

SSIA

# CHINESE LITERATURE



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## REMINISCENCES OF THE LONG MARCH

The Long March is the first of its kind in the annals of history, . . . it is a manifesto, a propaganda force, a seeding-machine. Since Pan Ku divided the heavens from the earth and the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors reigned, has history ever witnessed a long march such as ours? For twelve months we were under daily reconnaissance and bombing from the skies by scores of planes, while on land we were encircled and pursued, obstructed and intercepted by a huge force of several hundred thousand men, and we encountered untold difficulties and dangers on the way; yet by using our two legs we swept across a distance of more than twenty thousand *li* through the length and breadth of eleven provinces. Let us ask, has history ever known a long march to equal ours? No, never. The Long March is a manifesto. It has proclaimed to the world that the Red Army is an army of heroes, while the imperialists and their running dogs, Chiang Kai-shek and his like, are impotent. It has proclaimed their utter failure to encircle, pursue, obstruct and intercept us. The Long March is also a propaganda force. It has announced to some 200 million people in eleven provinces that the road of the Red Army is their only road to liberation. Without the Long March, how could the broad masses have learned so quickly about the existence of the great truth which the Red Army embodies? The Long March is also a seeding-machine. In the eleven provinces it has sown many seeds which will sprout, leaf, blossom, and bear fruit, and will yield a harvest in the future. In a word, the Long March has ended

with victory for us and defeat for the enemy. Who brought the Long March to victory? The Communist Party. Without the Communist Party, a long march of this kind would have been inconceivable. The Chinese Communist Party, its leadership, its cadres and its members fear no difficulties or hardships. Whoever questions our ability to lead the revolutionary war will fall into the morass of opportunism. A new situation arose as soon as the Long March was over. In the battle of Chihlochen the Central Red Army and the Northwestern Red Army, fighting in fraternal solidarity, shattered the traitor Chiang Kai-shek's campaign of "encirclement and suppression" against the Shensi-Kansu border area and thus laid the cornerstone for the task undertaken by the Central Committee of the Party, the task of setting up the national headquarters of the revolution in northwestern China.

(Mao Tsetung: *On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism*)

October 19, 1975 marked the 40th anniversary of the victory of the Long March accomplished by the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, the precursor of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

The First Front Army (the Central Red Army) set out in October 1934 from the Kiangsi revolutionary base and arrived in northern Shensi on October 19, 1935. The Second and Fourth Front Armies arrived in October of the following year. Thus the three main armies joined forces with the 25th Army Corps which had arrived earlier and the Northern Shensi Red Army and the world-famous Long March was successfully completed. Why did they set out on this great strategic march at that time?

The Chinese Communist Party was founded in 1921, and in the autumn of 1927 Chairman Mao founded the first Workers' and Peasants' Red Army and established the Chingkang Mountains revolutionary base in Kiangsi. Under the leadership of Chairman Mao, both the revolutionary base areas and the Red Army expanded day by day and the revolution was making excellent headway. But because Wang Ming usurped the central leadership of the Party in 1931 and pursued a "Left" opportunist line, the revolutionary

forces suffered heavy losses; the Red Army was compelled to leave its base and set out on the Long March.

During the Long March, the Party Central Committee convened an enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau at Tsunyi, Kweichow Province, in January 1935, putting an end to the rule of Wang Ming's line in the Party Central Committee and establishing Chairman Mao's leading position in the whole Party and army, thus saving the Party and the Red Army at a critical moment of the revolution.

Under the wise command of Chairman Mao the Red Army went north to resist Japanese aggression. They made their way across the Chihshui River four times, crossed the Wuchiang and Golden Sand Rivers, fought their way across the Tatu River, seized Luting Bridge, climbed the snow-covered mountains and slogged through pathless marshlands. They conquered the obstacles of Latzukou Pass, scaled Liupan Mountain and victoriously completed the 25,000-li march.

During the Long March Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee waged a resolute struggle against Chang Kuo-tao who usurped the Fourth Front Army's leadership and pursued a Right opportunist line. Chang opposed the Red Army's plan of going north to resist Japan, advocating that they flee to the south, and split the Party and the Red Army by setting up a bogus central committee.

The Long March was a sublime epic. This great service rendered by the Red Army is indelibly engraved in the minds of the people of all nationalities of our country. Their heroic deeds will always encourage the people of our country to advance valiantly along Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the victory of the Long March, we are publishing below some reminiscences written by veterans of this march. They record different aspects of the militant life of the Red Army during the Long March.

— The Editors

## Crossing the Golden Sand River

After the Tsunyi Meeting, the First Front Army of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army led by Chairman Mao routed the enemy forces in the vicinity of Loushan Pass and Tsunyi, crossed the Wuchiang and Peipan Rivers in the south, and swept on towards Yunnan. During the march our Red Cadres' Regiment had the task of protecting the Central Committee organizations and our leading comrades.

There were two infantry battalions and one special service battalion in our regiment, most of our cadres having been transferred from crack companies and platoons which had seen plenty of action.

April in Yunnan was already hot. Our thin uniforms were constantly drenched with sweat. In the misty fields the paddy waved in the breeze as if to welcome us. The hills on both sides were overgrown with trees, and bees were buzzing to and fro among their flowers and luxuriant leaves. The spring air was intoxicating. Although we had more than one hundred thousand enemy troops in hot pursuit behind us at that time, we all felt sure that Chairman

Mao would lead us to shake off the enemy and win fresh victories. So our morale was high as we marched along enjoying the spring scenery.

One evening our regiment encamped in a village. In the middle of the night I got up to inspect the sentries. When I reached the compound where members of the Central Committee were staying, I noticed that there was still a light inside. Which of our leaders was up so late? I was going to ask the sentry when someone came out. He approached us and when he came close I saw it was Comrade Chou En-lai. I stood at attention and asked:

"Aren't you in bed yet, vice-chairman?"

"Not yet," he answered. "Finished your inspection? Then come on in for a bit."

This compound had belonged to a landlord and the house was fairly well-built. In the room where Vice-Chairman Chou was staying there were several old-fashioned chairs and a large square table. On the table was a dim oil-lamp, beside it some simple writing material as well as a paper package. On the wall hung a big map; so it seemed that he had been studying the route for our march. Under the dim lamplight, the vice-chairman's face looked thin and wan; his eyes, too, had lost some of their sparkle. He was wearing himself out.

After we sat down he asked me: "How many men has your fifth company now?"

"We had some casualties in the battles at Tsunyi and Tucheng," I told him. "Our present strength is just over one hundred and twenty."

Then he asked me how our company had made out during the march and the state of our morale and equipment, and I answered all these questions. He thought over my replies, then said with a smile:

"Your fifth company fought well at Tsunyi and Tucheng. You must keep up your good reputation."

Having said this, he opened the package on the table and offered me some biscuits. I knew that was the supper prepared for him by

the guards. As biscuits were very hard to come by at that time, I hastily declined.

"I had a big supper," I told him. "I'm still full."

He pushed the package towards me, insisting that I try some, so I had to take a small piece. As I ate the biscuit I waited for more questions, but the vice-chairman kept silent as if lost in thought.

Finally he said, "All right. It's late now. Go and turn in."

As I left Vice-Chairman Chou's room I was wondering: Why did he ask me such detailed questions about our company? Did he just ask them casually or is he choosing a unit for some important task? I was sorry that I hadn't got this point clear.

The next morning, we seized the chance to do some odd jobs and to prepare rations. Some fellows husked rice, others mended or washed clothes, yet others polished their rifles and sharpened the bayonets. A few of us sat under the eaves to plait straw sandals, chatting as we worked.

"The enemy's chasing after us hard, yet we've halted here," remarked one man. "Isn't that odd?"

"What's odd about it?" someone retorted. "We must be waiting for them to catch up so as to give them a beating; or maybe there's some big job ahead and we need to make preparations."

"What big job?" cut in a third man. "An assault on Kunming? A forced crossing of Golden Sand River?"

As no one could answer this question all eyes turned towards me.

"No orders have come down yet," I said. "How are we to know?"

That afternoon when all our preparations were more or less complete, men kept coming to ask me why we still weren't leaving. I was feeling pretty impatient myself, and all these questions made me even more frantic. I decided to take a stroll and try to pick up some news.

This was a fairly big village of more than two hundred households. Their thatched cottages fenced with bamboo were surrounded by green paddy fields — a most tranquil scene. But because of the lies spread about us by the Kuomintang, all the young people seemed to have fled, leaving only some old folk and children in the village. Outside the gate of the primary school, in a pile of waste paper blown

this way and that by the wind, I found a map of Yunnan. I picked it up eagerly. In the past we had always relied on our higher command for directions and on local guides to lead the way, for otherwise we could not find our bearings; thus this map, simple as it was, was better than nothing. From the map I could see that if we were to head north we should have to cross Golden Sand River. The enemy defences there must be very strong. If we tried to force a crossing, we had to expect some hard fighting.

On the way back I passed the central organizations' headquarters and saw people hurrying in and out of the gate as if there was some meeting going on. Apparently at this stage of our Long March a new and major problem had arisen.

On the third morning we heard that the enemy was fast approaching, and about to encircle us. Still no order came to move on. We all felt on tenterhooks. At noon, I suddenly saw the messenger from regimental headquarters approaching our company. I went to meet him.

"Has the regimental commander sent for us?" I asked.

"How did you guess?" rejoined the messenger.

I realized then that my guess had been correct and joyfully grabbed hold of Political Instructor Li. Together we hurried to regimental headquarters.

Headquarters was packed with people. Apart from our regimental commander Chen Keng and the political commissar Sung Jenchiung, there were some other responsible comrades from our central organizations, some of whom I knew and others whom I didn't. The room was wreathed with tobacco smoke, and the meeting was still in progress. When Li and I went in our regimental commander gave us our orders:

"The Central Committee has decided that our army is to cross to the north bank of Golden Sand River, and has given our regiment the task of capturing the ferry at Chiaochehtu. Our regiment has decided to send the second battalion as vanguard detachment and your fifth company as the advance unit. Your job is to capture the ferry as fast as possible, no matter what the cost, and to cover the main force's crossing. You are to set out as soon as you are ready!"

Indicating a man near him in a dark uniform, he added: "The Central Committee is sending a work team with you to help carry out this task. Comrade Li here is head of the work team. He's to be in overall charge."

Hearing this I was still more elated. I quickly gripped Comrade Li's hand. After a brief consultation as to when to start, I went back to our company.

After the men had been briefed and were lightly equipped, we had a hearty meal, then set out along a small track leading to the river. The vice battalion commander Huo Hai-yuan and I marched behind the first platoon, while the political instructor and the work team brought up the rear. The two victories at Tsunyi and Tucheng had put our troops on their mettle. They had had two days in which to recover from fatigue, and they were jubilant too at having been chosen as the advance unit in this action. Though our way through the mountains was tortuous, in some places trackless, and the sun made us pour with sweat, not one of our men lagged behind or said a word of complaint. Pushing forward at a speed of over ten *li* an hour, we marched all night. At daybreak we rested for ten minutes to gulp down some cold water and a few mouthfuls of cold rations, then covered another eighty *li* in one stretch.

We had now crossed a high mountain and were only some sixty *li* from Golden Sand River. We decided to take a rest. This respite gave Comrade Li of the work team and me a chance to discuss the problem of capturing the ferry. We decided that as soon as we reached the bank we would wipe out the defenders there, then seize some boats and force a crossing. After we had routed or wiped out the enemy on the opposite bank, we would dig ourselves in to await the detachment behind us.

By the time we drew near the riverbank the sun had set. Some distance ahead of us we could see the dark silhouette of a range of hills, but could not make out which were rocks and which were trees. Golden Sand River lay like a length of grey cloth, but the river itself was indistinguishable from the sandy shore. Between the hills and the river were flickering lights, as if the enemy's eyes were watching us. We could not tell whether we had been spotted or not.

Perhaps they were waiting for us. All right, if they were we would have a trial of strength! Thinking in this way, we had nearly reached the shore. I passed the order to the men behind:

"Golden Sand River's just ahead. Get ready for action!"

Just at this point, the first platoon leader ran over through the darkness to report what had happened at the ferry.

Since our entry into Yunnan, the enemy had guessed that we would most likely try to cross Golden Sand River. They had therefore deployed troops on the north shore to guard all the ferries large and small for a stretch of several hundred *li*, while at the same time all the boats had been removed to their side to stop communication between the two banks. The enemy on the north bank at Chiaochehtu often sent out plain-clothes men to reconnoitre. Today they had sent some spies over too, but these men must have gone off to smoke a few pipes of opium or to squeeze the local people, for the boats that had brought them were still waiting at the ferry. When our scouts went down to the bank, the boatmen assumed they were the men whom they had ferried across.

"Going back?" they asked casually.

"Yes," said our men.

They then darted forward to point their pistols at the boatmen's chests, and in this way we had captured the boats.

Having heard this report, I raced to the bank. First we reassured the boatmen who were trembling with fright, then found out from them the situation on the north shore. There was a small town there, where originally a landlords' force of thirty to forty men had guarded the local tax-collecting office; but this morning one company of regular troops had arrived as reinforcements, and this company was stationed on the right side of the town. In the centre of the town, on the river front, was a wharf with stone steps where one of the landlords' men usually stood guard. Recently because of the tense situation they had posted an extra sentry. Though the enemy suspected we would try to cross Golden Sand River, as this was not a large ferry and they had no idea we could arrive so fast, the place was not too well guarded.

The vice battalion commander and I briefly discussed the situation and decided to cross the river at once. Meanwhile the political instructor spoke to the boatmen, urging them to help us, and because they had suffered so much under the Kuomintang they readily agreed.

I then ordered the first and second platoons to cross first with me, while the vice battalion commander, the political instructor and the work team remained behind on the south bank. The third platoon would be on the alert, ready to support us with fire if necessary.

The third platoon accordingly fanned out to right and left along the shore, training their guns on the flickering lights in the town on the other side. Silently I led the first and second platoons to board the two boats, whispering instructions on what they must do after going ashore and in case of emergency. Then, one after the other, the two boats cast off.

There was a breeze and the river was eddying. Waves slapped into our boats and set them rocking. A few of our men helped the boatmen with the oars, while the others stayed close together, hugging their rifles to prevent their being splashed by the waves.

As we got closer to the town we could see the dark outlines of the buildings more clearly. As the boats drew nearer still, the lights in the windows grew brighter, enabling us to see the shadowy figures inside — we could hear voices too. A few more minutes and the fight would be on! Tensely I tightened my grip on the gun in my hand, my eyes intent on the town.

Our boat reached the wharf. I nudged the two men near me who were prepared in advance. Guns at the ready they jumped ashore and bounded up the stone steps. As they reached the top, we heard the hoarse voice of a man with a local accent:

“Hey, why are you back so late?”

Our two comrades made no answer.

“Don’t move!” rasped a low voice.

I led my men up at a run and we overpowered the two sentries. A brief interrogation of these two captives confirmed what we had learned from the boatmen. So I ordered the first platoon to head right along the street to attack the enemy regulars, and the second



platoon to go left to attack the landlords' contingent. They were to keep me informed of developments.

The boats rowed back then to fetch the men behind us.

According to plan, our signalman collected some straw and set it ablaze on the bank — the signal that our company had crossed. The leaping flames dyed the shimmering water crimson.

As soon as we made this signal, a few shots were fired in the street, then silence fell. As we were wondering why the firing had stopped, messengers from both platoons ran back to report.

This was what had happened: when the first platoon reached the gate of the enemy company headquarters, the sentry challenged them, and one of the captured sentries following our orders answered:

"We're from the local unit."

Before the Kuomintang soldier could ask further questions, our men leapt forward and caught him by the throat. Having ascertained the situation inside from him, they charged into the courtyard, kicked open the door and shouted:

"Hand over your guns and you'll be spared!"

They found the room full of opium fumes, and the enemy troops sprawled on the ground smoking opium. The Kuomintang soldiers looked up in bewilderment at this stern command and slowly raised their hands.

"Hey, don't make a mistake," they protested in puzzled voices. "We've just arrived today."

"There's no mistake," our men answered. "We're the Red Army and we've come to get you."

