our annual production quota. . . .

I told Old Wei what I was thinking.

"He took the wrong line." Old Wei shook his head. "That was why he wasted a great deal of time. The clocks on the wall only tell the time of day, the start or finish of work shifts. They can't control people's thinking. The important thing is to have a clock in one's mind. And this clock has to be cleaned and kept in good running order by Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought. Only then will it keep going on Chairman Mao's revolutionary line."

"What clock are you talking about?" I wasn't quite sure what he meant.

"My clock," he answered, stressing every word, "is one by which I mean to make up for the time Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao's revisionist line made us waste. We have to steal a march on time!"

His high resolve warmed my heart.

Old Wei put on his red helmet and held out his big hands to me, asking, "Have you carefully studied that poem of Chairman Mao's?"

**So many deeds cry out to be done,  
And always urgently;  
The world rolls on,  
Time presses,  
Ten thousand years are too long,  
Seize the day, seize the hour!**

All that means seizing more time, right?"

I felt carried away by his enthusiasm. Looking at Old Steel, I replied, "That means we should maintain the same vigour, the same revolutionary enthusiasm and the same daring death-defying spirit we displayed in the years of revolutionary war."

"Right!" Old Wei's eyes gleamed. He strode to the command platform and blew his whistle.

Fiery steel ingots turned on the anvil as the hammer swiftly rose and fell. Production was in full swing throughout the foundry.

*Illustrated by Feng Yi-ming*



Temur

**"Sons and Daughters of the Grassland"**

Schin chases after the flock



The sheath and the cut rope suggest sabotage



femur and Schin fasten a red scarf on a branch as a sign



With one foot bare, Schin still runs after the flock through the snowstorm

PLA men and herdsmen ride in search of the brother and sister





## SONGS BY SCHOOL-LEAVERS

The following five poems are selected from a collection of poetry *Songs of Sweat* published by the Shanghai People's Publishing House this year. These poems are by Chang Teh-yi and Lung Pi-teh, two youngsters who, after leaving school, went to the countryside and border regions in answer to Chairman Mao's call: "It is highly necessary for young people with education to go to the countryside to be re-educated by the poor and lower-middle peasants." These poems express their feelings and thoughts about their new life and struggle.

— The Editors

### The Veteran's Wish

Let's not dismantle the shed, let's leave it here;  
For this is the place where we've lived and worked.  
Now a new group of young builders is coming;  
Let's not dismantle the shed, let's leave it here.

What should we veterans leave our successors?  
Hills of golden grain, succulent melons and grapes?  
No, that's not enough, not nearly enough.

We must leave them this old shed too,  
For it retains the warmth of our revolutionary spirit.

We'll point to this window-pane and tell them  
How it sheltered us from desert dust storms;  
We'll show them the door and tell them  
How it shut out the Tarim Basin's frost and sultry heat.

We'll tell them how well this old lamp kept us company,  
When we studied Marxism late into the night;  
We'll leave this stout pillar that propped the walls  
Of our storhouse, when full of grain and cotton.

Yes, let's leave them this old shed  
To help them see and understand  
How their predecessors toiled, so that  
They could continue to open up new paths.

Yes, let's leave them this old shed,  
A fiery furnace where youth is tempered.  
It has tempered us, the older generation,  
Now the younger ones must be steeled too.

Let's not dismantle the shed, let's leave it here.  
Let it remain for ever, a beacon for all who follow;  
So that it can tell those who come after,  
It was a foundation stone of our communist society.

## Advancing over the Wasteland

Advancing over the wasteland, with mattocks in hand,  
The tamarisks shiver, old trees shake, sand dunes dwindle.  
Though our mattocks are no more than three feet long,  
Sand dunes retreat, hills are dwarfed, the sky contracts.

Look overhead, the clouds are dissolving in disorder;  
They're scared our mattocks will unleash new storms.  
Hear the wind whining as it flees in haste,  
Afraid our mattocks will limit its wild ways.

It's the life-blood of former pioneers,  
That has forged and made this mattock.  
It's the sweat of former pioneers,  
That has hardened and tempered this steel.

See how the edge of my mattock gleams,  
Like the glint in the eyes of veteran workers;  
It seems to fix on me its warm and friendly gaze,  
Urging me for ever to plunge on ahead.

