

SSA

CHINESE LITERATURE



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The Song of Our Ideals

We print below a long poem written collectively in 1974 by some worker-peasant-soldier students who entered Peking University in 1972 to study in the Chinese Department. This poem first appeared in a collection of poems entitled *Song of Our Ideals* published by the People's Literature Publishing House in 1974. Before our translation was made, the authors had revised the Chinese text. For more information about this poem please see the article on p. 104 of this issue.

— The Editors



Red sun,
White snow,
Blue skies. . . .
Wild geese, on the wings of the east wind,
Come heralding the spring.
Leaving Peking where the sun rises,
We fly to Pagoda Hill¹
And plant our feet on the banks of the Yenho River.

O welcome, welcome, new comrades
Coming to join our shock team.

We welcome you as new members of our commune!

Please drink:

Taste some steaming millet wine

— Fermented in Yenan

By the passion of the people there.

Please eat:

Try these bright red dates

— Dates of northern Shensi

Sweet as honey.

With white towel head-dress,

Red arm-bands

— On these plateaux

A new patch of red lilies bloom. . . .

O new comrades!

You ask me:

“What are the ideals of revolutionary youth?

How to interpret them,

How to carry them out?”

— This is indeed

A very serious test-paper!

With the lilt of the *sona*, the quick tattoo of waist drums,

A Shensi folk-song soars to the clouds.

Setting the turbulent pulse

Of my heart all aquiver. . . .

Let me tell you how revolutionary ideals

Guided me, helped me to follow

The broad road leading ahead

And how they spurred me on

To take great strides into an iridescent tomorrow. . . .



1

When I opened my eyes

For the first time,

Our motherland

Was bathed in the rosy light of dawn.²

My first steps

Were taken

On the deck of our red vessel

While, rushing towards us,

Great foam-capped waves came rolling

As our speeding vessel plied its course.

My aunties told me

The hopes of contract labourers³

My uncles showed me

The red-tasselled spears of the Children's Corps.

“Hurry and grow up!

Awaiting you

Is yet another great revolution.”

Someone also sent me

A white dove,

Saying that it symbolized

Perpetual peace.

“How fortunate you are!
 You’ll never see, nor ever know
 The fierce clash of class struggle. . . .”
 — So many pictures, such a wide panorama
 Unfolded before my eyes,
 Which one of them
 Presented the best prospect?
 So I hoisted aloft
 The sails of my ideals
 And the winds from all sides
 Filled them, till they billowed.
 The flames of the Big Leap Forward⁴
 Destroyed the illusions of the Rightists;⁵
 To that fiery furnace I also contributed
 Scrap iron and little nails.
 When my uncles were writing criticisms
 And plunging into the struggle on Lushan⁶
 I helped them to grind the ink
 Making it good and black. . . .
 Though I wasn’t born in the
 Flaming years of war
 All around me hurricanes
 And tempests still raged!
 Gazing at
 The Red Army’s⁷ blood-stained straw sandals
 I stroked
 The bullet holes in an armyman’s cap.
 I knew quite well that
 The trail blazed

By our revolutionary forbears
 Was paved with their life’s blood.
 From the *Diary of Lei Feng*⁸
 Reading between the lines;
 Listening over the radio
 To articles on the great polemics,⁹
 I came to understand
 That to consolidate our state power
 A still more magnificent Long March
 Was underway.
 Watching keenly, our forbears
 Seemed to ask me:
 “Our ideals
 Will they be realized?
 Our unfinished tasks
 Who will carry them out?”
 Another seven or eight years passed,
 Another eight years or so!
 Then came the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution,¹⁰
 A peal of thunder that shook the world.
 The Ninth Great Struggle,
 And the Tenth Great Struggle.
 Already tall as my father and big brother,
 I stood in the ranks
 Of the great revolutionary contingents—
 Do you still remember?
*Bombard the Headquarters*¹¹
 A dynamic declaration full of lightning and thunder.

Do you remember?

The countless pens wielded by Chairman Mao's Red Guards
Slashing through all that was old and decadent?

And the proposals to sweep away the "four olds"¹²

That we posted all over the city
Overnight!

The footprints of those on long marches¹³

Reached into every corner of our country
Scattering Peking's seeds of fire.

An unforgettable date, August 18,¹⁴

Our bright red arm-bands

Were dyed with the brilliance
Of our red sun.