The Kuomintang soldiers exchanged helpless glances then got up and shambled out into the courtyard, where we lined them up at the point of our bayonets. Only their company commander and some other officers, who had been in a separate room, fired a few shots at random and fled. Since it was dark and we were not familiar with the terrain, we did not pursue them.

Something of the same sort had happened with the second platoon. They went to the headquarters of the landlords' contingent pretending they had come to pay their taxes. The landlords' men

were also smoking opium or playing mah-jong, so all of them were caught including their chief.

Fine! Everything was going well. Elatedly I ordered the signalman to build another bonfire on the bank to give the second signal.

The capture of the ferry had taken a great weight off our minds. As I stepped on to the stone-paved street of the town and saw the dark silhouettes of houses, I suddenly felt parched, my legs ached, and my stomach rumbled with hunger. If only we could find a place to have a good square meal and then a sound sleep! I was thinking of discussing our next step with the political instructor when the vice battalion commander came up.

"To consolidate our position at the ferry and deepen our defences," he said, "the regimental commander orders you to advance another fifteen *li* through the mountains towards Huili. There you can guard against enemy attack."

Our men quickly assembled in the street. All declared themselves able to go on, but we were so famished that we felt exhausted. This was not surprising as we had marched more than two hundred *li* at a stretch and had nothing to eat but cold rations. There was no time now to do any cooking and no eating-house in sight; we just had to stick it out. As we trudged along, however, I noticed a trade sign hanging in front of a door and by straining my eyes saw that it was a confectionery. I opened the door and went in. All was dark inside. And when I called for the shop-keeper no one answered. Most likely he had been frightened away by the gunfire. I lit an oil-lamp and found quite a few stacks of local pastries on the shelves. I thought: As there's no one about, I'll have to serve myself. I gathered together all the confectionery, about thirty cattles of it. There were more than a hundred of us in the company so each man got only a few ounces of food, but still it was better than nothing.

After we finished eating, our quartermaster worked out the cost, wrapped up some silver dollars, wrote a note on a slip of paper, and put these carefully in the drawer of the cash-desk. Then we blew out the lamp, closed the door, and continued on our way.

Once out of the town, we started up a mountain path on the left leading to a gully. Having advanced along this for sixteen or seventeen *li* we came to a patch of fairly level ground and decided to bivouac there. Each squad detailed a few men to gather firewood, fetch water, boil water and do the cooking. All the rest, hugging their rifles, fell sound asleep.

How long I slept I don't know, but I was awakened by a hand shaking me. I opened my eyes and found it was the vice battalion commander who'd come up too.

"Company Commander Hsiao, wake up quickly!" he said. "We're to continue the advance."

That made me sit up with a start and ask, "Is there some enemy movement?"

He pointed at a high peak in the distance and said, "Forty *li* along this path will bring you to that peak. If the enemy occupies that height, they'll be in a position to make things hot for us. So the regimental commander has ordered us to occupy that height before dawn, to extend our position and strengthen our hold on the ferry."

"Our regiment and the leading comrades of the central organizations can cross within one day, can't they?" I asked in surprise. "Why need we strengthen our hold on the ferry?"

He smiled at that and said, "It's not so simple. Our whole main force is to cross there."

"What!" I exclaimed. "The whole First and Third Army Groups?"

He nodded. "That's right. That's the plan now."

Now everything was clear. Why had our leading comrades called that hasty meeting before we set out? Why had Vice-Chairman Chou spent a sleepless night and asked all those questions about our company? He was considering not only the crossing of our staff officers but the movements of the whole army. The thought elated me, but also brought home to me our heavy responsibility as vanguard company for the whole army. I immediately notified all the platoon leaders, telling them to get their men to have a quick meal and then prepare to set off.

Our men were roused from their sleep. Our political instructor then explained the significance of our task, why we had to capture the height to consolidate our position. They were immediately all enthusiasm.

"Slog on another forty *li* and bivouac on the height!" somebody boomed.

"Capture the peak to cover our whole army's crossing!"

"Fight to the mountain top to guarantee victory!"

At dawn, though nearly on our last legs, we made it to the summit. From there we overlooked a whole range of hills and the path to Huili twisting and turning between them. We decided to occupy two hills on either side of the path, to control the way from Huili to the ferry.

So we marched on towards these hills and when we were nearly there the squad in front reported an approaching enemy unit. After a minor skirmish another twenty minutes passed. Then we saw a large enemy force on its way up.

This showed the brilliance of our higher command. Had we spent the night below in the gully, we'd have had to pay a heavy price today to capture this position.

As the enemy were uncertain of our strength they dared not attack. We held our fire too, both sides confronting each other without any action. Between three and four that afternoon we sighted our fourth company and the heavy machine-gun company of the special service battalion. As they drew near we saw, walking in front, our regimental commander Chen Keng and the political commissar Sung Jen-chiung. They seemed very pleased with us.

"Good show!" they cried.

While they inspected our positions I reported to them the enemy situation.

A few minutes later the regimental commander summoned us and the cadres of the fourth company and heavy machine-gun company to assign us tasks. Our company was to launch an attack from the hill on the right, to engage the enemy on that side of the path while the fourth company attacked from the hill on the left. The four machine-guns of the heavy machine-gun company were to cover

us from the two hills. After routing the enemy we must pursue them until further orders.

When our regimental commander gave the command, our big guns opened fire. And as soon as the bugle sounded the charge our whole company charged forward, firing as we ran. The enemy caved in quickly. In panic they fled helter-skelter. We chased them for nearly twenty *li*. Some we killed, others flopped down on the ground pretending to be dead, yet others fell over cliffs and were smashed to death. When we reached a hill behind a village, a caval-ryman brought the regimental commander's order:

"Stop the pursuit and bivouac where you are."

So we bivouacked on the slope behind the village. By then we were really tired out. Once we sat down we felt unable to get up. No one complained any more of hunger or thirst.

But when it was nearly dark, our men started shouting and ran down the slope. I saw that a unit was passing the foot of the hill and its vanguard was already approaching the village, but the troops in the rear had not yet appeared on the scene. Our men had heard that this was the Third Army Group and roused themselves from sleep to get up and watch. They raised great shouts of welcome although our comrades-in-arms could not possibly hear them. Once again, all our fatigue after our forced march, combat and pursuit was forgotten.

The next day our Central Committee leaders and members of the general staff crossed the river and stayed in a village we had passed during our pursuit. Our whole regiment also made the crossing safely. We heard from some newcomers that the First Army Group at Lungchichtu had found it impossible to cross there because the river was too wide at that point and enemy planes could fly low to strafe them; while the Third Army Group at Hungmentu could not cross there either as the current was too swift; thus both had eventually crossed at Chiaochentu. After the Third Army Group crossed, it had marched left towards Huili.

*Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien*

## Red Army Men Dear to the Yi People

In March 1934, we Yis and the poor Han people in Yuehhsi County, unable to stand the cruel rule and exploitation of the reactionary Kuomintang government and army, rose simultaneously in the three districts of Haitang, Wangchiatang and Paoan. Four thousand strong, we wiped out three companies of Kuomintang troops and for three days surrounded the county town. Soon after we had broken into the town, however, the enemy sent up reinforcements from Hsichang. We suffered a setback and had to retreat to the forest on a mountain in the eastern part of the county, where we lived the hard life of hunters for a year.

By May 1935, it was rumoured that the Red Army was coming. Some said the Red Army would have it out with the Kuomintang and the landlords, and help the poor; but others described the Red Army as man-killers and arsonists. Were there actually troops who fought the Kuomintang on behalf of the poor? We had no way of knowing. Finally we decided to send three men to investigate.

When the men returned they reported that the Kuomintang troops had withdrawn from the town, the rich families had moved away

and it was true that the Red Army was coming. Local Kuomintang officials were endeavouring to coerce the people into moving, saying that the Red Army and Communists would "communize everything" and forbidding them to ask questions about the Red Army. Not knowing the facts, some people had moved away too.

After all, what did we know about the Red Army? We could only make guesses. One thing we did know, and that was that the Red Army fought the Kuomintang. If not, why should those brutes and murderers fly in such a hurry? As for "communizing property", we who had nothing were not afraid of that. Besides, after a year in the forest we'd had enough of living like savages and preferred to help the Red Army fight the Kuomintang so as to get our own back. So we left the mountain and returned to the county town.

Yuehhsi was a shambles. The houses of those who had opposed the Kuomintang and landlords had been destroyed. The troops had looted the town before they fled. Many a house was gutted, its door gaping. The deserted streets were strewn with the debris of tiles, planks, straw and rags. Those lucky enough to have so far escaped disaster were hiding behind their bolted doors and closed windows.

One morning, we were asking in a shop for news of the Red Army when from the distance we heard the thud of hoofs. Peeping out, we saw five horses coming. On each rode a spirited youngster in a black tunic, an octagonal visored cap studded with a red star, and straw sandals. Each had a rifle slung across his shoulder and a cartridge-belt around his waist.

As soon as they saw us, they alighted.

"Friends," they said, all smiles, walking towards us, "you've had a hard time."

We hesitated at first but then, seeing how friendly they were, we went over to meet them.

"Don't be afraid, folk," they said. "We're Red Army men out to destroy the KMT dichards for the sake of the people of all our different nationalities."

"The Red Army!" we exclaimed, and at once surrounded the five smiling Red Army men. Hand grasping hand, we scrutinized each other, they looking at our woollen cloaks and hair knotted upon our heads and we staring at the red stars on their caps.

"We heard that you folk here, especially our Yi brothers, were cruelly oppressed by the KMT dichards. The enemy before they fled must have tried to frighten you by spreading rumours. We hope you'll go about your business as usual. Our troops will be putting up here for a few days and we guarantee you won't suffer any loss."

Smiling, they shook hands with us, and escorted by a crowd which had gathered at the news went on to visit different families in the town.

Gradually the shops in the streets opened. The news of the arrival of the Red Army men was passed from mouth to mouth.

In the afternoon, to the accompaniment of stirring battle songs, a Red Army detachment marched into the town. People lined the streets, clapping and staring. All the Red fighters looked fresh and vigorous, smiling and waving greetings as they marched. When they reached the entrance of the drum tower they sat down to rest and at once were surrounded by a curious crowd. Some fighters started chatting with us; others picked up children and fondled them. When the crowd gathered round us was many rows deep, a fighter with a Mauser hanging from his belt mounted the steps to address the gathering.

"Fellow-countrymen! We are the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army led by the Chinese Communist Party. We used to be poor folk like you, ground down by the reactionary officials, landlords and capitalists. When we couldn't stand it any longer we joined the Red Army. Unless we overthrow the Kuomintang reactionaries and liberate the whole of China, nobody will live in peace and happiness. Now the Japanese imperialists are invading our country and the Chiang Kai-shek government refuses to resist them. To save the nation, we are going north to fight the Japanese. We welcome our brothers from all nationalities who love our motherland to join the Red Army."

The crowd stirred. The terms "Join the Army!" "Fight the reactionaries!" and "Fight the Japanese imperialists!" were new to them.

I felt very excited on hearing they had really come to fight the Kuomintang. I was tempted to join them, but on second thoughts I decided to wait a little longer before making up my mind.

"Look! The Red Army is opening the prison. Hurry!"

People began to run towards the county yamen, shouting. I raced there too. The place was already crowded to overflowing. In the hall and in the courtyard before the prison burned fires on which the fighters, their faces flushed from the blaze, were throwing bundles of KMT official documents. We watched delightedly amid joyful shouts of "Long live the Red Army!"

Hoisting a tremendous log, a team of stalwart Red Army men went up to the tall, grim iron gate of the prison. They straddled in front of it, raising their battering-ram. Then one of them shouted: "Ready — go!"

Bang! The log battered the gate, which fell with a crash to the ground.

Tense with excitement, I pushed my way through the crowd towards the prison. It was fearfully dark inside. From the gloom came the clanking of chains and a revolting stomach-turning stench. The Red fighters strode in undeterred with torches and hammers, calling out as they entered: "Fellow-countrymen, you've been through hell! We're the Red Army, come to save you."

I followed them in. What a heart-rending sight it was! Emaciated, with long dishevelled hair, the prisoners lay stark naked or at best with a piece of rag around their loins in puddles of mud, excrement and foul water. They were chained with heavy handcuffs and fetters. The Red fighters carefully knocked off their chains and carried them out into the fresh air. Many of us helped and together we brought out about two hundred. They were all our Yi brothers. Some of them had been in prison for as much as a dozen years. There were also many who had been cruelly done to death. And what were their "crimes"? Failure to carry out the Kuomintang policy of "pitting the Yis against the Yis"; refusal to kill their broth-

ers from other tribes or to provide young girls for the Kuomintang officials according to "regulations"; or inability to pay the endless exorbitant taxes.

The harrowing sight of the survivors as well as news of those tortured to death evoked storms of weeping and wailing from their relatives who were present. The families of the dead caught hold of the Red Army men, begging them to avenge their loved ones. The Red fighters, with tears in their own eyes, assured them, "Fellow-countrymen, we shall remember your trust and wipe out the savage Kuomintang to avenge all who have suffered at their hands."

Carried away by furious indignation I cried impulsively: "I'll join you to fight the Kuomintang!"

The oppressive atmosphere was rent by my sudden cry. Then many of them followed my example. "I'll join in too to fight the Kuomintang!" was the cry.

The Red Army fighters clapped to welcome us and said that we could register presently.

Just then, along came many soldiers carrying medicine cases, food, garments and bolts of cloth, and baskets filled with silver dollars, ingots and coppers. Full of gratitude the crowd watched while the Red Army men helped the released prisoners to put on the clothes, and gave them food. A bolt of cloth and a dozen silver ingots were also given each. Then they dressed the wounds of those who were injured.

"Dear fellow-countrymen!" the soldier with the Mauser spoke up again. He had a broad face, dark, bushy eyebrows, and a pleasant way of speaking. "All these things were squeezed from the labouring people by reactionary Kuomintang officials and landlords; we're distributing them to you now to help you get over your difficulties and develop production. Tomorrow we're going to open the granary. We hope you'll come with bags, and tell those who aren't here today to come as well. You grew that grain yourselves, it's only right you should have it!"

Shouts of joy greeted this speech. "Thanks to the Red Army!" "Long live the Red Army!"



Subsequently, I discovered that the speaker was Political Instructor Liu Chih-chun. He led us to company headquarters and fetched a man of medium height.

"These three comrades will be in your squad," he said pointing to three of us. "Take good care of them, they are Yi comrades." To us he said, "Don't be afraid. It'll be like in your home." And pointing at the squad leader, he added, "This is Comrade Ho Hsiang-jung, your squad leader." Then he walked away with the other new volunteers.

Three days later, the troops set out. The whole town turned out to see us off, bringing gifts of pigs' heads, whole sheep, beef and wine which they pressed us to accept. The troops declined repeatedly, saying: "We have to fight battles on our way, so we can't take all



these things." But more people came with presents. Tears of gratitude in their eyes they stood on both sides of the road, mostly old men and women, holding cups of wine.

"The Red Army's done so many good things for us during your few days here," they said. "Yet now you won't drink even a mouthful of wine. How can you refuse?"

Finally our commander ordered us to sip a mouthful of wine each before leaving.

Now another crowd of men carrying swords, spears and sticks came and demanded to join us. We only recruited four hundred vigorous youngsters and tried to persuade the others to go back. But when we started for Haitang, many of them still followed us.

Two days later, while approaching Haitang, we were informed that the people there had intercepted and surrounded the fleeing Kuomintang county head and a few heads of the Kuomintang Party branch at Yuehhsi, together with two companies of the security force. They were waiting for us to go and wipe them out.

When we reached Haitang, we saw everywhere our Yi brothers, armed with whatever weapons they had, waving their cloaks in welcome. Shots were raining down thick and fast, for the enemy entrenched behind earthen walls and fortifications were putting up a stubborn resistance. Just in time I noticed a Kuomintang soldier aiming at our squad leader as he reloaded his rifle. I raised my gun and fired. The enemy dropped dead behind the wall. Startled by the report behind him, the squad leader looked back at me and immediately understood. Without saying a word, he smiled at me and quickly charged forward with the others. The county head and four Kuomintang county leaders were captured. The two companies of the Kuomintang security force had fled but were driven back by the Yi people. Holding high axes, knives and forks, the brave people attacked the enemy from all directions, and the Red Army fighters who had already taken the township struck from the rear. Attacked on both sides, the two companies of enemy soldiers were soon annihilated.