Inspired by my gleaming mattock,  
I shout as I raise my arms;  
The mattock flashes in a silvery arc,  
With a swish like the rush of a racing tide.

I wipe away my sweat and look around,  
How many bramble bushes and sand dunes are there?  
I laugh at the sky, for they're no obstacles to me,  
As I wield my mattock to beautify our motherland.



## The Frozen Marshland

As fast we stride across the frozen marsh  
That has slumbered through the long ages,  
Under our feet ice cracks and water gurgles,  
As it spurts up to take a look at us.

Is this the first time you've heard men's footsteps,  
Or heard their laughter, since time began?  
Yes, we're the first to come to this frozen marshland;  
But our footsteps we shall print indelibly upon you.

Do you feel our weight too much to bear?  
That's because our shoulders carry the heavy load  
Of the whole Tienshan and mountainous border regions,  
Which our motherland and the working class have placed on us.

Today you'll feel the first drops of sweat fall,  
And you'll know how hot our blood, how radiant our hearts.  
You'll realize we've brought our own fire with us,  
Sufficient to melt these illimitable frozen marshlands.

When my green army uniform is reflected in your water,  
You'll know that we have brought the spring.  
Tomorrow you shall be one vast green meadow,  
With waving willows lining the long roads.

This frozen marshland is like a sheet of clean white paper,  
For us to draw on it the fairest, newest pictures.  
Adding another splendid painting of socialist construction  
To the golden gallery that leads towards tomorrow's communism.



## With Baskets Slung over Their Shoulders

They carry loads of glistening sweat,  
Loads of moist, rich soil,  
Loads of golden autumn harvests,  
Loads of sweet-smelling crops.

Straight from school these strong young girls have come,  
Carrying a heavy responsibility on their shoulders.  
Each with a loyal heart and great courage,  
They form a brigade to transform the land.

Mounting the stone-slab steps with care,  
They climb above the clouds and mist;  
Like ships breasting the current,  
Their arms are oars that cleave the waves.

They move one hill after another,  
Shift one lake from here to there;  
According to the picture they carry in their minds,  
And the plans they keep in their young hearts.

On their broad and sturdy shoulders,  
Planets revolve, sun and moon rise and set,

A great sea of bumper crops sings in the breeze,  
The foundation of socialism is being laid.

They carry loads of arduous struggle,  
Loads of revolutionary happiness;  
Loads of all our people's hopes,  
Loads of heavy tasks that History demands.



## The Well Diggers

An old peasant waits, a bowl of wine in hand.  
The brigade leader sweats with apprehension.  
The fifth one down the well also stays too long.  
None of these youngsters has any sense of time at all.

To prepare and be ready in case of drought,  
No youngster cares that early spring is chilly,  
Deep in the well the one on duty digs with a will,  
While those who wait their turn stand fretting.

The wind rises, as it begins to snow,  
But down below the pickaxe still carries on.  
Those above call down, "It's snowing. Come on up."  
Below he shouts back, "It's just fine for hard exercise."

The pulley turns, loaded crates come up,  
Each one filled with lumps of frozen mud.  
Our youngsters are determined to battle with hardships,  
If there's no water, they'll dig through half the earth.

Finally the shift must change; smiling, mud-covered,  
Up he comes. Ah, but listen, there's water gurgling!  
Old auntie has brought them all hot soup from the village;  
Already in her mind's eye, she sees a fountain bubbling.

## Chinese Artists Discuss Their Study of the "Yenan Talks"

On May 23, 1942 Chairman Mao published his *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*, in which he pointed out that literature and art must serve the workers, peasants and soldiers; and Chinese writers and artists must for a long period of time unreservedly and whole-heartedly go among the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, in order to observe, experience, study and analyse all the different kinds of people, all the classes, all the masses, all the vivid patterns of life and struggle, all the raw materials of literature and art. Only then can they proceed to creative work.

During the thirty-three years since the publication of the *Yenan Talks*, especially since the Cultural Revolution initiated in 1966, Chinese writers and artists have seriously studied this glorious document, taking it as their guide for action.