"We support you"¹⁵

— That mighty voice
Stirred deep emotions,

Gave us support by saying,

"It is right to rebel against reactionaries."¹⁶

Gave us support

To strive our whole life long

"For the liberation of all mankind."¹⁷

When Chairman Mao waves his hand

I advance!

In the tempests' wild clamour

How many stormy petrels soar to the heights!

Though churning counter-currents would impede,

The great river rolls on eastward, undeterred.

Monkeys on the banks may cry out in anguish,

Our revolutionary vessel has passed a myriad hills.

Raging tempests

Sweep away all dark clouds such as,

"Restrain oneself and return to the rites."¹⁸

Angry denunciations proclaim

The death sentence

Of the revisionist line in education!

What gibberish is this: "Unable to make a name,

He died of depression"?

"Ah, fly on, future scientist,

Mighty eaglet. . ."

An offspring of tenant peasants

Ashamed to own his parents,

The son of a collier

Refusing to work in the pit.

This is what's called

Peaceful transition

— The invisible poison of old influences.

This is indeed

Class struggle

— A battle to the death;

In the storm of January¹⁹

I came to Shanghai port,

Where a worker in a shipyard

Told me how,

As hot tears of happiness filled his eyes,

He had helped to launch

Our country's first ten-thousand-ton ship.

On the route of our long march,

I arrived at the Red Flag Canal²⁰

The poor and lower-middle peasants there
Brought out to show me
A steel spike they'd used to transform the land,
It had been worn down from a metre
To just three inches. . . .
The mighty pens that depict our ideals
Must always express
The deepest class feelings;
Only by integrating with workers and peasants
Can we make progress
Along the only road leading
To our revolutionary ideals! . . .

“Young people with education go to the countryside. . . .”²¹

Chairman Mao issued
This command to advance
As the waters of a hundred streams converge
And ten thousand steeds gallop.
To sign a pledge of determination,
They waited in queues
Stretching into the far distance.
Outside the reception stations,
Young students gathered
Waiting to set off.
Invincible young shoots
Have sprouted in these
Red fiery years!
On the eve of departure
From dear Peking

I and my comrades-in-arms
Arrived at the gates of Chungnanhai,²²
We gazed from afar
At the light shining through the night,
Listened to the water
Softly lapping on the shore.
With our writing brushes we pledged:
“We’re going to the countryside
To make a thorough-going revolution.”
Each word so large it covered
Eight whole sheets of paper.
We spent the hours writing
From dusk till dawn
For we wanted our beloved
Chairman Mao to see from his windows,
In the glow of the rosy morning clouds,
Our pledge of determination,
And smile with satisfaction.



2

Rows of cave dwellings,
Terraced field upon terraced field,
A thousand *li* of high plateau,
Thousands of acres of levelled land.
Close to our hearts, we kept
Chairman Mao's letter to us Red Guards,
We went from Peking
To Yen-an.
Here lies the soil
Where the seed of our ideals can strike root.
This is our base
Where we'll struggle against heaven and earth.

The morning gong
Calling us to work
Strikes the first note
In the song of our ideals.
The blazing prairie fire
Has coloured red
The first lines
Of the lyric proclaiming our ideals.

Pickaxes

Broke bleeding blisters on our palms.

Prickly brambles

Tore our faded jackets of students' blue.

Hoeing,

Auntie taught me to distinguish weeds from useful plants.

Winnowing,

Uncle taught me how to catch the wind.

In the course of our advance,

Every single step

Was gained through struggle

Through all this we were supported

By our class kin close beside us.

On a night of raging blizzard,

My blunt old pick

Suddenly disappeared.

Following footprints I reached the end of the village

Where, from the mouth of a cave, a red hot furnace glowed.

My old pick was being reinforced with steel.

An "Old Eighth Router"²³ sat by the bellows,

His cheeks rosy under a thatch of frost-white hair,

An old model worker

In the big production drive at Nanniwan,²⁴

A hero in the defence

Of Sanggamryong!²⁵

He'd placed all his demob pay

In the funds of the brigade, resisting firmly

Any return to individual farming.

Sledge-hammer in his hand
He'd forged the countless tools
 Needed to conquer rugged hills and turbulent waters.
As the hammer rang, it reinforced
 The song of our ideals
 With the cadence of continued revolution.
The fire in the furnace
 Tempered every single note
 In the song of our ideals.