We set out towards Tashupao next morning before sunrise. Men and women, old and young, flocked around us on the way. After we reached Tashupao, we had to cross the Tatu River. When this was made known to them, the local people wanted to cross with us. We did our best to explain that this was impossible, and after picking out a dozen of our smartest Yi brothers as guides we made the rest promise to go home after they'd seen us off. However, when we reached the river, we found that all the boats had been destroyed by the enemy. That same night the local people brought timber and made dozens of rafts.

At dawn next morning when our troops started to cross, a huge crowd of Yis gathered on the shore and with tears in their eyes watched our fighters' departure.

"Be sure and come back!" they shouted.

When the last of us were on the rafts, some of them cried unrestrainedly.

"Good-bye, fellow-countrymen! We'll be back!" we called as we waved to them from the rafts.

"Come . . . back . . . soon!" Their voices floated sadly across the broad river.

We looked back as we marched, and shouted confidently: "We'll surely come back soon!"

*Illustrated by Tung Chen-sheng*



## Forced Crossing of the Tatu River

### A Glorious Mission

In May 1935, after having crossed the Golden Sand River the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army advanced north to force a crossing over the Tatu.

Tradition has it that Shih Ta-kai's\* troops met their end at the Tatu River, a tributary of the Yangtse. We were in a perilous position too, being pursued by hundreds of thousands of Chiang Kai-shek's troops while the "crack troops" of the Szechuan warlords guarded all the ferries of the Tatu River. Chiang boasted: With the Golden Sand River behind, the Tatu River in front and our armies hemming them in on either side, the Communists can't get away —

\*A general in the peasant insurgent forces of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. In 1863, after a split in the insurgent forces, he tried to lead an army to cross to the north bank of the Tatu but was trapped by Ching government forces. His whole army was wiped out.

not even if they sprout wings. He was hoping that we would end up like Shih Ta-kai.

Our First Regiment of the First Division, First Red Army Group of the First Front Army was to be the vanguard unit with the task of forcing a crossing over the Tatu. Regardless of the rain we set out as soon as this order came from a village more than 160 *li* from the river.

After marching for a whole day and night we halted on a hillside a dozen *li* from Anshunchang, within sound of the gurgling waters of the Tatu. The forced march of over 140 *li* in the rain had fagged our men out. The minute they halted, they dropped to the ground and fell asleep. It was already past ten at night. I hurriedly sought out some local people to find out the situation.

What they told me coincided with the information gathered by our scouts. Anshunchang was a small market-town of about a hundred families. It was guarded by two enemy companies to prevent the Red Army from crossing the river there. All the boats except one which was kept for the enemy's own use had been taken away or scuttled. An enemy regiment was stationed on the opposite shore, its main force being 15 *li* downstream. Three so-called "backbone regiments" defended the town of Luting upstream and there were two more regiments further downstream. Our only way to cross the Tatu was by capturing Anshunchang and seizing the boat.

The order came now from command headquarters: Make a surprise attack on the enemy at Anshunchang tonight, seize the boat and make a forced crossing. Army Group Commander Liu Pocheng and Political Commissar Nieh Jung-chen gave us special directions: "This crossing concerns the lives of tens of thousands of Red Army men. You must overcome all difficulties to carry out your task, opening up a way to victory for the whole army."

"We're not Shih Ta-kai but the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army led by the Communist Party and Chairman Mao. We can conquer all enemies and all natural barriers. At the Tatu River we'll write a glorious page in the annals of the Chinese revolution," pledged Li Lin, the regimental political commissar.

## Prelude to Victory

The fighters were roused from their sleep and we marched on through the drizzling rain and darkness.

We had now divided our forces. The Second Battalion led by Political Commissar Li was to go downstream and make a feint to attract the main enemy force; the First Battalion led by me was to take Anshunchang and then force a crossing; the Third Battalion would remain where it was to protect command headquarters.

We advanced along muddy paths in pitch darkness for about a dozen *li* till we were near Anshunchang. Then I made the First Battalion divide into three groups to advance by different routes.

The enemy at Anshunchang had never dreamed that the Red Army would get there so quickly, hence they were not on their guard.

"Which unit are you from?" An enemy sentry challenged our advance party.

"We are the Red Army! Hand over your weapons and you'll be spared!" With this thunderous cry our men rushed the enemy.

As enemy rifles cracked, our guns opened up too from all directions. The roar of the Tatu and the yells of the warlord troops were drowned by our fierce barrage. The enemy first resisted stubbornly, but many were killed or captured and soon the rest fled. In less than half an hour we put paid to the two enemy companies.

As the battle went on, I went into a hut by the road. "Who goes there?" I heard someone cry. My messenger guessed it was an enemy. He cocked his rifle and shouted: "Don't move! Hand over your weapons." Not knowing how many we were, the enemy soldiers surrendered their guns. It so happened that these men were in charge of the boat. I told the messenger to escort them to the First Battalion who were to secure the boat.

After some hard work the First Battalion succeeded in getting the boat, the only one there, our only hope of ferrying our men across the river.

I went down to the riverside when Anshunchang was taken. Cliffs towered on either side of the Tatu which was about 300 metres wide

here and a dozen metres deep. White waves leapt into the air as the rushing waters broke on reefs. It was out of the question to cross right away, as there were no boatmen and we were not prepared. I quickly reported to my higher command and asked for instructions while going ahead with preparations for the crossing. That evening I paced the hut at the end of the street of Anshunchang and sat beside the oil-lamp racking my brains over the problem of crossing the river.

I considered swimming across. But the waters of the 300-metre-wide river were rapid and rough. There were many whirlpools too, which would carry any swimmer away.

Neither would building a bridge do. With the flow at 4 metres per second, even driving a stake would be difficult, let alone the piles of a bridge. The only hope was the ferry boat. I ordered Sun Chih-sien, commander of the First Battalion to find some boatmen.

He sent men out who found first one boatman and then others. . . . By dawn they had found a dozen or so.

## The Seventeen Heroes

The rain let up. Clusters of white clouds floated in the azure sky. Water boiled and raced between the steep cliffs on both banks. By daylight the river looked more forbidding than ever. Through the field-glasses everything on the opposite shore was clearly visible. There, about one *li* from the ferry, was a tiny hamlet of four or five households enclosed by walls about half a man's height. The ferry itself was surrounded by black rocks and near by were fortifications. I reckoned that the main enemy force was concealed in the hamlet, planning to make a counter-charge when our vanguard approached that shore and force it into the river.

"He who strikes the first blow will be the winner," I decided.

I ordered the artillery battery to place their three guns and several heavy machine-guns in advantageous positions. The light machine-guns and crack shots also moved into position under cover by the riverbank.

Now our firepower was ready, but crossing still remained a serious problem. There was only one boat; so an assault team of brave and resolute men must be formed. I gave the commander of the First Battalion the task of picking this team.

When word of this reached our men they promptly surrounded the battalion commander, each asking to join the team. Sun Chih-sien had a hard time explaining that not all could go.

"What shall we do?" he asked me.

As for me, I was torn between pleasure and worry — pleasure because all our soldiers were so fearless, worry because this was causing a delay.

"You decide which unit is to go!" I told Sun.

He decided to send men from the Second Company, who assembled quietly outside our command post to hear which of them had been chosen.

"Company Commander Hsiung Shang-lin, Second Platoon Leader Tseng Hui-ming, Third Squad Leader Liu Chang-fa, Deputy Squad Leader Chang Keh-piao, Fourth Squad Leader Kuo Shih-tsang, Deputy Squad Leader Chang Cheng-chiu, fighters Chang Kuei-cheng and Hsiao Han-yao. . ."

Sixteen names were called. Sixteen heroes stepped out and stood in a line, all determined powerful men, fine cadres and fighters of the Second Company.

Suddenly a fighter broke from the ranks. "Let me go too! I must go!" he cried, running towards the battalion commander. It was the messenger of the Second Company.

The battalion commander looked at me. Moved by the scene I nodded my agreement. "Very well," Sun told him. The messenger brushed away his tears and bounded forward to join the other sixteen.

So an assault team of seventeen heroes was formed. They were equipped each with a broadsword, a tommy-gun, a pistol, half a dozen grenades and some work tools. Hsiung Shang-lin was to head the team.

## The Forced Crossing

The solemn moment had come. Hsiung Shang-lin and his men jumped on to the boat.

"Comrades! The lives of tens of thousands of Red Army men depend on you. Cross resolutely and wipe out the enemy."

Amid cheering the boat left the south bank.

The enemy opened fire in alarm at the boat.

"Give it to them!" I ordered.

Chao Chang-cheng, our crack gunner, had already trained his gun on the enemy fortifications. With two bursts he sent a fort flying into the sky. Our other machine-guns and rifles also spoke. Shells showered on the enemy fortifications; machine-gun fire swept the opposite shore. Meanwhile the boatmen rowed with all their might.

The boat plunged forward through the surging waters. Bullets landed around it, sending up spray. The eyes of everybody on shore were intent on the assault team.

Suddenly a shell dropped beside the boat, sending up a great wave which rocked the craft violently.

My heart was in my mouth. But the boat after some pitching and tossing resumed its normal course.

As it sped swiftly towards the opposite shore the enemy concentrated their fire on it. Cleaving the waves, undeterred by the rain of bullets, it continued on its way.

A volley of shots swept the boat. Through my field-glasses, I saw a fighter clutch his arm.

As I was wondering how badly hurt he was, the boat was caught in an eddy and hurtled against a big rock.

Straining my eyes, I watched while some of the boatmen tried to push off from the rock. White waves were churning round their little craft. If the eddy sucked it downstream into a whirlpool, it was bound to overturn.

"Punt clear!" I couldn't help shouting. Everyone on shore shouted too, to spur them on.

Four boatmen jumped into the rolling waters. They rammed their backs against the boat to hold it while four other boatmen punted



for all they were worth. Sweating and straining, they got the boat clear of the rock and on its way.

The boat drew nearer and nearer to the opposite shore until it was only five or six metres away. Regardless of the fierce enemy fire our heroes stood up, ready to jump ashore.

An enemy unit came rushing out from the hamlet. Obviously, they wanted to wipe out our landing party.

"Fire!" I ordered the gunners.

Wham! Wham! With two great blasts Comrade Chao Chang-cheng's shells exploded right in the middle of the enemy. Then Comrade Li Teh-tsai's heavy machine-gun cracked again. One by one the enemy soldiers fell right and left.

"Fire! Give it to them hard!" Shouts rang out on the riverbank. The enemy retreated, scattering in panic.

"Fire! Fire! Lengthen the range!" I ordered again.

We pumped another shower of metal at them. The boat landed under cover of our heavy barrage. The seventeen heroes flew ashore and with their tommy-guns and grenades cut down the enemy who were charging towards them. Our men occupied the defence works at the ferry.

The enemy didn't give up. They launched another counter-attack to drive us back into the river before we could gain a foothold. We poured our shells and bullets on the opposite shore once more. The enemy fell in the smoke while our seventeen heroes charged with a threatening roar. Seventeen broadswords flashed as our heroes slashed this way and that, forcing the enemy to retreat to the mountains in the north. We had won control of the ferry.

The boat returned presently to the south bank. Comrade Sun Chi-hsien and the machine-gunners ferried across, and then it was my turn. By now darkness was falling. The boatmen rowed faster to ferry across more boatloads of Red Army men. Pursuing to follow up our victory we captured two more boats downstream, and these helped to shuttle across the troops behind us.

The First Regiment's successful crossing of the Tatu greatly facilitated the speedy seizing of the Luting Bridge by the Fourth Regi-

ment on our left flank. By means of that bridge tens of thousands of Red Army men crossed the Tatu River, that great natural barrier, thus shattering Chiang Kai-shek's dreams that we would meet the same fate as Shih Ta-kai. The heroic deeds of our seventeen heroes will be remembered always.

*Illustrated by Fu Lin*

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**Towards Victory** (oil painting) by *Peng Pin*

In January 1935, the Party Central Committee convened an enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau at Tsunyi in Kweichow, put an end to the rule of the "Left" opportunist line in the Party Central Committee and established the new central leadership headed by Chairman Mao, thus saving the Party and the Red Army at a critical moment, and enabling the Red Army to triumphantly complete the Long March and reach northern Shensi. This oil painting shows the great joy of the Red Army fighters after the Tsunyi Meeting.

BEHIND MAO: CHOU EN-LAI  
BEHIND CHOU: CHU TEH



## **Nine Company Cooks During the Long March**

During the Long March I was quartermaster of a company in the Third Army Group of the Central Red Army. There were only nine cooks in our mess squad. Their leader, a short, dark and taciturn man, was named Chien. The vice leader Liu was of medium height and fond of telling jokes. The one who fetched most of the water was named Wang. These three were from Kiangsi my own native province. The names of the others I no longer remember.

We marched and fought almost every day. The company leaders had ordered that no one in the mess squad was to carry more than twenty kilograms so that they would not get too tired. But the cooks hid grain in the pots and pans so that each man was carrying thirty to forty kilograms at least. At one of our Communist Party group meetings they criticized me, the quartermaster, for not thinking enough of the soldiers. What were the men to eat if we got to a place where we couldn't buy grain? They were right and I let the cooks carry as much as they wanted to.

On the march Vice Squad Leader Liu was always cracking jokes or singing. Much laughter, accompanied by the clank of pots and



pans and utensils, made the mess squad the jolliest in the company and earned it the name "our theatre troupe". Sometimes the cooks were in such high spirits that they would start racing each other, whooping and yelling as if they didn't have thirty or forty kilograms on their shoulder-poles.

Yet they worked the hardest. When the men halted for rest, they promptly built fires and boiled water for drinking. When we reached a camp site, they set up their stove and got busy splitting firewood, washing vegetables and cooking rice. They got no more than two or three hours of sleep at night.

In the mountains of Kwangsi there were few peasant houses and it became difficult to buy grain. The cooks often had to travel far ahead of the troops to get it, usually unhusked, which meant additional work husking it. Once they spotted a small unused millstone

in a village and bought it from a peasant — another sixty kilograms to carry. One of them picked up a sieve and a winnow, battered and obviously discarded, and added them to the loads swinging from his shoulder-pole. Now the mess squad acquired another name, "our travelling mill".

Outside Tucheng in Kweichow Province, the army had to intercept enemy troops on a hill. Our company was holding down a forward position, cut off from our mess squad by a line of enemy fire. Several times the cooks attempted to take meals to the soldiers but were beaten back by machine-gun fire. A day and night passed. Liu paced around the stove impatiently, then stopped and conferred with the others in a low voice.

He came to me and said, "Listen, chief, Wang and I are going to make another try."

They strapped the food packs on their backs and went out. As we watched them from a hilltop, the two ran right into the line of fire. We were just about to cheer when Wang pitched to the ground and rolled over. Liu also fell. We were stunned. Two comrades killed right in front of our eyes.

At midnight the two suddenly appeared in front of us! "We went to the King of Hell to report for duty," Liu said, grinning, "but the little devils guarding the gate wouldn't let us in."

They had faked the fall and then picked themselves up and run hard. Their courage and quick wit got the food to the men.

After we left Kweichow, Squad Leader Chien developed eye trouble. His eyes became red and swollen. But he shouldered his loads as usual, walking with the aid of a stick. At first his eyes were just watery, then there was blood in the secretion. But he went about his work as usual.

When we came to the formidable snow-clad mountains we were told to carry the lightest possible loads on the climb. Utensils not absolutely necessary were left behind and we carried only food for two days for the whole company, some fresh ginger and hot peppers, and firewood.

It took the army a whole day to climb the first of these mountains. The air was rarefied, the slopes were covered with perpetual snow, and icicles hung from the trees. At the summit some men sat down to rest and could not get up again. The cooks immediately made them chew fresh ginger and drink hot pepper soup, and pulled them to their feet. The cooks had become nurses. "We won't let one man die in the snow mountains" was the mess squad's slogan. But while reviving the soldiers, two cooks collapsed. We did everything we could but they never opened their eyes again.

Before entering the terrible marshlands the army had a longer rest at Maoerhkai. The mess squad collected enough food for ten days and bought some *chingko* barley for emergency use.