While commemorating the 33rd anniversary of the publication of the *Yenan Talks*, Peking artists and others who were in Peking at the time made a careful study of Chairman Mao's recent instructions on the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, linking it with present and past struggles on the literary and art front; they also read the *Yenan Talks* again and held a discussion. Below are some contributions to this discussion.

— The Editors

Wang Kuo-hua (China Dance Drama Troupe):

Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art* points out the basic direction for our proletarian literature and art. In this splendid work he states: **"The science of Marxism-Leninism must be studied by all revolutionaries, writers and artists not excepted."** Recently while studying the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, I read the *Yenan Talks* once more and realized more deeply the absolute correctness of this instruction.

Class struggles in history and in the world today make it clear that fierce class struggles are bound to take place throughout the whole historical period of socialism, and these will be reflected in the field of literature and art, an important constituent part of the superstructure. If the proletariat fails to exercise dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in this field, the bourgeoisie will increasingly extend the position it has occupied and exercise dictatorship over the proletariat. Since the founding of our people's republic, representatives of the landlord and bourgeois classes such as Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao have tried to promote a revisionist line in literature and art, peddling their stinking feudal, capitalist or revisionist wares far and wide and advocating the Confucian doctrines which served the exploiting classes. They have encouraged the growth of capitalism, in the hope of attaining their criminal aim — the overthrow of the proletarian dictatorship and a capitalist restoration. The Soviet revisionist renegade clique, now in the process of restoring capitalism on all fronts, also considers literature and art as important means for creating counter-revolutionary public opinion. This historical lesson tells us that if we want to carry through to the end the proletarian revolution in the superstructure, including the spheres of literature and art, we must make a serious study of Chairman Mao's important instructions on the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat and persist in criticizing revisionism as well as the bourgeoisie.

In 1964, guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, a revolution in literature and art began in China. After a fierce struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao's counter-revolutionary revisionist line, a series of revolutionary model

theatrical works were produced. Radiant with the light of Mao Tsetung Thought, these banished from our stage all the feudal characters of the old Peking opera — princes and ministers, talented scholars and young ladies. These works have created typical heroic characters of the proletariat imbued with the communist spirit, which have become models for our people to emulate. Thus these model theatrical works have played a great part in consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat. As revolutionary art workers, we are deeply aware of our great responsibility. We must make a painstaking study of revolutionary theory, and put on good performances of these model operas under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. We must do our best to serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, to serve the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

**Liu Chuang** (Central Philharmonic Society):

As the proletarian revolution in literature and art makes fresh headway, our Party and our people expect us to produce more and better works. My job is composing music. Studying the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat has brought it home to me that music, like all other forms of art, must take as its basic aim the creation of typical images of proletarian heroes to help consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. To achieve this aim, we must study Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought, thoroughly remould our world outlook, and keep on criticizing such bourgeois ideas as the view that a musical composition is the composer's private property. We must persist in following the principles guiding the creation of the revolutionary model works, go and live among the masses, and seek help from both the leadership and the masses in our creative work. We must strive to produce new compositions with ideological depth, projecting images of proletarian heroes and able to move those who hear them.

**Hung Hsueh-fei** (The Peking Opera Troupe of Peking):

I am a young actress who owes everything to the Party. The little bit of knowledge and skill I have were taught me painstakingly by my leadership and other comrades. If not for Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in literature and art, if not for help from the Party

and the people, I would not have such political understanding or be a successful stage artist. However, after I played the part of Sister Ah-ching in the revolutionary Peking opera *Shachiapang*, I began to hear flattering remarks:

"Now your career's made; you've got position and fame."

"With this opera to your credit, you don't have to worry for the rest of your life."

At first I saw nothing wrong with these remarks. But after studying the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat and reviewing the spirit of the *Yenan Talks*, it dawned on me that such comments reflect the complex class struggle. We artists need to make a serious study of the theory of the proletarian dictatorship and strengthen our resistance to corruption by bourgeois ideas; for only so can we consolidate and successfully carry forward our revolution in literature and art.

**Chang Man-ling** (The China Peking Opera Troupe):

"Perform in revolutionary operas and be a genuine revolutionary", this is the militant slogan of stage artists. However, it is easier said than done. The old revisionist line propagated reactionary ideas like these:

With one outstanding skill,  
You'll always eat your fill.

And

Acting's the road to fame,  
To money and a name.

During the Cultural Revolution we debunked the revisionist line in art, but its pernicious influence is not something that can be swept away overnight. My own experience has taught me that to solve the problem of "for whom?" we must first solve the problem of what sort of persons we want to be ourselves. After studying the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, I gained a deeper understanding of this. All our work must be in the interest of the people. We must do whatever the Party requires of us. We can only become true members of the proletariat if we serve the masses wholeheartedly, not working for personal fame or profit.

**Li Ping-shu** (The Peking Opera Troupe of Shanghai):

Chairman Mao has pointed out: **“This question of ‘for whom?’ is fundamental; it is a question of principle.”** During our study of the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, we re-read the *Yenan Talks* and recalled our own experience in the revolution in literature and art; and this further convinced us of the absolute correctness and brilliance of Chairman Mao’s directive to us to integrate ourselves with the workers and peasants.

When we produced and rehearsed the revolutionary Peking opera *Song of the Dragon River*, we began to go among the labouring masses and our thoughts, feelings and class stand began to change too. When I first rehearsed the role of Chiang Shui-ying, the woman Party secretary in this opera, I had no clear picture of the part in my mind and did not know how to act. Hard as I tried, I just could not give a good portrayal of a Party cadre in the country, a fine leader for the poor and lower-middle peasants. After five visits to the countryside to live and work with the peasants, my thoughts and feelings underwent a change. The poor and lower-middle peasants taught us revolutionary history, the history of their villages and their families; they taught us how to plough, how to harvest wheat and rice; and they also made many good suggestions for the revision of our script. All this was an eye-opener to me. And it was thanks to their education and help that I gradually deepened my understanding of this heroine, so that I gained in confidence and was able to give a more realistic portrayal. I see now that each visit to the countryside gave me fresh ideas and clearer vision. The labouring masses are the source of my strength. In future I mean to follow Chairman Mao’s instructions, integrate myself with the workers, peasants and soldiers and do my best to portray heroic images of the labouring masses so as to serve the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

**Chou Hui-fen** (Shanghai School of Dancing):

I take the title role in the revolutionary ballet *The White-Haired Girl*. It was the worker-peasant-soldier masses who taught me how to portray this heroine. I remember when I first rehearsed

for this role, my understanding was very superficial. When it came to the scene in the Temple of the Goddess where the girl meets the landlord who has cruelly oppressed her, I imagined that by glowering at him I could express her hatred. Again, the girl is standing on the altar when she catches sight of her enemy, and she wants to leap down to attack him; but because the altar was rather high, I was scared of making this leap. At that time, however, I thought problems like these were simply questions of mastering stage technique.

After I went several times to study, live and work with the poor and lower-middle peasants, their bitter accounts of their sufferings in the old society aroused my hatred for the landlord class. In Szechuan, we stayed for some time with Lo Chang-hsiu who had been so persecuted by a landlord that she hid herself in the mountains for seventeen years. This gave me a deeper insight into my part. After that, when I came to this scene, I felt such anger welling up in my heart that I leapt down spontaneously from the altar to attack the vicious landlord. Indeed, so fierce was my class hatred that I longed to tear him to pieces.

In the light of this experience, I feel that if a stage artist wants to give a truthful depiction of heroic images of the labouring masses, the main problem is not that of performing technique but of one’s own thought and feeling. We must seriously study the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, go to the midst of the masses and share in their lives and fiery struggles until we have moved our feet over to the side of the workers, peasants and soldiers. Only by shifting our stand to the side of the proletariat, by truly understanding and loving the masses, can we give authentic depictions of our heroic workers, peasants and soldiers. And only then will our art truly serve proletarian politics.

## A New Revolutionary Dance Drama

The new revolutionary dance drama *Sons and Daughters of the Grassland* was recently staged in Peking, following the appearance of the *Red Detachment of Women* and *The White-Haired Girl*.