On the second day of our struggle through the marshlands, Squad Leader Chien told me, "Chief, the swamp is ruining the men's feet. We must have hot water every evening for them to soak their feet in." I had thought of the same thing but I also saw that the cooks

were having a hard time carrying their loads and cooking. They didn't rest as much as the others. I said no, but when we stopped to bivouac for the night they had the hot water ready anyway. The soldiers were very appreciative.

One morning, as I was walking behind a cook who was carrying the big copper pot, he suddenly swayed and fell to the ground. He never got up again. Another cook, tears running down his face, picked up the pot and walked on. Blinding windstorms alternated with icy rain. At noon the rain was so heavy that the troops were forced to halt. The cooks found a sheltered spot and set up the pot to make ginger broth and pepper soup. The cook who had picked up the pot from his dead mate took a bowl of ginger broth to a soldier, then pitched over and stopped breathing.

Two comrades gone in half a day!

On the evening of the fifth day our company commander was talking about sending a few soldiers to help the mess squad. The cooks got wind of it and sent their leader Chien over. "You can't take more men from combat, commander," he said. "You need every one you've got for fighting. We can carry on by ourselves."

The commander was quiet. After several battles, our hundred-man company had been reduced to less than forty men. It was true, he couldn't spare more men.

A little after midnight Chien got up and began to boil water for the dawn march. The day before he had been running a high temperature. I tried to make him sleep some more but he wouldn't so I helped him. His gaunt face made me think of many things in the past.

We had been neighbours back in Kiangsi. He had no family or relatives and lived by himself. Then the Red Army came and he joined the revolution. He would come to my house and say, "Aren't you going to join the Red Army, Hsieh? Chiang Kai-shek is shitting all over us, 'encircling and suppressing' us at every turn. Are you going to swallow all that?"

He said many things that showed me the only way out for us poor people was revolution. I joined too.

On the Long March he always took the biggest loads and would not let anybody relieve him. In camp he was always taking work

away from others so they could rest. He became a bag of bones. We urged him to take care of his own health too. "Don't worry about me," he always said. "I can eat and I sleep well. Nothing will knock me down."

He put his whole heart into getting more food for the soldiers. Even when we were on the march for weeks without stopping he always managed to give the men an extra good meal every now and then. All the salt fish and pork we expropriated from despotic landlords he saved for the soldiers, never tasting any himself. "With Old Chien in the kitchen," the men said, "we don't have to worry about food."

Chien's voice brought me back to the present. "Go and get some sleep, Hsieh," he said, "I can handle it."

In the flickering light of the flames I saw beads of sweat on his forehead. I was about to ask him how he felt when he suddenly whispered, "Give me some water." As I lifted the lid of the pot, I heard a noise behind me. I turned around to see Chien crumpled up on the ground. I bent down and shook him, calling his name. The fire under the pot was now roaring but Chien's body quickly grew cold. Many of our finest comrades died on the battlefield, others under enemy torture. Just as heroically our mess squad leader died at his post — the stove.

The cooks were awakened by my calls. The company commander and the men came. They stood around Chien in tears.

The next day another cook hung the copper pot from his shoulder-pole and we continued our march. In the evening there was hot water for drinking and washing.

When we reached northern Shensi, however, the copper pot was hanging from my shoulder-pole. The company commander saw it and bowed his head. The men saw it and wept silently. They knew that all the cooks had died. In the most difficult days of the Long March many men of our company had died in battle, not a single one from hunger. The copper pot, a symbol of our cooks' sacrifices, was kept in our company as an invaluable relic of the Long March.

*Illustrated by Tung Chen-sheng*

## Snow in June

After crossing the Golden Sand River and several days' arduous march, our Red Army's Second Front Army came to the area of snow mountains. It was in the sweltering summer of 1936. And the sun blazed down on us so, it seemed we were carrying burning stoves on our backs. We were dripping with sweat, but our nostrils and lips were parched. The path zigzagged upwards. A very high mountain we'd been seeing from afar for a fortnight now appeared even taller. When we reached its foot we could no longer see the top, only icy white snow with a dazzle from the setting sun which hurt our eyes.

According to the local people, we had a seventy *li* march ahead of us to cross over to the valley on the other side. When it was dark we continued the long climb up the winding trail in the dim moonlight. Our troops were strung out far ahead and behind. The encouraging shouts and cheerful songs of the propagandists reverberated in that bushy ravine, intermingling with the neighing of the horses. Though our spirits were high, we had to proceed slowly, picking our way along the twisting path in the deepening obscurity, for one misstep meant a long drop down the gorge.

Although we trudged on steadily all night, daylight surprised us still less than half-way to the peak. We received the order to rest. After gulping down a few mouthfuls of fried flour, we marched on.

As we climbed, the path became steeper until it seemed almost vertical. Although our vanguard had cleared the way, it wasn't exactly easy going for our horses and mules. The overhanging rocks could come crashing down on our heads at any moment if we happened to brush carelessly against them. Mountain torrents roared, throwing up great clouds of spray.

Near noon we reached the half-way point. Then we went round a bend. Ahead, two tall mountains nestled together, sandwiching our little trail between them. On either side a few emerald-green pine-trees jutted from the rocky cliffs. The path was bordered by lush weeds only a few inches high and here and there yellow flowers proudly swayed in the soft breeze. It seemed like spring, except for the gusts of cool breeze in the shade, as if autumn were setting in, that made us forget it was June.

In another two hours, we were in the deep of winter. The snow became thicker with every step and the path more and more slippery. I could hear the old ailing comrade from Kweichow behind me panting as he struggled to negotiate the slope. I was reaching out for his gun, when my vice squad leader came up to take his bedroll. But the old man refused. He braced himself and continued laboriously on his way.

Then we came to a spot where the snow had frozen about two feet thick. Beneath it water gurgled. Then the tortuous trail became steeper and narrower. One wrong step and we'd go flying down the face of the mountain never to be seen again. Our feet, shod in straw sandals soaked through by the snow, were now completely numb.

As the air became thinner, I felt as if a boulder had been placed on my chest. We advanced slowly, stopping for breath every few steps. I looked back at the old comrade behind me. Sweat was streaming down his forehead and he seemed too exhausted to take another step. Unwillingly, he flopped to the ground. Our instruc-

tor rushed up and, putting the old man's arm over his shoulder, slowly helped him up, like a mother her small child.

"Keep on a while longer, comrade," the instructor urged gently. "Crossing the mountain means victory. We just can't give up here."

"I can make it." Moved, the old comrade pushed away the instructor's supporting arm and staggered on.

Our spirits soared when we finally reached the peak at three o'clock in the afternoon. But the dark clouds gathering in the southwest suddenly rushed towards us, bringing a storm. Hail pelted down. Then came an onslaught of snow. How changeable was the weather! Our thin uniforms were soon soaking wet and frozen in spots. As blasts of bitter cold wind set our teeth chattering, our instructor and our company commander told us to wrap our quilts round us. As if bent on making things difficult for us, the wind blew more violently. Every step in the knee-deep snow was a terrible effort and our billowing quilts, like sails in the wind, made us stagger. We held on to each other as we plodded on.

"They say that the way to Szechuan is harder than the ascent to heaven," the instructor muttered to himself. "This is even worse."

It's hard to say what our little messenger behind him understood by that, but he retorted, "Instructor, we're already way up in the sky. We're treading on clouds, aren't we?" We all burst out laughing.

Towards evening the snow subsided. The setting sun irradiated the summit to the west and the reflection of its rays on the snow was blinding.

I thought the descent would be easier, but I soon found out I was wrong. We had to be extremely careful lest we slip and go skidding down the slope. Because of a second's inattention, one of our comrades went hurtling some thirty metres. We were all watching anxiously when he spiritedly rose to his feet and shouted: "Come on. Try the 'slide'." And so we all slid down.

By nightfall, we'd triumphed over wind and snow without losing a single comrade. Within the space of one day, we'd experienced spring, autumn, and winter with its wind and snow. At the foot of the mountain, the heat fell upon us. It was summer once again.

## On the Tangling Mountains

When we came to the foot of the Tangling Mountains, headquarters ordered us of the supply department to reach the other side before half past two the following afternoon, to prepare food for the troops.

At three o'clock in the morning, we made a "hearty" breakfast off two-thirds of our grain ration—less than six ounces a head—boiled with wild vegetables. At half past three, we set out by the light of the setting moon and stars. The vanguard battalion took the lead, followed by the light casualties on horseback and the stretcher teams carrying the seriously wounded. We marched in single file up the winding mountain path, over sharp stones which pierced right through our straw sandals.

A cold wind blowing by fits and starts from the valley lashed dust into our faces and warned us that a storm was brewing. We should have to race to cross the mountain in time. For delay would not only mean spending a night with empty bellies in the wind and snow, but failure in our mission. I kept taking out my watch to estimate our speed and urging the men to make haste. It was the time, though,

that went faster and faster, while our advance became slower and slower. The men's legs refused to obey them. Their swollen feet seemed weighted with lead. Every step cost a superhuman effort.

This was not astonishing, because in a month's hard marching we had not had a single square meal or one night's good sleep. The men had to tighten their belts as their stomachs grew emptier and they drowsed off as they walked. They kept transferring the packs over their shoulders and the sticks in their hands from one side to another—even a mug felt as if it weighed a thousand catties. The stretcher-bearers had the worst of it, for though their shoulders were red and sore they had to take care not to tilt the stretchers and watch the path ahead of them like hawks.

None wished to speak, fearing that their strength would be blown away by the wind once they opened their mouths. "Story-teller" Wang and Sun Ta-kang, the lively messenger, fell silent too. The only sound from them was puffing and panting.

"Why are you so silent, Sun Ta-kang?" Political Commissar Chang who walked behind me asked suddenly.

"I know why," Wang cut in. "He's homesick."

I was baffled. Young Sun had never once missed his home since he joined the army at the age of thirteen. Sun looked bewildered too as slowly Wang went on, "The Tangling Mountains remind him of his home the Flower and Fruit Mountains."\* Political Commissar Chang and I burst out laughing.

Sun ran over with new strength to have it out with Wang. And the men behind came forward to hear the joke. Quickening his step Wang shouted, "Sun Ta-kang is going to ask his Monkey Grandpa to move away the Tangling Mountains for the troops behind us." Joyous laughter rang out instantly in the quiet valley.

When next I took out my watch to check the time, Political Commissar Chang was winding his. There was a glint of satisfaction in his eyes. Crossing this mountain would mean victory.

Suddenly a stir went through the ranks ahead. Then bad news was passed back: A storm had risen on the mountain!

\*The home of Monkey Sun, hero of *Pilgrimage to the West*, a mythological novel written in the 16th century. Magical powers were attributed to Monkey.

In no time, a gigantic pillar of dust shot up from behind the mountain to shade the sun. The wind, howling like a raging beast, flung snow and gravel into our faces. Linking hands, our men dropped to the ground. The mugs on our backs clanged under the onslaught of the sand. Darkness fell, though it was noon. We were forced to give the order to bivouac.

After dark the wind abated by degrees. We lit fires and set about boiling water for the wounded, changing their dressings, or drying clothes soaked by sweat. The horses started nibbling at the bark of trees before their grooms had time to fetch branches and grass. We killed two horses and gave the flesh to the casualties, the hide and bones to the staff. Our small store of grain we kept for the next day's breakfast, to give us energy to cross the summit.

Before setting out we had heard that wind on this mountain was invariably followed by a snowstorm. Now a heavy snow-fall began.

Late that night the political commissar and I made the rounds of the sleeping men. The snow was even heavier now, the trees were hung with icicles more than a foot long, many fires had been extinguished by the snow, and some of our men were buried in it as they slept. We lost no time in making sure that the casualties were safe and searching for the men buried in snow-drifts.

After this inspection, we returned to our tent. The political commissar had never been robust. Now his breath was coming in gasps, his face and neck were red with exertion. I patted his back, bent by twenty-seven gruelling years as a hired hand, till after a while his breathing became more regular.

"Old Wu!" He smiled and threw another branch on to our dying fire. "I doubt if there's a painter in the world who could paint such a magnificent snow scene." He harked back to the heavy snow-fall there had been one night when he was working for the landlord. While he lay shivering in the stable, unable to sleep for the cold, the landlord had ordered him to cover his horses with quilts. "But that's ancient history," he said. "Let's come back to the present. Today's report showed another fifteen stretcher-bearers lost — we're up against it, all right. And tomorrow will be even more critical.



In this deep snow we shan't be able to tell where the path ends and the precipice begins!"

We were discussing the climb of the following day, when we heard a voice behind us: "Department chief! Political commissar!" We turned and saw a man swathed in bandages crawling painfully towards us. His legs, outside the tent, were deep in the snow. With an effort, he raised his head. By the gleam of the fire we recognized Battalion Commander Chang.

We made haste to carry him in, and propped him up between us by the fire.

I could not fathom what had brought him, so seriously wounded, through the snow in the dead of night.

He gazed from sunken eyes at each of us in turn. "I heard what you just said. . . . We all know the position. I've thought it over, and you must leave us here!" To forestall any objection, he added quickly: "For the sake of the revolution!"

"Every man in the Red Army is a seed of revolution. We can't abandon you as long as we live!" The political commissar was racked by coughing.

"I've thought this out. To preserve our revolutionary strength. . . ." He broke off to grit his teeth in agony as the sweat poured down his face. Roughly wiping it off, he panted: "I've thought it all out. We've been carried all the way through Szechuan, adding so much to our men's burden. How many have lost their lives because of us? I'm not going to see my comrades dying for me. You must live on . . . to finish the revolution!" His eyes slowly closed.

We called his name, but he was gone.

Big flakes of snow were still falling. The fire had nearly flickered out.

When the long dark night was over and we had buried our comrade-in-arms, we set out again. Though the commissar was desperately weak, by dint of a tremendous effort he continued to lead the way. Whenever we reached a steep and treacherous slope, he would wave to us to slow down. "Steady there, men! Carefully does it!" His directions were punctuated by violent coughing.

When we came to the foot of the cliff where our vanguard had camped the day before, we found frozen corpses in the snow. Among them was an arm with a clenched fist projecting from a drift. Prizing apart the stiff fingers, we discovered a Party membership card and a silver dollar. On the card was written: "Liu Chih-hai, member of the Chinese Communist Party, admitted in March 1933."

Taking the card and the silver dollar, I bowed my head and breathed: "Rest in peace, Comrade Chih-hai! I shall give your card and your last membership fee to the Party."

The commissar stood on the edge of the cliff, inspecting every stretcher that passed by. When our casualties saw him in such a dangerous position, some of them were moved to tears by his concern for them in spite of his own weakness. The stretcher-bearers said: "Don't worry, commissar! We guarantee to carry out our mission!"

Our troops moved forward in an endless file, while the commissar stood on the height braving the icy wind. Between fits of coughing he encouraged the men, though every word took a fearful toll of his strength.

"Go all out, comrades! Forward! For — ward!"

His hoarse voice was silenced abruptly as he slumped down in the snow. His orderly cried wildly: "Commissar! Wake up!" Slowly he opened his eyes and focussed them on the men round him, and on the advancing troops. He struggled to his feet. "Go on!" He managed to smile. "I'm done for, comrades. . . . The people of all China are waiting. . . ." He turned and pressed his face to the orderly's cheek. Then, staggering to me, he wrung my hand. The next moment he had fallen lifeless. . . .

We dug a trench in the snow and with tears in our eyes we buried him. I wound up the watch he had left, and marched on into the teeth of the north wind in the footsteps of my comrades.

*Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien*

## “Political Commissar Wang” of Our Squad

Early in 1936, I was transferred to the Thirty-First Army Hospital to work as a nurse. When comrades there heard that I was assigned to Squad Two, they told me enviously, “You’re in luck being in the same squad as Political Commissar Wang. Good for you!” How come we had a political commissar in our squad? As I was wondering about this, a youngster much my own size rushed in and grasped my hand warmly as if we were old friends.

“You’ve come at the right time,” the political instructor said to him. “Comrade Chao’s to work in your squad. Take him there with you.”

“I’ve come to fetch him,” he answered cheerfully.

As I followed him off, the political instructor added, “Comrade Wang Tsai-sheng, mind you take good care of him.” So his surname was Wang. Could he be the “Political Commissar Wang” I had heard about? I shot an inquisitive glance at him. He looked about seventeen at most, not much older than I was. It didn’t seem possible to have such a young political commissar.