The scene is the Choktu Brigade in the Inner Mongolian grasslands in 1964. Early one morning, a boy and his younger sister, Temur and Schin, wearing the red scarves of Little Red Soldiers, are milking ewes and collecting fodder with other children. The reactionary herd-owner Bayan, now herding the brigade's flock, so fears and hates the revolution that he starts to lash at the sheep with his whip. Temur and Schin snatch it from his hand; for these children understand that small as the shepherd's whip is, it should still be in the hands of the masses and not those of the reactionaries. They ask to look after the flock for the brigade. The brigade's Party secretary, Suho, welcomes and grants their request.

While the children are out grazing the sheep, there is a sudden blizzard. They work hard to protect the sheep and finally round them up. As they are looking for one lost lamb, Bayan sneaks up in the dark, cuts the rope of the pen and stampedes the flock. On their re-

turn the children find the severed rope and Bayan's knife-sheath on the ground, and realize there has been sabotage by the hidden enemy. They go after the sheep through the storm, looking out for the enemy too. Night comes. Seeing a flickering light in the distance, they tie one of their red scarves to a tree-top as a sign for anyone searching for them. Little Schin loses one of her felt boots in the snow. At this point Bayan comes back looking for his sheath. They fight him and Temur is wounded. Just in time, Party Secretary Suho and some PLA men and herdsmen catch up with them and capture the enemy.

The protection of the brigade's flock is the drama's central theme. Around it revolve two sets of contradictions. The first is between these two children and the reactionary herd-owner, a contradiction between two opposing classes. The second is the children's fight with the blizzard, a contradiction between man and nature in the production struggle. The class struggle is the main thread, while the contradiction between man and nature forms its background. By setting the children in several direct confrontations with the reactionary herd-owner Bayan, their heroism and spirit are clearly brought out, and we see their courage, daring and ability in the fight.

This new dance drama is based on the courageous struggles of many Inner Mongolian children who fight heroically against snow-storms to protect their commune's sheep. However, its creators use the method of integrating revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism to sum up the spirit of the people in the grasslands in socialist revolution and socialist construction and create typical images of two young proletarian heroes.

In accordance with the requirements for the depicting of heroic characters and for expression of the main theme, they have succeeded in realistically portraying these youngsters and bringing out the salient features of our age, the characteristics of the Mongolian nationality and of children.

What is most essential in socialist literature is that it should bring out the salient features of our age, which determine the other aspects. The makers of this dance drama have not only striven to express these salient features in depicting the heroic characters, but every single incident, every scene and the entire dance vocabulary are imbued

with the spirit of our time. For instance, in the first scene the contention of the brother and the sister to get hold of the milking pail shows their deep love for their life in the grasslands and their love of labour, that fine characteristic of the children of New China. In the second scene, the brother and sister use their spades in simulated bayonet practice, showing their love for the People's Liberation Army — another feature of our age when the whole country is learning from the PLA. The third scene contains a dance miming galloping on horseback. Quick in rhythm and impetuous in spirit, it gives vivid expression to the feeling of comrades rushing to the rescue of others in our socialist pasturelands. These things show the spirit of our age and make a strong emotional impact.

Because it has adapted certain folk dance movements of the Mongolian nationality with which it deals, this dance drama shows very distinctive national features. Every one of the dances, whether it is the cheerful and lively milking dance, the swift and vigorous fodder-collecting dance, the humour-filled wrestling dance, or the dignified and impetuous galloping dance, is based on actual life in the grasslands, makes full use of traditional Mongolian dance techniques and is rich in national flavour and realism. In the two children's dance as they set out with the sheep, the motions show them herding sheep with both joyful enthusiasm and a sense of responsibility; now they look down and count the sheep, now they wave their arms showing fondness for the sheep and driving them on, now crack the whip urging them on and keeping them together. All these movements express the children's high aspirations as they herd sheep for the revolution. Accompanied by lively, cheerful melodies and set against splendid and beautiful background scenery, this dance unfolds a magnificent and varied panorama of life.