When we reached our quarters he helped me settle in, asking as he did so when I had joined the Red Army and where I came from. After I told him, he nodded and said, “I was a cowherd before joining up. Both of us are from poor families. The only way for the poor to gain a happy life is to join the Red Army, fight the local tyrants and share out their lands.” He paused and pointed to a spot on the floor. “Here’s your sleeping place. If you need anything, just tell me. Anyway, our belongings are for the whole squad to use.”

He talked to me at some length and explained our work. “It’s an honour to be a nurse in the Red Army,” he said. “We must do our work well so that the wounded and the sick can leave hospital earlier. That’ll speed up the victory of our revolution.”

He was really a great talker, knowing much more than I did. Later on, I learned that he was indeed “Political Commissar Wang” — my squad leader. Of course, that title “commissar” was one given him by the other hospital workers.

In June we reached the grasslands — a vast stretch of swamps covered with mud and rotting grasses. The going there was certainly hard. Comrade Wang Tsai-sheng kept beside me all the way. When we arrived at our first camping place I was all in. I lay down feeling quite unable to move. But Wang got busy heating water and cooking and then urged me, “When you wash your feet wash all the way up to your knees; then you won’t feel footsore on the march and can walk with ease.” After that, he went to urge other comrades to wash their feet too.

Whenever I was hungry on the journey I was tempted to eat my dry rations. But he always reminded me genially, “Remember what the instructor said: Those rations must be kept for an emergency.” Still, I ate some on the sly when I could not fight back my hunger, so that soon I had finished the lot. Then he went hungry himself to save his own rations for me.

Some days later, all our rations were exhausted. We had no way out but to pick wild herbs and boil them with oxhide for food. Some of the wild herbs were poisonous, so that the bodies of those who ate them swelled up.



One day Wang, who had never dropped out before, lagged behind me. Thinking he must be ill, I waited for him to catch up. When he approached me I was taken aback, for his face was the colour of an adobe wall, his eyes were sunken, and he was shivering.

"Why didn't you let me know what a bad way you're in?" I scolded him with concern.

With an effort he said, "Don't worry. I'm all right. You go on and wait for me ahead." When I put out a hand to take his arm, he pushed me aside.

Then our troops came to a primeval forest. Seemingly endless, it covered the whole mountain. Some of the huge, dense-set trees had already rotted and fallen to the ground, where their trunks were overspread with grey funguses. Underfoot was a thick layer of fallen leaves with puddles of stagnant water here and there. The sodden earth squelched as we laboured over it. It was dark by four in the afternoon. The gloom under the dense foliage was fearsome.

We stopped for the night there. Wang, gritting his teeth, went to look for wild herbs, gather dry firewood and kindle a fire to heat water, oblivious of his illness.

"Lie down for a while," I urged him. "You must think of yourself sometimes, not always of others."

Smiling, he said feebly, "Doing some light jobs will cure me."

We had boiled the wild herbs, but could we eat the last piece of oxhide the two of us had left? It was really worrying. Would we ever cross these boundless, uncultivated and uninhabited grasslands?

"Seems to me..." I grumbled, "we shall never get out of here anyway. So let's eat that piece of hide now."

He lifted his head with difficulty and said, "Feeling pessimistic, eh? No, we must keep that hide. Try shaking the ration bags again to see if there are any scraps left for the soup. That'd be better than nothing."

Actually I had done that countless times. But it seemed I had no choice. So, once again I turned the two ration bags inside out and slapped them. To my surprise, I did get some more scraps.

Now a sudden strong wind began to blow, snapping twigs from the trees. The sky abruptly turned pitch-dark. Lightning flashed, then

came a thunderstorm, reverberating tremendously through the valley. I held the pot tight to stop the wind from overturning it. A few moments later, hailstones as big as eggs pelted down, smashing into the trees and ricocheting on the rocks. Afraid the squad leader might be hit, I put down the pot and hurried over to help him. But he struggled to shove my hands aside, shouting as loudly as he could, "Get under shelter quick. I can walk by myself."

I raced about helter-skelter and bumped into Old Li, the cook. He had dumped the cauldron on the ground and was scurrying for shelter. Seeing that the cauldron was a big one, I picked it up and held it over my head. The hailstones battering it made a noise like beating a gong.

"Hey, mate," I shouted at the cook, "come back quick. This is a splendid shelter."

Li turned to look and exclaimed, "You've a smart head all right!" With that, he doubled back and ducked under the cauldron. Listening to the racket over our heads he joked, "This is a lively item!"

I kept silent, thinking of the squad leader, ashamed that I'd left him. When the hail abated, I hurried back to the big tree. I found Wang there, stooping to gather things together. At sight of me he asked, "Did you get hit?" Then, pointing to the ground he said with a rueful smile, "Look, finished!" The pot had upset and the fire was out, the wild herb soup spilt over the heap of ashes. I was struck dumb by the sight. Seeing the situation, Old Li said generously, "Never mind, I've half a small bowl of *chingko* barley left. Let's cook that and eat it."

"That won't do!" Wang stopped him. "Keep it. We still have a long way to go."

"But you're all in," countered Li. "You shared the oxhide with the rest of us. How can I eat this barley all alone?" He took the ration bag from his back to pour out its contents. But no matter how hard he shook the bag, nothing happened. He ripped the bag open, and found that the barley had sprouted.

"Good or bad, it's still grain," Li said helplessly. "It'll do."

As I was cooking the barley sprouts, Li's reference to the oxhide flashed back to my mind. When we first entered the grasslands,

one day as soon as we bivouacked Wang left us. Presently he came back, beaming, and dragged me over to see a heap of oxhide left there by our advance unit. We took it back and handed it to the political instructor who issued each man two pieces. The smaller pieces we used for shoes by tying them to our feet with coir rope while the bigger ones we sewed into peaked caps with a star drawn on them. But now the makeshift shoes and caps had all disappeared into our bellies.

My stomach was rumbling as I cooked, while Wang leaned against some damp branches, panting hard. His face was ashen, his eyes fixed on the flames. I moved over to feel his forehead. It was as hot as burning charcoal. What was to be done? I paced to and fro frantically. Rousing himself he said, "Don't worry, Young Chao. I'll be myself again soon."

I filled a bowl of barley sprout gruel and offered it to him, but he shook his head and said faintly, "I'm not hungry."

"Make yourself eat some," Li urged. "You'll feel better when you've some food in your stomach."

"If you won't eat, neither will we." I grasped his arm, nearly breaking into tears.

Suddenly he pulled himself together. "All right, I'll eat," he said, taking the bowl with trembling hands and putting it on his knees. But the roots of the barley sprouts choked him. If only I could get him some noodle soup! But now. . . .

It was getting dark. We levelled a space under the big tree and spread some dry leaves over it to prepare a place for the night. In the darkness the squad leader peered at me as if meeting me for the first time. With a sore heart I urged him to rest, but he remained motionless. After a while he said, "I'll get up tomorrow morning to do the cooking. The journey's hard, you should take more rest."

At midnight it rained again. He quietly spread his ground sheet over me. When I groped with my hand I found he was only half covered. Whenever we slept in the open and it rained he always put his ground sheet over me and slept uncovered himself. He was still doing this even now that he was ill.

The rain stopped after some time. Bonfires lit near by awoke me. I knew it was nearly dawn, so I got up noiselessly to make some oxhide soup for the squad leader.

When the soup was ready, I filled a bowl and took it over to him. I called him several times but there was no response. My heart beating fast, I drew back the sheet only to find him lying there stiff and stark, his eyes wide open. The bowl plopped from my hand to the withered leaves on the ground. I threw myself on him and wailed.

The political instructor, Old Li and other comrades rushed over and dragged me up. After standing in silence for a while, we laid him out, wrapped his body in the sheet and covered it with branches. Then we gathered handfuls of earth to make him a grave.

Thus, our "Political Commissar Wang" went to his final rest during the Long March. But his love for his comrades spurred me on, giving me the strength to finish that hard journey.

*Illustrated by Fu Lin*

## Our Supply Station on the Grassland

It was in early autumn 1936 that after several days' march we reached the marshy grassland in the upper reaches of the Yellow River — Kechu River. At daybreak the soldiers started striking tents. We roused the exhausted yaks, then watered and loaded them. Our troops quietly fell in, ready to set off.

Just then, the sound of hurried footsteps rang out. I looked up. A little fighter was running in our direction, shouting something. Probably greeting comrades of his, I thought, but to my surprise he yelled to me.

"Comrade! Are you Yang Yi-shan?"

"Yes!"

"Come quickly. Commander-in-Chief Chu Teh wants to see you." He pointed ahead.

I hurried that way. A powerfully built man was standing with his back to the choppy river, his oxhide cape flapping in the wind. At the sound of my swift footsteps, Chu Teh turned to greet me. I quickened my pace.

"Are you in charge of supplies, comrade?"

"Yes," I replied.

"Then you're the one assigned to set up a supply station here?"

"That's right."

"Good. Yours is an important task, comrade. Since tens of thousands of our men are still in the rear, headquarters has decided that the units directly under our Fourth Front Army will leave all their transport yaks for them. It'll take us six more days to cross the grassland. Give each man no more than a catty of beef or mutton per day and count in the hide and skins too! The rest must all be left for the troops serving as the rear guard. Otherwise they'd never make it across the grassland." He continued, stressing each word: "Scald the sheep so you could eat the skin with the meat. Oxhides need to be thoroughly boiled. Intestines and tripe must all be eaten too."

Then he climbed a mound to address the troops. Raising one hand, he declared, "Comrades, as you all know, crossing the grassland is the toughest part of our march. But the comrades of the Second Front Army, our rear guard, are in a tighter spot. They don't even have wild herbs to eat, as the route's been stripped bare of them by the troops in front.

"Headquarters has decided to leave them all the sheep and yaks taken from the enemy yesterday. We'll also leave them our transport yaks. You must carry on your backs whatever you can't discard."

Before he finished speaking cheers rang out. Our fighters eagerly unloaded the yaks and handed the animals over to us. Then they set off.

Before leaving, Chu Teh reminded me: "You've got your work cut out for you, comrade. Be sure to tell the comrades in charge not to throw anything away. Even the tiniest bit of oxhide is precious."

## 2

So over three hundred of us remained behind to set up the supply station. We pitched our tents and hid the animals in grasses as tall

as ourselves, leaving a patrol headed by our political commissar to guard them.

The whole Fourth Front Army had now come through. We knew it wouldn't be long before the Second Front Army vanguard arrived, so we began making intense preparations. Then the worst happened. Enemy cavalry launched a surprise attack at dawn. We repulsed them, but they carried off many of our yaks.

Some five days later, the members of the Second Front Army Headquarters, led by Commander Ho Lung, finally arrived. Before we could even see the troops, shouts rang out in the distance — they'd probably spotted our tents. Though we'd been eagerly awaiting their arrival for days, we felt unhappy now. We'd lost so many precious yaks to the enemy.

Ho Lung had no sooner arrived than he demanded: "Who's in charge of supplies?"

"I am, commander." I ran up. Then he asked for a detailed report on the arrangements for distributing the animals. I told him the instructions I'd received and the losses we'd suffered from the enemy attack.

"That doesn't matter," he responded with a wave of his hand. "No difficulty in the world can stop us." Then he made several of us study the food supply problem again. After calculating carefully, Ho Lung decided to reduce the rations of one catty per day. The men were asked to do their best to round them out by catching fish.

After distributing the beef and mutton to the fighters we prepared the commander's ration which I took to his bodyguard. But Ho Lung refused it, saying: "Take it back!" I insisted on leaving the meat, for how could he march such a distance without food? Then Ho Lung took the meat and returned it himself.

"Don't worry, comrade," he told me. "I'll provide my own food supply. Keep my share for the men who're coming." Seeing my puzzled expression, he threw back his head and laughed, then went through the motions of a man pulling in a fish. "Wait and see," he joked, "we'll supplement our rations." And, true to his word, whenever they stopped near a pond, Ho Lung set to catching fish.

The last batch of the Second Front Army came through. Our task completed, we marched on, following the path our comrades had trod.

After three days' march, we reached a densely forested mountain. We pushed on, taking a miry path criss-crossed with the tracks of wild animals, but soon even our guide could not find the way. Then we spotted some of our troops ahead. Our main force, we thought. What luck! When we got nearer, we realized it was a company of the Second Front Army that had been assigned to do sentry duty while the others marched on. They'd obviously run out of food when this mission was completed and were too weak to go on, for most of them were lying on the ground. Some had even lost consciousness.

We rushed over to help them sit up, clasping them gently.

"Go on, comrades," their political instructor murmured. "Keep on. We don't want to hold you back." He paused. "When you catch up with our main force, just tell the leadership for us that we completed the task entrusted us by the Party."

But how could we leave them like that! We still had one yak left to carry our guns, which we'd been reluctant to kill. Now we gave it to them.

Not long after we left the grassland we encountered this company again. We cheered, jumping for joy, then rushed to embrace each other. Happy in our victory, we shouted together: "We've made it! Made it at last across the grassland!"

## The Battle of Chihlochen

By the end of November 1935 northern Shensi was in the grip of freezing winter. Encouraged by the slogan "Welcome the Central Red Army with a victorious battle!" the Fifteenth Red Army Group in northern Shensi captured Changtsunyi and Tungtsun southwest of Yenan, then took two smaller positions near by. Chairman Mao led the Central Red Army, that is, the First Front Army, to Tungtsun after the fighting, joining forces with the Fifteenth Red Army Group. In order to use the northwest as the base for China's revolution Chairman Mao as soon as he reached northern Shensi drew up a plan for a big battle of annihilation, the Battle of Chihlochen.

At that time the situation in northern Shensi was this: After the victory of the Northern Shensi Red Army at Laoshan and Yulinchiao, five enemy divisions had launched an attack against us. Chairman Mao decided to concentrate the forces of the Red Army which had converged in northern Shensi to smash the enemy at Chihlochen, northwest of Changtsunyi. We were to go there to survey the terrain before he made more definite dispositions.

All the officers above regimental rank of the First Front Army and the Fifteenth Red Army Group met west of Changtsunyi and set off to Chihlochen. We covered the thirty *li* in less than an hour, then dismounted and climbed a mountain overlooking the town from the southwest. Chihlochen, surrounded on three sides by mountains, was a small town of about a hundred households. A road ran like a white ribbon straight through its centre. To its east stood an ancient hamlet, the stone wall around which was almost intact although most of the houses there were falling down. A sluggish stream ran through the northern part of the town. We looked carefully through our field-glasses at the roads, hilltops, villages and stream. Every small height, tiny tree, ditch or isolated house was an object for commanders to observe and study, for we were well aware that unanticipated difficulties might crop up in battle if we overlooked any of these in our reconnaissance.

"This is very favourable terrain for us," was our general verdict.

"The enemy will be putting their heads through a noose when they come to Chihlochen."

As we walked from one height to another we arrived at a decision: "Let the enemy in to Chihlochen and wipe them out there." After some discussion we agreed to demolish the hamlet east of the town to prevent the enemy from using it as a stronghold. No orders had yet been issued, but from their experience our fighters had guessed that a battle was going to be fought here. Knowing that shedding more sweat before a battle could reduce the bloodshed during it, they worked day and night, regardless of fatigue, to pull down the wall. Those fighters who had recently joined us after being taken prisoner asked softly, "Is the enemy really coming?" "Sure," our veteran soldiers answered. "Chairman Mao's got it all worked out."

To win the first victory after having joined forces with the First Front Army, the Fifteenth Red Army Group left only one platoon to guard Chihlochen, massing its main forces near Changtsunyi, building up their strength and making active preparations for combat. Their slogans were: "Celebrate joining forces with a victory!" "Welcome Chairman Mao with a victory in battle!"

In high spirits the Red Army waited for the enemy. When all preparations on our side were complete, on the third afternoon, under cover of six planes, Niu Yuan-feng, commander of the enemy 109th Division, arrived with his troops at Chihlochen.

That night Chairman Mao issued an order: Forced marches were to be made by the First Front Red Army from the north and the Fifteenth Red Army Group from the south to surround Chihlochen before dawn. Chairman Mao and Vice-Chairman Chou En-lai came in person to command at the front. From his command post on a hillside near Chihlochen Chairman Mao gave special instructions to all the army leaders to wipe out the enemy. "It's to be a battle of annihilation," he instructed us again after the battle started.

At daybreak, two units of Red Army men swooped down from the mountains on both sides of Chihlochen like two iron fists. Though on their guard, the enemy had never expected us to come so fast. When they wakened up to the fact of being surrounded, the heights on both sides of Chihlochen were already in our hands. They went north when our rifles clattered in the south and drew back again when firing broke out in the north too. Under our powerful attack, the enemy 109th Division, sandwiched in a valley filled with shots and shouting, crumbled and surrendered their weapons. Those who resisted fell under our bullets and bayonets.

Attacking on two sides, it took us less than two hours to occupy Chihlochen where the enemy divisional headquarters was stationed. Niu Yuan-feng escaped to the little hamlet east of the town and put up a stubborn resistance with barely over a battalion of men.

Though we had demolished the hamlet, they had reconstructed it to some extent after their arrival the previous night; and the tricky terrain made it easy to defend. The first attack by a small unit of Red Army men had failed. We were organizing a second attack when our messenger announced, "Vice-Chairman Chou's coming."

The sun was high in the sky by now. Vice-Chairman Chou and several other comrades were observing the enemy-occupied hamlet through their field-glasses as they came down the hillside. We hurried over. The vice-chairman shook our hands and asked many questions about our first attack. Then he instructed us: "We'll



leave the enemy alone for the time being if we can't rout them right now. They're like turtles in a jar. With no grain or water in the hamlet, they're bound to make a break for it very soon. We'll annihilate them when they are on the move."

The shots died down. Captured rifles and ammunition piled up on the hillside and in the town where we had assembled prisoners of war. Joy of victory filled the hearts of every fighter.

Hiding in the hamlet Niu Yuan-feng, commander of the 109th Division, sent telegram after telegram urging his superior to send reinforcements. Little did he know that the 106th Division dispatched to rescue him had been routed on its way to Chihlochen, with a whole regiment wiped out.

That night, giving up his hope for reinforcement, Niu and his remaining men broke through to the west. We gave chase immediately. "We'll drag Niu back like an 'ox'," our fighters swore.

Niu Yuan-feng and his remnant forces met their end twenty-five *li* away on a mountain in the southwest where Niu himself was captured.

**"A battle in which the enemy is routed is not basically decisive in a contest with a foe of great strength. A battle of annihilation, on the other hand, produces a great and immediate impact on any enemy. Injuring all of a man's ten fingers is not as effective as chopping off one, and routing ten enemy divisions is not as effective as annihilating one of them."** The battle of Chihlochen once again proved the greatness and correctness of Chairman Mao's military thinking. The collapse of the entire 109th Division and a regiment of the 106th Division foiled the enemy's plan of attacking northern Shensi and forced the 108th, 111th and 117th Divisions to withdraw.

We left Chihlochen with our trophies and prisoners. Passing by the village where Chairman Mao was staying we saw light shining in his cave. The past days must have worn him out. Why was his lamp still lit so late at night?

With deep respect I went over to his cave. I asked the guard at his door, "Hasn't the chairman gone to bed?"

"No. He never sleeps at night." The guard showed me in.

The chairman was at work beside an oil-lamp with an old blue coat around his shoulders and an old large-scale map spread out on his desk. He must be considering a new move and new battles, I thought.

Putting down his pencil, the chairman offered me his big powerful hand. "You must be tired," he said with a smile.

"It's so late now, why aren't you resting yet?" I asked.

"I'm used to staying up. Well, have all our troops pulled out?"

He went on to tell me briefly the significance of this victory and the enemy's present position, then asked with concern about the casualties and where the wounded were housed. Finally he urged me to see to it that the troops had a good rest and all washed their feet.

It was late at night when I left the chairman's cave. After riding off some distance I turned to look back. In the chairman's cave the light still shone.

A meeting of cadres was held in Tungtsun on November 30 when Chairman Mao gave a report on "The Battle of Chihlochen and the Present Situation and Our Tasks". Referring to the significance of this battle, he said that this victory had laid the foundation for the Party Central Committee and the Red Army to set up a broad base in the northwest and push forward the countrywide struggle against Japanese aggression.

*Illustrated by Huang Chia-yu*

## **Our Three Front Armies Join Forces**

*Ho Po-ling*

### **A Warm Welcome**

One morning early in September 1936, our Ninth Regiment of the First Front Red Army left Heicheng in northern Kansu for Huining where we were to meet the northbound Second and Fourth Front Red Armies. The long-awaited conjunction of all our armies would soon take place. What a glorious mission we'd been entrusted with! We were so happy our fatigue seemed to disappear as we marched off.

The following evening we continued along the highway leading to the city of Haiyuan. Stars twinkled over the slumbering earth; in the silence we could hear each other's breathing. Our hearts beating fast with excitement, we stepped out. Soon the walls of Haiyuan came into sight, then gradually loomed higher as we approached.

After the small village to the north of the city, there was a long stretch of open highway. Word came down the line: "Move quietly and get your rifles ready!" We all tensely prepared to fight.

The city walls stood out more and more clearly and soon the sound of the enemy soldiers' raucous shouts within the city was carried to us by the wind. There was no detour possible, but having been informed by an intelligence report that these weren't regular troops, we figured they'd be too cowardly to try and stop us. Our leadership decided to avoid an engagement in order to reach Huining as quickly as possible. Having received the order to fight only if attacked, we marched head high in orderly ranks right under the enemy's nose. Just as we'd expected, the enemy, impressed by our show of force, didn't dare open fire let alone come out and pursue us. All they could do was to stand powerless, watching us march by.

After Haiyuan, we made our way towards Talachih and Kuocheng. Talachih was a fine place. The lake was in the midst of green hills, on which herds of chestnut horses grazed like deep crimson clouds at sunrise. Flocks of sheep dotted the slopes like so many clusters of fluffy white clouds. Luscious water-melons, twenty to thirty catties each, lay in the fields beside the road, and red apples swayed heavily on the branches of the trees. It was a lovely scene.

We stopped at Talachih to wait for the Second and Fourth Front Armies. While there, we spread out to mobilize the local people. Our Fourth Company, led by Li Kuo-hou, our regiment's political commissar, went to Hungpaotzu, a small village between Talachih and Kuocheng. One day a report came in: an enemy regiment was marching on Hungpaotzu to try to prevent the conjunction of our armies.

Welcoming the chance, we all resolved to annihilate the enemy. By this victory we would express our warm welcome to our Second and Fourth Front Armies. Political Commissar Li promptly gave the order to withdraw. We had just finished laying an ambush when the enemy came into sight. Very arrogant they looked, too, with their cavalry strutting at the head of a long infantry column. As they streamed towards the village, we lay still, waiting for them to

get close, then set up a barrage of fire using all our weapons including our three machine-guns.

Those arrogant-looking cavalymen now showed themselves for the cowards they were, turning tail like a pack of wild dogs. Our bullets cut them down and the riderless horses ran helter-skelter or reared wildly. Two fallen soldiers, one foot caught in the stirrup, were dragged about like dead dogs behind their horses. The cavalry having been scattered, the foot soldiers broke ranks.

When our main force arrived in the evening of October 6, we attacked the enemy from both sides, swiftly wiping them out.

One night as we were sleeping soundly, a bugle-call shattered the silence. Jumping up, we grabbed our rifles and ran outside to assemble. As we were marching along the road to Huining, a propaganda team member standing at the side of the road shouted at the top of his voice:

"The Seventh Regiment has taken Huining, comrades. But now the enemy's sent two brigades to try and retake the city. Let's go and wipe them out. Quick, comrades!"

His voice hadn't quite faded away when another voice sounded ahead: "That gunfire is coming from Huining, comrades. Let us celebrate the joining forces of our three front armies by a victory in this battle..."

As we were hurrying along, the order came: "Leave your packs on the right side of the road."

Relieved of that weight, we fairly raced along. By dawn we reached the top of Northern Slope. The city lay just across the river. From our vantage point, we could see that our forces had already defeated the enemy. Before we could even turn to descend the slope, a rousing cheer rose from our comrades standing on the nearby heights:

"Long live the conjoining of the Red Armies!"

"Long live the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army!"

Excited, we swarmed on to the heights. The vanguard troops of the Second and Fourth Front Armies had arrived. Red flags fluttering at their head, they were marching in long columns towards the city from the southeast.

Then red flags appeared at the city gate. With the red flag of the First Front Army's Seventh Regiment in the forefront, the welcoming procession streamed out of the city to meet the approaching comrades.

Our exulting hearts pounded madly at the sight. "Let's go and meet them!" someone yelled. That shout came like an order to charge; we raced down the slope towards our comrades. . . .

*Liu Jen-sung*

## Northward Bound

One evening during our march through Kansu Province, our Fourth Army Corps of the Fourth Front Army arrived at Weiyuan. We were bivouacking when a message came from headquarters: Hu Tsung-nan had mobilized all his troops to pursue us. In addition, two other Kuomintang divisions had been sent from Lanchow. They were marching on Weiyuan to strike us a deadly blow, hoping to thus prevent us from joining forces with the First Front Army.

We promptly assembled, ready to continue our march and shake them off. Political Commissar Yeh of our division gave us a talk first: "Comrades, the enemy is out to stop our northward march. They think they're going to keep us from joining forces with the First Front Army. But they're daydreaming. Today, we must show the same spirit as when we climbed the snow mountains and crossed the marshland. We'll give the enemy the slip and meet our First Front Army brothers in the north. . . ."

Encouraged by the news that we'd soon be united with our comrades, we set off immediately, our energy redoubled, and marched swiftly along the moonlit road.

During that forced march, we covered 230 *li* in twenty-four hours, shaking off the enemy. But having had nothing to eat during the march, we felt famished. All around us there was nothing but barren loess hills dotted with a few blades of grass and wormwood. And not a village in sight. Luckily there was a shower that day. As we tramped along we collected rain water which we mixed with some baked oat-meal.

But the next two days there wasn't a drop of water. Too thirsty to keep up a brisk pace, we gradually slackened our step.

"Hurry, comrades!" someone shouted from ahead. "We'll soon meet our brother units!"

We all knew that we still had several days' march, but the mere thought of joining forces with the others made us speed up. After another few *li* we spotted a small village in the distance. What a heartening sight. But it turned out that an enemy battalion was stationed there. We got through after a fierce battle, but our hopes of finding water were dashed. Licking our parched lips, we trudged on.

At the top of a slope, a small hut came into sight. We stopped some distance away. Two messengers and I were sent to the hut in search of people or water.

The old woman living there was startled when we ran up, but we explained that we were Red Army men going northward to fight the Japanese aggressors, and that we were looking for water, not having had any for four days and nights. We also told her not to be afraid.

The old woman obviously knew about the Red Army, for after looking us over from head to foot she exclaimed: "What a hard life you good people have! In these parts, there isn't a drop of water within twenty *li* — except when it rains. But I have a bucketful of water. Take it to your men." She handed it to us.

We looked at the water and hesitated, though our throats felt as if they were on fire.

"Granny," one of the messengers spoke up, "what about you. . . ?"

"It doesn't matter," she responded. "There's a small spring not far away that provides about a half bucketful a day — that's enough for the three of us in my family." Then she fetched a small jar of

honey which she handed to me. "Mix this with the water for your men."

Terribly grateful, I took the jar, then fished out two silver dollars that I had to press on her several times before she would accept.

Having stirred the honey into the water, we carried the bucket to our battalion. Instructor Li Ting-hsueh first scooped out half a bowl of water for each of the wounded, then took a little himself. Raising the bowl high as if he were proposing a toast, he announced: "Let's sip some of this sweet water to moisten our throats. The most difficult part is behind us. Now, comrades, in a few days we'll be with the First Front Army!" At those words, our morale soared.

Having drunk, we set off again. After marching five days and nights, we at last met the First Front Army. Our hearts were filled with a sweetness not unlike that of the honey water we'd tasted that day.

*Chu Chia-sheng*

## Home at Last

After battling our way for thousands of *li*, our Second Front Army finally reached northern Shensi.

Not having fought for several days in a row, we all wondered if we hadn't arrived in the revolutionary base area. But when our army pressed on day and night without even stopping to rest, we figured we hadn't. After a thirty-six-hour forced march, we were mighty tired of walking.



We were still pushing on when at midnight word came from the front: "Don't lag behind, comrades. We'll soon be meeting the First Front Army!" This news went down the line like a gust of wind. Cheers broke out: "We'll soon be home! Home at last!" "We'll see Chairman Mao!" "The First Front Army is just ahead!"

How could we remain calm now that this long-awaited day had come at last? Like arrows shot from a bow, we sped on.

I brought up the rear with a transport squad of our general affairs department and some of our men. When the news reached us, we put on a spurt and advanced by forced marches. Just before dawn we came to open terrain. Ahead a light shone in the darkness.

"Hey! A light!" we shouted simultaneously.

Squad Leader Hsu of the transport section excitedly pointed ahead: "The revolutionary road is becoming wider and wider, brighter and brighter. Comrades, our vanguard is probably already with the First Front Army. Let's speed it up!"

Encouraged by these words we quickened our step, heading towards the light. Then a song rose up ahead:

*"Aiyali,*

Wise is Chairman Mao's strategy,

Duped and weary, the enemy.

*Aiyali. . ."*

It had been over a year since we'd last heard this folk-song that had been so popular in the Kiangsi revolutionary base areas. Heard in these circumstances, it was particularly moving and some fighters burst out: "Comrades! Comrades! . . ."

We spotted six men sitting round a blaze, some singing, others poking at something in the fire, their heads bent. At our shouts, they leaped up and ran towards us, calling: "Comrades! You must be tired. Are you of the Second Front Army?"

"Right! Are you of the First Front Army?"

"Yes."

We rushed towards each other shouting. Some of us put down our loads and dashed ahead to greet our comrades. We class brothers grasped each other's hands, one at heart, embracing all the more warmly because our separation had been so long. The drumming

of our hearts was like a song expressing the long arduous path we'd trod.

They took us to the fire and made us sit down. Handing round the potatoes baked in the fire, they apologized: "Everything's been prepared for you up ahead. We only came to meet you. These potatoes aren't good, but they'll take the edge off your hunger."

The fire blazed in welcome. Though we were sitting out in the open, our hearts were filled with warmth. We cried: "We're home at last!"

We said goodbye, then continued on our way. At sunrise we saw smoke curling up from the foot of distant hills. We soon made out some caves in the hillside. At the village entrance a man was peering in our direction. Having spotted us, he turned back, then re-emerged with two others. Together they walked down to the side of the road and stood waiting.

"Which unit are you from, comrades?" one man wearing an apron asked in a strong Fukien accent as we approached.

"The political department of the Sixth Army Group of the Second Front Army," Squad Leader Hsu replied.

"You must be tired out, comrades. Come in and have a rest." They showed us into a cave.

The table on the *kang* was neatly set with over a dozen bowls and chopsticks. They brought some hot water, then handed round bowl after bowl of boiled millet and mutton stewed with potatoes. "Eat up," they urged. "Go ahead!" Although the food was most appetizing, none of us touched his bowl, for we didn't want to accept such a big meal. Besides we were in a hurry to catch up with our troops.

One fighter stood up and turned to me: "Let's go, department head."

Our "hosts" didn't know what to do. Worried, one of them called out: "Squad leader, the Second Front Army comrades want to leave!"

The man with the Fukien accent hurried over and barred the way. "You're home now, comrades, why be in such a hurry to leave?" he remonstrated. "After you've come such a distance carrying

heavy loads, how can we let you continue on empty stomachs? If you refuse to eat, our political instructor will criticize us when he gets back."

I had no choice but tell my men to sit down again.

These comrades were from a mess squad of the First Front Army. When we sat down and began eating heartily, the squad leader was delighted. He told us eagerly:

"Before dawn this morning many Second Front Army comrades passed through here. When we learned that you would soon be arriving we came and waited a long while. We've sent socks, towels, tooth-brushes and tooth-paste ahead for your army. And we've prepared this meal for you." He pointed to the many dishes on the table, then concluded: "You must finish it all, lick every platter clean!" All of us burst out laughing.