This dance drama has succeeded in uniting depth of content with simplicity of expression, and so is well suited to children, of whose tastes and feelings it shows a good understanding. An instance is the scene in which the brother and sister are chasing the sheep, then get separated, and Temur finds Schin again in a snow-drift and rescues a lamb. Finding that his sister has lost one of her boots and is lying down with a frost-bitten foot, he leaps up in anxiety, frantically

trying to pull and kick off one of his own boots, so that his sister can wear it. But his boot is frozen fast to his foot and will not come off. And Schin, seeing what he is doing, drags herself forward in an effort to stop him. She seems to be saying with concern: "Brother, you mustn't; if your foot gets frost-bitten too, how can we fight that bad man Bayan and protect the flock?" So they are at unselfish cross-purposes. Then suddenly the brother stretches out his arm and points forward, raising his head towards the sky, and the sister, holding on to the brother's leg, lifts her frost-bitten foot. The combined posture is like that of a proud eagle stretching its wings as it soars skyward. This set of dance movements presents the specific features of these young heroes; at the same time it shows the special characteristics of children — their naivete and liveliness.

This revolutionary dance drama has been specially created for children, and is the first in China with children as its main heroes. It sets a good example for the development of revolutionary children's art in China. Made into a coloured film, it is now being shown all over the country.

## The Peasant Song-Writer Shih Chang-yuan

For nearly twenty years Shih Chang-yuan has been composing songs while taking part in collective farm labour. Altogether he has written more than four hundred songs, some of which are well-known throughout China, like the song *Learn from Tachai and Work with a Will*. After we had seen performances by the children's orchestra of the Tachai Brigade, we went to a village called the Inner Anyang Gully where Shih's home is, only about a dozen miles from Tachai. There, the comrades in charge of the brigade invited Shih who was working in the fields to come over to meet us.

We saw a middle-aged man dressed like any ordinary peasant. He started to introduce himself:

"I'm just a peasant. I had no schooling before Liberation and only learned to read in 1952. I have been learning to write songs since 1957. I make them up because the masses need them."

Inner Anyang Gully is a mountain village in Hsiyang County, Shansi Province. During the War of Resistance Against Japan, this was a guerrilla area. At that time Shih liked learning revolutionary



songs from our guerrillas. After Hsiyang County was liberated in 1945, first land reform and then agricultural collectivization were carried out. The poor and lower-middle peasants, politically and economically liberated, wanted to express their joy with new songs, so a movement to learn them started in this village and Shih volunteered to do the teaching.

As this movement went on, the peasants found they needed to understand simple musical notation; so in 1954 a class was organized for this, and Shih attended it.

But people were not content just to sing songs composed by others, they asked Shih to make up new songs based on real characters and

real incidents in the village. Then with their encouragement he began to compose.

Shih told us: "When making new songs, we shouldn't just follow our individual interests, we should choose themes which suit the tasks of specific periods. We sing so that we can carry through Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and follow the example of Tachai." This, he added emphatically, had been the principle by which he composed new songs.

This is really what he has done as we can see when we look at the songs he has composed over the past dozen or so years. All his songs were written for some revolutionary purpose.

Inner Anyang Gully, like other rural districts in China, set up a people's commune in 1958. The peasants were elated and showed great enthusiasm for their work. Shih composed two songs: *Please Come and See Our Mountain Village* and *Happiness Falls Like Blossoms on Our Mountain Slope* to praise this new spirit. The second song includes these lines:

In our southern mountains and on our mountainsides,  
Many songs combine to sing our commune's fine.  
Through the still air the sound of the songs glides,  
The Tachai spirit blooms on these hillsides.

The lilting melody of this song fully expresses the spirit of the people's communes.

During the Cultural Revolution Shih composed many new songs, praising the masses' struggle to transform our land. In 1972 Hsiyang County suffered from a very serious drought which lasted seventeen months, but the poor and lower-middle peasants of Hsiyang were undaunted by this calamity. They carried water on shoulder-poles when they were going to do the sowing, and when the nearby springs had dried up, they fetched water from a long way away. For each *mu* of land they had to carry a hundred loads of water and walk several hundred miles. They kept at it for more than fifty days until finally they conquered the drought and won a bumper harvest.

Shih took part in this struggle himself. The heroic spirit of the peasants inspired him and he composed as he worked. Thus he

produced more than twenty songs like the one called *Never Seen the Like of It*. As he finished each new song, he would teach it to the propaganda team and the people who taught singing, and soon everyone would have learned it. The peasants sang his new songs as they carried water and tilled the ground so that music became a powerful weapon in the fight against the drought.