As we were eating and laughing, the squad leader suddenly ran his eyes over me, then turned to take out a piece of blue cloth from his bedding-roll. After carefully examining the piece of cloth, he eyed me again, looking undecided. What is he up to? I wondered, puzzled.

But one of the cooks understood. "Squad leader, I have some." He produced a small parcel wrapped in black cloth. After putting the grain it contained in the squad leader's cloth, he handed over the piece of black cloth with a reminiscent smile. "This was given me by the quartermaster when we crossed the Yellow River."

Waving the cloth, the squad leader walked over to me. I finally understood: Having noticed my torn jacket he wanted to mend it. How thoughtful of him! Before I could refuse he was standing before me, saying with concern: "Use this to mend your jacket, comrade. Get yourself spruced up to see Chairman Mao."

I'd worn that jacket every day for two years and it was beyond mending. But I didn't refuse the squad leader's offer, which for me symbolized the unity and friendship of us class brothers. It would remind me of the victory of the Long March, the conjunction of our armies and the beginning of a new historical period in China's revolution.

*Illustrated by Tung Chen-sheng*

## NATIONAL MINORITY POEMS AND SONGS

*Saifudin*

### Sing, Skylark

*— to a girl singer*

Sing, skylark, pour out your heart in this age of joy,  
Soar over our garden of art where a hundred flowers bloom.

When our poets present stirring odes to the revolution,  
Make them into moving songs to spread far and wide.

When musicians play music in praise of our great land,  
Carol your accompaniment to their thrilling strains.

Let all our lads and lasses dance their new dance  
As you sing the heroes and heroines of today.

Only those who recall winter's cold feel the warmth of spring,  
Never forget how dread winter ravaged your heart.

The cruel society of the past locked you in a cage of iron,  
Countless days and nights you dreamed of the coming of spring.

Who was it that freed you from the freezing winter?  
Who smashed that cage of iron and set you free?

Skylark of our age, forget not the tireless gardener,  
Sing the finest songs of your heart for Chairman Mao.



*Saifudin*

## Stride Forward

Thunderstorms have routed winter  
And ushered in radiant spring;  
We must treasure each drop of blood and sweat  
Shed to bring in the spring.

In the burgeoning spring  
When trees bud and are clothed in green,  
Look ahead to the coming of summer  
When a hundred flowers will bloom.

Those whose hearts are set on winning through  
To that magnificent season  
Must stride ahead along the path  
Pointed out by Chairman Mao.

Infinitely bright, the future,  
But countless perils beset us on our long march;  
We must overcome the bitter cold of snow-storms,  
Cross perilous frozen heights.

Each fresh peak climbed  
Tempers our heroic army,  
The flowers of victory let us give  
To these fine, loyal hearts.

Ah, poet, never plume yourself  
On your paltry contribution;  
You should see that the heroes of our time  
Are reclaiming seas, moving mountains!



## A Song from Our Hearts

— *Tibetan folk-song*

When a fine young stallion comes to our grasslands,  
Eager to run, with silver hoofs it stamps the earth.

When a bold eagle scans the boundless blue,  
Flexing its pinions it longs to soar in space.

When emerald-green willows lure and charm the cuckoo,  
It fills the air with its sweet clarion call.

When liberated serfs see our beloved PLA men,  
A spring of gratitude wells up within their hearts.

Oh, PLA comrades sent by Chairman Mao,  
You've planted red flags over all our snow-clad peaks.

Oh, PLA comrades sent by Chairman Mao,  
You've brought the glow of spring into our hearts.

We liberated serfs, bold and full of zest,  
Will forge ahead to communism together with you.



## Along the Tarim River

— *Uighur folk-song*

As I walk along beside the Tarim River,  
How sweet the many rainbow-coloured flowers.  
Viewing my beautiful, flourishing homeland,  
A song of joy springs from my heart.

As I walk along beside the Tarim River,  
Full ears of wheat hang low their heavy heads,  
As the reaper cuts a swath through this sea of gold,  
A song of joy springs from my heart.

As I walk along beside the Tarim River,  
Grapes and apples hang in heavy clusters overhead,  
And while the purling river water murmurs,  
A song of joy springs from my heart.

As I walk along beside the Tarim River,  
A snow-white cloud of cotton stretches to the blue,  
Prettier than a landscaped garden is our commune;  
A song of joy springs from my heart.



## Chairman Mao Brings Happiness

— *Chuang folk-song*

Look!  
The Milky Way has dropped down on our hills.  
No, no, look again.  
That's not the Milky Way that's fallen from the heavens,  
But water from the new canal that's reached our village.  
Every conduit comes from far-away Peking,  
It's Chairman Mao who sends water to us Chuangs.

Look!  
The stars have dropped down on our hills.  
No, no, look again.  
It's not the stars from heaven that dot our hills  
But countless bright electric lights that shine.  
Every connecting wire is linked with far-away Peking,  
It's Chairman Mao who's sent electricity to us Chuangs.

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The Chuang people live in the Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region and in Yunnan, Kwangtung and Kweichow Provinces.

Listen!

A roar of thunder is shaking the very cliff tops.

No, no, listen again.

It's our new tractors rumbling across the high hills.

For mechanization has now come to our Chuang villages,

It's Chairman Mao who's sent these tractors to us.

Singing a song to our beloved Peking,

We say Chuang villages are learning from Tachai.

We'll fight heaven and earth and persevere,

So for generations to come happiness will be ours.

Year after year we'll always remember

It's Chairman Mao who brings us happiness.



On the Way to School

by Tuan Hsiao-chin and Ting Shih-chien

*New-Year Pictures*



A Train Load of Supplies Comes to Our Mountain Village by Ho Cheng



Battling on the Taihang Mountains by Chao Yi-chao and Chang Ming-tang



Chairman Mao's Teachings by Huang Nai-yuan and Wang Lai-hsin



Sparks of Joy by Teng Kai-pi, Lin Jang-yu and Chang Sheng



Harvest-time Nursery by Liu Erh-kang



*Ho Chin and  
Hsiao Tu*

## Source of Light

Ten thousand mountain ranges are linked together,  
Peak after peak lifts its shoulders to the sky.  
Among them we Chuangs and Yaos\* have built power stations,  
Now there's a galaxy of stars among our countless hills.

Look closely at this Yao hamlet,  
It's aglow with winking stars afloat upon a sea of cloud;  
And our Chuang villages are star clusters,  
Shining among the green-forested peaks.

As village follows village,  
A luminous sea merges with a hill ablaze,  
Till whole people's communes are lit up,  
And the whole wide sky is incandescent.

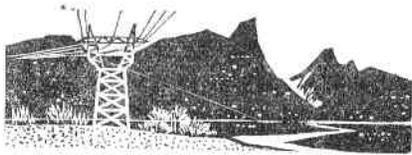
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\*The Yaos live in the Kwangsi Chuang Antonomous Region and Hunan, Yunnan, Kwangtung and Kweichow Provinces.

In the old days black clouds hovered everywhere.  
They darkened even the brightest day.  
But in our new society the sun never sets,  
Even the darkest night is turned into bright day.

From where did these lights first come to our mountains?  
What is the source of all this illumination?  
A single lamp in Shaoshan Village. . . .  
And then the bright lights of Tien An Men Square.

Silver lights shimmer all over the green hills,  
Golden lights add lustre to our days.  
Chairman Mao is the bright sun,  
A source of light for all mankind.



*Chao Hsiao-po and  
Chen Chia-hsiao*

## Li Brocade for Chairman Mao

In olden times the priestess Huang\*  
Came to us Lis to learn to weave fine silk.  
For more than six hundred years we had woven it,  
But never one single bolt of beautiful brocade was ours.

But since we Li people gained liberation,  
We've woven the rosy clouds with our many coloured silks.  
Our five peaks we use as our weaving frame,  
We use bright rainbow colours for our warp and weft.

We weave gleaming silk and the finest of brocades,  
In red and green with all other bright spring colours,  
We've been weaving now for twenty-six long summers,  
Into our patterns we've woven our every hill and stream.

---

The Li people live in Kwangtung Province.

\*Legend has it that six hundred years ago in the Yuan Dynasty a priestess named Huang went to Hainan Island and lived there for many years with the Yi people to learn their wonderful weaving skills.

We weave a picture of the sun and phoenixes,  
Among radiant morning clouds on Mount Wuchih.  
Our thousand phoenixes greet the red sun,  
For our phoenixes are those who spin and weave.

Into a pattern we weave our Lis' Tachai spirit,  
As we watch them ploughing under the red kapoks.  
Chairman Mao sends the dew and rain from Peking,  
Li villages are blossoming with Tachai flowers.

Many new pictures are woven into our brocades;  
Which one best expresses our deepest feelings?  
It's the one with Chairman Mao among us Li people  
That shows his heart beats as one with ours.

We ask the clouds to carry to Peking  
A bright brocade for our beloved one,  
For generations to come, we Li people  
Will follow the Party; our hearts will never change.



## Busy Chiang Hamlets in Spring

When white mists cover our mountain tops,  
And a mizzle moistens our winding pathways,  
Songs ring out from deep in the forest,  
Where Chiang villages hang high among the clouds.

There are many rounded slopes,  
And a thousand twisting paths,  
Twenty-eight hairpin turns  
That lead zigzag to our mountain eyries.

Beside terraced fields are fine new houses,  
Wind ripples the luxuriant green wheat like silk,  
There's no one to be seen among these mountains,  
Yet happy voices are there away up among the clouds.

---

The Chiang people live in Szechuan Province.

A group of girls begin to scatter fertilizer,  
Their nimble fingers flutter in the mist,  
And their swift footsteps rustle like the wind,  
As they trample on the pearly dew-drops.

When bugles blow in spring to wake the earth,  
Sixty-year-old uncle firmly grips the plough,  
Our vigorous men and sturdy oxen  
Fill the air with the tang of up-turned earth.

Our team leader boldly tackles the bank of brambles,  
While an active youngster follows with a team,  
Cutting new furrows on the slope of a wilderness,  
We'll plant a thousand rows of cayenne peppers.

Golden rays pierce the mist,  
As the red sun rises.  
Industrious are our Chiang villagers,  
Red spring flowers among green willows.



## A Spring Flower

— *Monba folk-song*

In the far-flung garden of our socialist motherland,  
The Monba, a new spring flower, is blossoming.  
Cultivated and watered well by our Party,  
Chairman Mao himself had tended it and helped it grow.

In the far-flung garden of our socialist motherland,  
The Monba flower is one that will never fade,  
For with Peking all its roots are fast entwined,  
Its face turns ever smiling to the radiant sun.

In the far-flung garden of our socialist motherland,  
The Monba is a red flower that fears no cold.  
Red as a ball of fire, it scorns frost and ice,  
Like a sentry it stands alert on our far frontier.

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The Monba people live in the Autonomous Region of Tibet.

*Li Yao-tsung*

## On Reading "Selection of National Minority Poems and Songs"

A selection of 215 poems and songs of 54 minority nationalities edited and translated by the Central Institute for Nationalities was published by the People's Literature Publishing House, Peking in 1975. The book is arranged according to the nationalities of the poets and has handsome illustrations; its front cover displays a picture of people of various nationalities dancing in front of T'ien An Men.

The poems and songs in this selection were chosen by editors familiar with the national minority areas. Most of them were written collectively by minority workers, peasants and soldiers including herdsmen on the Inner Mongolian grasslands, new workers in the factories of the Tibetan plateau and sentinels on the borderland, all path-breakers in the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, struggle for production and scientific experiment. Some of the poems were written by professional poets. All of them record the hardships and arduous of a life of fiery revolutionary struggles.

The more than two hundred poems in this selection are rich in content and theme and varied in style. The national minority poets reveal their veneration for our great leader Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party each in their own language, but all with strong feeling, harmonious rhythm as well as moving and lively metaphors.

A Tung songster sings:

The Tungs freed from iron cages,  
Long for the red sun in Peking.

.....

Why is the reed-pipe so resonant?  
Because our new life today is sweeter than wine!

Songs like this express the common feeling shared by the people of all nationalities.

A new outlook now prevails among the Chinese people whose class consciousness and consciousness of the struggle between two lines have been raised since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, and the study of the theories of proletarian dictatorship. An old Tibetan secretary of the Communist Party sings to the herdsmen who are attending a night-school class around a bonfire:

A drink of spring water refreshes one,  
Added fuel makes flames leap high.  
Covered with treasures is our grassland,  
The most precious are the theories of proletarian dictatorship.

Many of the poems glowingly depict the vigorous development in industry and agriculture in the national minority areas which comes from learning from Tachai and Taching. A Tibetan woman weaver sings from her heart:

With their two hands,  
The first generation of weavers on our steppe  
Produce magnificent woollen fabrics and blankets  
For the liberated serfs.  
They are drawing a splendid scroll  
For our motherland's future.

The Chuang folk-song *Chairman Mao Brings Happiness* strikingly depicts how the broad masses of Chuang peasants are learning from Tachai.

The Monbas who live in our southwest border area, with a population of only 5,000, are one of the smallest of all our nationalities. Before liberation they led a primitive life in the deep mountains. After liberation the people's government helped them to overpass several centuries and embark straight away on the golden road of socialism. *A Spring Flower* sings the happiness of the Monbas today.

*The Long Iron Dragon*, a Tung folk-song sung to the accompaniment of a *pipa*, praises the jubilant scene of a train entering the area where the Tung people live.

When a long iron dragon comes to the Tung village,  
The golden waves on a thousand tiers  
Of terraced fields  
Ripple in glee.

.....

The long dragon running on its tracks  
Links the Tung village to the heart of our country.

*A Chingpo Girl Goes to University* conveys the happiness of a minority girl who is sent to receive higher education. And *Ode to the Barefoot Doctor* depicts the determination of a Pai girl to serve the peasants enthusiastically.

Included in the selection is also a poem by a PLA fighter of the Kaoshan nationality from Taiwan showing how the Kaoshan people long for the liberation of Taiwan and their return to the motherland.

We long day and night  
For the red flag to unfurl in Taiwan.

In the old society the people of the various nationalities in China led a life of poverty and misery under the exploitation and oppression of the reactionary rule of a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country. Many of the minority poems of that time were dismal expressions of suffering; some were even tainted with the pernicious ideology of the exploiting classes. Today, our socialist era and socialist literature have cleared the way for a new style of national minority poetry,

as can be seen from this selection. The poems, with good content and form, brim over with political fervour and are rich in the flavour of life and of the times. Characterized by new artistic technique and distinctive national styles, they are flowers nurtured by Mao Tse-tung Thought and the heart-blood of the workers, peasants and soldiers of the minorities.

The publication of this selection shows the thriving condition of the socialist literature and art of our various nationalities and the growth of the ranks of our minority worker, peasant and soldier writers. National minority poems and songs will bloom in future in still greater splendour in the garden of socialist poetry of our great motherland.

Hsueh Yen

### New-Year Pictures

A national exhibition of New-Year pictures was held in October last year at the Peking Art Gallery, with 261 new art works on display. The first of its kind since the Cultural Revolution, it showed the new achievements in this field.

New-Year pictures are a traditional art form loved by the Chinese people. The block-printed pictures of this kind have a history of over one thousand years, and Yangliuching in Tientsin and Taohuawu in Kiangsu Province were two famous centres for their production during the 16th and 17th centuries. By the 19th century, water-colours in this genre had also appeared.

Most New-Year pictures showed people's happiness and scenes of festivity; hence families liked to paste them up on doors and walls before the lunar New Year. But in the old society, this art form became a tool used by the reactionary ruling class to spread feudal ideas. After the founding of New China, though it underwent some changes in form and content, it still expressed feudal, bourgeois and revisionist ideas because of the dominance of Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line over the literary and art field. Since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolu-

tion our spare-time and professional art workers, under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line on literature and art, have brought new enthusiasm to the painting of New-Year pictures, using socialist ideology to dominate this art form and endeavouring to project the heroic images of workers, peasants and soldiers — a new development in New-Year pictures.

All the works in the exhibition were done after the Cultural Revolution. Varied in technique and striking in colour, they conveyed our people's ardent love for our great leader Chairman Mao and the new phenomena of socialism. They also reflected today's excellent situation and the way in which the Chinese people are following Chairman Mao's important instructions to study the theory of the proletarian dictatorship to combat and prevent revisionism, promote stability and unity, and boost the national economy.