The song *Never Seen the Like of It* is a duet for men. It begins like this:

Oho! With flaming ardour we toil hard,  
And sing a new song of the Tachai spirit.  
So many new songs we want to sing,  
We do not know where to begin.  
Which will we sing first? What do you suggest?  
We'll sing *Never Seen the Like of It*.  
Right, so let us sing,  
Let's sing *Never Seen the Like of It*.

This song has a vigorous and militant spirit and uses distinctive folk language, rich in local colour. It expresses fervent praise for the revolutionary optimism of the peasant masses armed with Mao Tsetung Thought.

To inspire the masses to fight on undaunted by fatigue in their movement to learn from Tachai, Shih also composed a battle song called *Learn from Tachai and Work with a Will*. The words begin as follows:

Learn from Tachai and work with a will.  
Let us all join battle, giving all we've got.  
When the cadres and the masses have one single aim,  
Even oceans can be filled, even mountains moved.  
Chairman Mao's line shows the way,  
We must work hard to make big progress.

This song has a clear cadence and the melody is vigorous and powerful.

The biggest river in Hsiyang County is the Sunghsi River which runs through eighteen people's communes. When there was heavy rain, it used to flood its banks; and when there was no rain, it would dry up, causing a lot of trouble. During the mass movement to learn from Tachai, the local peasants repaired the dykes and built dams, completely harnessing the river and changing the whole situation.

To commemorate the great achievement and tell of the important role played by women in this struggle to transform nature, Shih composed *The Sunghsi River Flows Around the Hills*, a woman's solo. It contains the following passage:

Now the river flows around the hills for fifty li,  
And a reservoir has been built in the valley,  
From this we get electricity and we get fish.  
Our agriculture is mechanized,  
Motors hum all over the hills,  
Rumbling like thunder.

The lyrical melody depicts vividly the joy of the masses on seeing how this troublesome river has been turned into a source of wealth.

In the class struggle and the struggle between the bourgeois and proletarian lines, Shih has always used his songs as a weapon to debunk revisionism and to praise the great victory of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. In 1974, during the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, initiated and led by Chairman Mao himself, Shih composed more songs like *Workers, Peasants and Soldiers Are the Main Force of the Movement*, to criticize Lin Piao's criminal behaviour when he advocated Confucian doctrines and vainly tried to restore capitalism.

Last January when the Fourth National People's Congress was convened, Shih made a new song *Long Live Our Mighty Socialist Motherland* amid the jubilation of the local masses. With a quick marching rhythm and cheerful melody this song celebrates China's prosperity under socialism.

All this peasant composer's songs possess a clear revolutionary content and a distinctive musical style. He follows Chairman Mao's directive to make the past serve the present and weed through the old to bring forth the new and is good at choosing suitable melodies from folk music and adapting them with certain innovations, so that they vividly express our new life under socialism and the revolutionary spirit of the masses. In order to reflect more fully the new spirit of our socialist countryside, he has made good use of various musical forms; among the songs he has composed, some are solos, some are duets, some are for choirs or mass singing, some are marching songs with a vigorous rhythm, and some are lively cheerful pieces to ac-

company acting. Since his works possess a distinctive Chinese flavour and express the heroic spirit of the masses in socialist construction, they are very popular here. The local peasants say: "Shih's songs are easy to sing, pleasant to listen to and they show our spirit and express our feelings."

Shih said to us when we interviewed him: "When I make up new songs, I always rely on the masses for their support and help. My songs are based on the masses' own experience; then when I sing to them, I ask them for criticism. They are the source of my strength."

Shih Chang-yuan is very good at both farm work and masonry. He said, "Once separated from labour, one is separated from the masses and their fiery struggle. If this happened to me, the source of my inspiration would dry up and I could no more express the masses' true feelings."

## CHRONICLE

### The Celebration of the 33rd Anniversary of the Publication of the "Yenan Talks"

To celebrate the 33rd anniversary of the publication of Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*, the Ministry of Culture arranged various literary and art activities around May 23 which are described below:

Films of Model Theatrical Works: Fourteen colour films based on modern revolutionary Peking operas, revolutionary dance dramas and revolutionary music were shown. They included the Peking operas *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*, *The Red Lantern*, *Shachiapang*, *On the Docks*, *Song of the Dragon River*, *Red Detachment of Women*, *Raid on the White Tiger Regiment*, *Fighting on the Plain* and *Azalea Mountain*; the modern revolutionary dance dramas *Red Detachment of Women* and *The White-Haired Girl*; the revolutionary symphony *Shachiapang*, the piano concerto *The Yellow River* and the piano music *The Red Lantern* with Peking opera singing. New copies of these films were made and these were shown not only in towns but in many villages, factories, mining areas and army units by specially organized teams. At the same time, two new films of the revolutionary dance dramas *Sons and Daughters of the Grassland* and *Ode to the Yimeng Mountains* were also released.

Stage Performances of New Theatrical Works: Various new works were chosen from items in the two theatrical festivals given by different provinces and regions recently held in Peking. Many of them are local and minority nationalities' operas adapted from



From the Kwangtung yuehchu opera *Azalea Mountain*

the model revolutionary Peking operas. They include *The Red Lantern* adapted into the form of a Sinkiang Uighur opera, *Red Detachment of Women* into Hupeh hanchu opera, *Azalea Mountain* into Kwangtung yuehchu opera, and some scenes of Peking operas into Honan yuchu, chuchu and Shensi chinchiang. There were also a number of new Peking operas and local operas as well as songs and dances and popular ballads from various provinces and regions. These performances were mainly staged in Peking factories, mining areas,

villages and army units. In their spare time the performers took part in labour together with Peking workers, peasants and soldiers, learning from them in the process.

**Exhibition of Art Works by Workers and Peasants:** During the celebration, fifty woodcuts by workers of Shanghai, Yangchuan and Luta, and fifty paintings by peasants of Huh sien County in Shensi were exhibited in various factories, mining areas and villages. The woodcuts were displayed in the Anshan Iron and Steel Company, and in the Taching, Takang, and Shengli Oilfields. The peasant paintings were exhibited in Tachai Brigade, Hsiyang County, the Yangchuan Coal-mine in Shansi, the Hsiao chinchuang Brigade in Tientsin, the Sino-Korean Friendship People's Commune in Peking and in other units. Some reproductions of outstanding works from the three national fine arts exhibitions held after the Cultural Revolution were also displayed.

Members of The Peking Opera Troupe of Peking work with commune members



**Performances of Revolutionary Theatrical Works for the Grass-roots Units:** More than ten groups responsible for various modern revolutionary Peking operas, dance dramas and symphonies went to factories, mines, villages and army units to perform for the workers, peasants and soldiers. The items performed were mainly model theatrical works. Some new Peking operas such as *Red Cloud Ridge*, *Investigation of a Chair*, *Fighting on the Sea* and *The Chingehiang Ferry* were included too. During this period, these performing artists worked in the fields and factories and went all out to integrate themselves with the workers, peasants and soldiers.

### **Amateur Art Activities Among Luta Workers**

Guided by Chairman Mao's proletarian line on literature and art, workers in Luta, Liaoning Province, have created many art works in their spare time.

There are now over 750 literary and art groups and 35,000 activists in this district. Since 1966 when the Cultural Revolution began, more than 31,000 poems, ballads, dramas, dances, paintings and stories have been recommended from the grass-roots level to the municipal authorities. Nearly four thousand new works have been selected for broadcasting, or for publication in newspapers. Most outstanding of all have been the art works created by the workers. Fifty of these paintings were selected for inclusion in the *Selected Works by Luta Worker Artists* brought out by the People's Fine Arts Publishing House and more than 80 woodcuts and New Year pictures were chosen for the National Fine Arts Exhibition and the Exhibition of Art Works by Shanghai, Yangchuan and Luta Workers.

### **New Colour Films by Dye Transfer Process**

Recently China has succeeded in producing colour films by the dye transfer process. This method is an advanced technique used in processing and copying colour films giving good colour reproduction. The colours do not fade easily and production costs are lower. This technique will greatly benefit our film industry.

After a year of experiment, this new technique is giving excellent results. It was employed in the making of a number of colour films now showing, including the modern revolutionary Peking operas *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*, *Song of the Dragon River*, and *Azalea Mountain* and the modern revolutionary dance drama *The White-Haired Girl* and others.



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Spring Comes to the Chialing River (woodcut)

by Feng Chung-tieh



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