The large New-Year picture *Chairman Mao's Teachings* is one example. It shows graphically how Chairman Mao's heart is linked with those of the revolutionary people. In the picture, Chairman Mao sits by a millstone in front of a dwelling cave in the northern Shensi revolutionary base during the War of Liberation. Marking off points on his fingers, he affectionately explains revolutionary theory to the women of a literacy class who crowd around him listening eagerly and attentively. The northern Shensi women's fine spirit and aspirations are brought out by the artist in rich yet simple colours.

The current mass movement to study the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to combat and prevent revisionism has had a deepening impact all over the country. The New-Year pictures *Going to Night-school* and *Telling the Grannies Again* both deal with this movement.

*Going to Night-school* reflects the enthusiasm with which our poor and lower-middle peasants study revolutionary theory. After supper the men and women members of a people's commune go in groups to night-school, keeping up a lively discussion on their way about the Party and state affairs. Though it is night, the painter has not made the picture oppressively dark, but by putting lanterns and

flashlights in the commune members' hands he suggests a night atmosphere.

*Telling the Grannies Again* shows the woman teacher of a political night-school staying patiently after the class is over to explain revolutionary theory again to two old grannies. This depiction of a political night-school reveals the scale and ramifications of the theoretical study being carried out in the countryside. One of the painters of this picture is a girl who went to settle down in the countryside after leaving school and is now a night-school teacher herself. Because she has first-hand experience of the subjects she portrays, her works are realistic and have a strong artistic impact.

Many of the works displayed also showed the vigorous development of our socialist revolution and construction. Examples of pictures reflecting the growth of the oil, ship-building and steel industries are: *Oil Transportation Outside Chinhuangtao*, *Oil Dragon*, *Waving Ribbons of Colours*.

*Sparks of Joy* is another eye-catching picture painted collectively by steel workers and professional artists. It shows the enthusiasm of the workers who go all out to temper more steel. The lively atmosphere and the energetic figures in this picture convey the high morale of the Chinese workers who are resolved to make greater contributions to the revolution of both China and the world. The steel workers' faces shine with joy when they see the sparks of molten steel flow from the furnace.

A drive has been launched in our country to learn from Tachai, a red banner in agriculture. Following the example of Tachai, the commune members in Hsiyang County, Shansi Province, are blasting hills and filling in gullies to make plains so that their fields can be ploughed with tractors. *Battling on the Taibang Mountains* shows commune members waiting, tense and motionless, by their bulldozers the instant before the explosion, bringing out the heroism of the poor and lower-middle peasants who are battling against nature in a driving snow-storm.

*A Train-load of Supplies Comes to Our Mountain Village* shows workers delivering tractors, pumps, fertilizer and other materials to a mountain village in the snow to help the commune members to mechanize

their farming. The old peasants, vigorous girls and sturdy young men who are braving the bitter cold to transform their land rush over to welcome the train. This picture illustrates how China's industry aids agriculture and how the people of the whole country are going all out to help bring about the mechanization of farming.

Revolution in the content of New-Year pictures has inevitably brought about changes in the technique of painting, enabling this form of art to express the spirit of our time and giving it a more distinctive national flavour. The works in the exhibition showed that our painters have done their best to weed through the old to bring forth the new. By adopting certain foreign techniques as well as techniques from traditional Chinese painting and folk art, they have enriched the art of New-Year pictures.

*He's the Image of Our Old Party Secretary* and *Enjoying the New Porcelain* were painted with meticulous attention to detail, using the method of "a picture inside a picture" employed by certain folk artists. *The Spring Breeze Brings Warmth* with its sharp colour contrasts is in the style of Yangliuching New-Year pictures. *Spring in Hsisuangpanna*, another lively picture, gives a striking bird's-eye view of the crowds at a large fair in an area inhabited by the Tai nationality. *On the Way to School*, painted with the meticulous strokes of traditional Chinese painting in simple yet vivid colours, shows concisely how a Young Pioneer on her way to school props up a maize shoot, tying it with the silk ribbon from her hair. This picture expresses our children's public spirit and love for the collective.

All the New-Year pictures displayed have been reproduced and will be used to decorate the homes of the workers and poor and lower-middle peasants.

## A Song-and-Dance Ensemble of Liberated Serfs

A song-and-dance ensemble of liberated serfs, the Amateur Art Propaganda Team of Todlundechehen County, is active in the Todlun River Valley in Tibet. The twenty-four artists of this team are members of rural communes, village teachers or barefoot doctors. In their spare time or during festivals they go to nearby communes, factories or army units to put on performances of songs and dances which they have composed themselves.

Todlundechehen County lies northwest of Lhasa, capital city of the Tibetan Autonomous Region. Its population is just over twenty thousand. In recent years amateur art activities have developed so widely in Tibet that more than thirty communes in this county have their own amateur art propaganda teams, the county naturally has its own propaganda team too.

All these propagandists come from poor families and each has bitter memories of the time when they were cruelly oppressed by the local government, the nobles and the lamasteries. Many of them are



*Happiness Sparkles in the Mountain Village*

still scarred with the marks of whips and shackles. The political instructor of the team, Yeshei Yangdzom, is the daughter of a slave who became a slave herself as soon as she left her mother's womb. When she was three her mother tried to run away; but her cruel master caught her and had her killed by tying her to the tail of a galloping horse. Another team member Tsedrol was also the child of a slave who started to work in his master's stable when only eight years old. Yet another, Tsamchod, was the son of a blacksmith and a street singer. All people such as these were treated as less than human in the old society; it was not until 1959, after the democratic reforms in Tibet, that they were really liberated. Now Yeshei Yangdzom is a member of the Chinese Communist Party whose work is so exemplary that she has been elected alternate member of the county Party committee and head of the county women's association. Tsedrol is his commune's security officer, and Tsamchod is a barefoot doctor.

Those who have suffered from the icy winter can delight more fully in the warmth of the sun; those who have tasted much bitterness can appreciate more keenly the sweetness of our new life.

These propagandists have not only won political and economic freedom, they are determined to be the masters of their culture too. Love for the Party and Chairman Mao makes them throw themselves eagerly into their propaganda work as they take revolutionary art to the villages of liberated serfs and to the tents of herdsmen. On the stage, with tears in their eyes they recall the past sufferings of the serfs and with burning anger denounce the crimes of the slave system, then sing from their hearts of the liberation of serfs, of new socialist Tibet and of their gratitude to the Party and Chairman Mao.

In old Tibet serfs and slaves were treated like cattle, denied all human rights; thus they had no schooling. Now under the care of the Party and government they receive literary and art training, and the county has organized short-term training courses to teach them singing, dancing and instrumental music. Thanks to the Party's encouragement and assistance and their own hard work they have overcome various difficulties until now these former illiterates are able to write short dramas and songs full of revolutionary feeling. Tandzin Kunga of this team was previously unable to read musical scores and could only sing a few folk-songs; but he has now composed over thirty songs. His colleague Nyandra, having learned some rudiments of musical composition in a short training course, has also composed many songs for the team based on folk tunes which, while vigorous, cheerful and artless in the tradition of Tibetan folk music, also express the spirit of our new age.

After the democratic reforms great changes took place in Tibet; and the Cultural Revolution in particular gave rise to much more that is new. These great social changes provide a rich source of inspiration for artists, and many of the items performed by this propaganda team are based on real life. For example, the song-and-dance item *Happiness Sparkles in the Mountain Village* is adapted from a folk dance of the Kongpo district. With its gay, stirring rhythm it shows how hydro-electric power stations are being set up in the Tibetan countryside and how hard people are working to install machinery and

fix up electric wires to make every house bright with electric lights. It reflects the transformation of the Tibetan countryside and the people's elation. In old Tibet, slaves were not allowed lamps; they lived in the stables with only yak-hides for cover and only the moon and stars to give them light. Even ordinary homes had nothing but the lees from the oil press to light lamps or had to burn pine torches. The choice of this theme brings out the liberated serfs' gratitude and love for the Party and Chairman Mao.

All the members of this propaganda team come from the production front and are good at farming as well as keen on art. Having their roots among the masses, they share the masses' feelings, joys and interests. *Harvest*, a song-and-dance item, is based on their own practical experience. The chief melodies in this dance were composed by Tandzin Kunga when he was harvesting and saw the joy of the peasants as for the first time they threshed golden wheat with a threshing-machine given them by the state, then compared this with the forced labour of serfs whipped by their masters in the old days. The contrast between the old and the new society stirred him so deeply that he decided to compose some dance music to depict the record harvest, the joy of the liberated serfs and their love for socialism. He himself worked on the threshing-floor until late at night, carefully observing

*Harvest*



the feelings of his fellow-workers. After making several drafts, he finally produced this musical composition.

In all their amateur art activities, the members of this team follow Chairman Mao's instruction that literature and art must serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, must serve the needs of proletarian politics and the needs of socialism. The items they create and perform are geared to the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment. Carrying their luggage, costumes and stage properties, they tour different communes, travelling by day and putting on performances at night. To take art to the liberated serfs wherever they live, they climb mountains, ford rivers and brave all manner of dangers in order to present their programmes to peasants and herdsmen in remote areas.

Once in early spring they set out to the Mongtod herding commune, far off the beaten track. A snow-storm started and the path was slippery so that many of them fell from their horses; but undeterred they continued on their way and after nearly six hours finally reached their destination four thousand metres above sea level. When the herdsmen of Mongtod Commune saw them coming through heavy snow to perform for them, they were tremendously moved. They brought out steaming buttered tea for the team and lit a blazing bonfire outside their tents to warm them. This welcome made the artists forget their fatigue and they put on items for more than two hours outside in the wind and snow. The herdsmen declared with gratitude: "You've not only brought us a revolutionary show but the Party's and Chairman Mao's kind concern as well."

Since this county art propaganda team was formed it has given more than two hundred performances, which have been seen by more than one hundred thousand people. Everywhere it goes, it receives the warmest of welcomes from the liberated peasants and herdsmen of Tibet.

The path taken by this amateur art team was not smooth; it evolved in the midst of fierce class struggles and struggles between the socialist and capitalist lines. When this county's liberated serfs first organized amateur propaganda teams, a few class enemies did their vicious best to sabotage them. They formed "Tibetan opera companies"

to perform reactionary operas glorifying serf-owners and nobles, in an attempt to win away the propaganda teams' audiences. One such company secretly backed by an ex-serf-owner in the Dongkar district openly challenged the local amateur propaganda team. The latter accepted the challenge without hesitation in order to win a position for socialist art in the countryside. Its items dealing with the liberation of slaves and heroic characters from real life so appealed to the broad masses that the performances of this team were packed, whereas those of the opera company drew few people. Denounced and attacked by the liberated serfs, the old Tibetan operas preaching fatalism and superstition finally lost all their mass following.

For some years now this Amateur Art Propaganda Team of Todlundeche County has persisted in serving the workers, peasants and soldiers, in taking revolutionary art to mountain districts and in winning new positions for socialist art in the countryside, and it has scored achievements in all these respects. In the autumn of 1975, this team came to Peking to represent all the Tibetan amateur art workers from the ranks of liberated serfs. It took part in the theatrical festival organized by the Ministry of Culture as well as in the performances put on during the National Day celebrations.

### Theatrical Shows Commemorating the Long March



The suite of songs *The Red Army Fears Not the Trials of a Distant March*

A round of theatrical shows was organized by the People's Liberation Army art troupes in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the victory of the historic Long March. Included in the repertoire were the modern drama *The Long March*, the suite of songs *The Red Army Fears Not the Trials of a Distant March*, the dances *Storming Luting*

*Bridge, Scaling the Snow-capped Mountains* and *Years of Hardship* and a variety of vocal and instrumental solos, choral singing and military band music.

The play *The Long March* is the story of a battalion of the Central Red Army on the Long March with Chairman Mao. It presents the heroic fighting history of the Red Army on the Long March. The vocal suite *The Red Army Fears Not the Trials of a Distant March* consists of ten parts, all distinguished by strong emotion and élan.

These items reflect, from different angles, the heroic deeds of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army on the Long March, propagate the great significance of the Long March and praise Chairman Mao's revolutionary proletarian line.

### Festival of Puppet and Shadow-Plays

In November last year, a national puppet and shadow-play festival sponsored by the Ministry of Culture began in Peking. The first batch of participants were troupes from Shanghai, Hunan, Hupeh, Shensi, Heilungkiang and Kwangtung.

Some of the thirty items performed were adaptations from revolutionary modern Peking operas; others were new items portraying the life of children, or dramatized tales and fables for children — a field in which the puppet theatre excels. Rod puppets, hand puppets and marionettes as well as shadow-figures were used by the puppeteers.

Puppet-shows and shadow-plays are a traditional Chinese folk-art dating back centuries and combining a variety of art forms such as: drama, song, dance, music, painting and sculpture. The art of the puppeteer — both in the making and manipulating of puppets — is characterized by exaggeration, vividness and vivacity. Guided by Chairman Mao's principle of **“Letting a hundred flowers blossom; weeding through the old to bring forth the new”**, puppet-shows have been steadily improved; unwholesome ideas have been eliminated; and new items have been added. They now have their distinctive place in our socialist culture.

## Peking Concert of Works by Nieh Erh and Hsien Hsing-hai

A concert of works by people's musicians Nieh Erh and Hsien Hsing-hai was held in Peking on October 25, under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture.

Items on the programme included Nieh Erh's *Song of the Broad Road*, *Graduation Song*, and *The Dockers' Song*; selected passages from Hsien Hsing-hai's *Yellow River Cantata* and *Production Cantata*, his songs *Go to the Enemy's Rear*, and *On the Taihang Mountains* as well as selections from his instrumental music. These items were performed by the Central Philharmonic Society, the China Opera Troupe, the China Song-and-Dance Ensemble and other art troupes.

These two musicians were pioneers of China's proletarian revolutionary music. Nieh Erh, the composer of the Chinese national anthem, was born in 1912 and died in 1935. During his short life, he composed more than thirty songs reflecting the determination of the Chinese people to struggle against imperialism and feudalism, making a great contribution to the movement for resistance against Japanese aggression and national salvation.

Concert of Works by Nieh Erh and Hsien Hsing-hai



Hsien Hsing-hai, who was born in 1905 and died in 1945, also took part in the resistance against Japan. He arrived in Yen-an in 1938 and wrote much excellent music including the well-known *Yellow River Cantata*. His last work *China Rhapsody* completed in 1945 reflects his ardent love for his motherland.

These two musicians composed their works in the throes of the great revolutionary struggle, inheriting and developing the best in Chinese traditional music. Their strongly militant compositions fired their countrymen in their own day with burning patriotism and today inspire our people in our socialist revolution and socialist construction and in our fight against imperialism and hegemonism.

## Peking Artists Perform at the Grass-roots

Recently many Peking art troupes have gone to communes, factories, shops and PLA units to join in the work there as well as to give performances for the workers, peasants and soldiers. Many troupes toured the mountain areas, carrying with them simple stage properties and putting on shows in remote mountain villages. During their tour, they ate, lived and worked with the workers, peasants and soldiers and made a point of learning from them.

## Group Sculpture "The Long March"

Art workers from the Foochow Sculpture Workshop have created a group sculpture "The Long March". It consists of six sections: *Tsunyi*, *Crossing Golden Sand River*, *Storming Luting Bridge*, *Scaling the Snow-capped Mountains*, *Breaking Through Latzukou* and *Yenan*. The length of the whole is 367 cm, its width 20 cm and its height 54 cm. In the section *Tsunyi*, utilizing the natural colours of Shoushan stone, the craftsmen have depicted the site of the enlarged meeting of the Party Central Committee's Political Bureau in January 1935. In *Scaling the Snow-capped Mountains*, they used the white part of the stone to carve ice and snowy peaks and the red and yellow seams to portray the Red Army units. This scene of the Red Army marching over

the snow is truly magnificent. *Yenan* presents Pagoda Hill and the Date Orchard where Chairman Mao lived.

Shoushan stone is a valuable stone which lends itself to sculpture on account of its great variety of colours; thus Shoushan stone sculpture is a popular traditional folk-craft. The successful creation of the group sculpture "The Long March" adds new lustre to this traditional handicraft.



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