In those days when we'd just set up
 Our hydroelectric station
I went to an old member of the "Women's Association"
 — Mother of a revolutionary martyr and asked,
"Shall I fix up an electric light in your cave?
 It'll make mending and sewing so much easier!"
The old woman smiled, but shook her head:
"Better set up a local broadcasting system first,
Fix up a line
 Across these mountains and the plain
So that everyone can hear
 The voice from Peking;
Let Chairman Mao's thinking
 Light up the hearts
 In thousands of households!"
Such simple language, my class kinswoman used,
 Devoid of all sophistication.
But her words
Helped me to take my bearings
 And realign the orientation of my ideals.

Opening the book of minutes
 Kept by our brigade committee, I wrote in it,
 "Never forget class struggle."
Striking out that big "Benevolence"²⁶ in the Confucian Temple,
We worked on an exhibition
 Criticizing Lin Piao and Confucius.²⁷
Under starlight
 We inspected the reservoir, lantern in hand,
 To gauge the weather
 Distinguish friend from foe
 And gain discernment in class struggle.
At the cross-roads
 We stopped the cart deserting the land for profit.
 Bucking the wind,
 Adhering to the correct line
 We continued to forge ourselves into the finest steel.

Donning my first pair of Shensi shoes,
I and my dear ones
 Followed the plough ourselves,
 And climbed high mountains.
To thoroughly turn the earth,
 We raised high overhead
 The pickaxe wielded by the 359th Brigade.²⁸
Clearing up accounts,
 My fingers rattled the same abacus
 Used during the re-examination of the agrarian reform.²⁹
At harvest time, dripping with sweat
 I sharpened my sickle
 Until its blade shone like silver.

Learning from Tachai,³⁰ we welcomed
Yet another golden autumn;
Then braving whirling snowflakes,
Set off continuous blasts levelling hills into plains,
So beginning our battle
To cross the Yangtse.³¹

Happiness crystallized from hardships endured
Along the path of former trail-blazers,
Victory heralding
Even more severe trials.
It was here under Pagoda Hill
By the banks of the Yenho River
Slowly I came to realize
There never could be any poetry
In individualistic ideals.
The ideals of revolutionary youth
Must be fashioned by the whole proletariat
Calling on millions upon millions to participate!
Our beautiful reality
And glorious ideals
Are tightly joined
By the red line of revolutionary struggle.
What joy it is
To struggle with heaven
With earth
And with man!
Thus we followed the directive to integrate
With workers and peasants,

We rushed into battle
Knowing no return!

Who says our life
"Is dull and prosaic,"
In working for our cause
We find infinite beauty.
Who says, "The countryside's too backward,
Too difficult to change!"
**Nothing is hard in this world
If you dare to scale the heights.**³²
The rural areas
Need me,
I need the countryside
Even more.
In the expectations of the poor and lower-middle peasants
I've discovered my own aspirations,
To realize the ideals of the proletariat
I'd gladly stay on this glorious Shensi plateau
To welcome ten years or even decades
Of militant springtimes.
Dear comrades-in-arms,
My new work-mates!
It was then,
Only then I was able
To start and write an answer
To that serious test-paper:
"What are the ideals of revolutionary youth?"



3

However, the implementation of our ideals
Is by no means calm and tranquil.
Not all rich and fertile mountains
Are covered by walnut and apple trees.
Frauds will pretend to be in tune
And full of sympathy.
Landlords and rich peasants
Will flatter under the guise of their "concern".
Vessels that dare not hoist sail
May be grounded on a sandy shoal.
Swallows hovering under the eaves
May get their wings smudged with soot.
Some will hide in dark corners
To fling poisonous darts:
 "Labour reform in disguise."³³
Others travelling along the wrong road
Will peddle such arsenic as:
 "Those with brains will rule."³⁴
What's all this talk of "Life",
 "Youth", "the Future" and "Ideals"?
How often ugly individualism

Beautifies itself in these
Alluring terms.
From Siberia also
A cold wind came:
 The clamour of the new Tsar.
On the question of "ideals"
The revisionists too
Are raising a hullabaloo.
They say, "Chinese youth have no ideals."
 — What a hypocritical mask they wear
 To cover up their sinister motives.

You're the ones who've turned back
From the road of the October Revolution,
It's you who have sold out
The Bolsheviks!
Your so-called "Ideals"
Of what poor stuff are they?
Nothing but intoxication and stupor
From guzzling vodka,
Decadence and madness accompanied
By a medley of strident jazz.
Your infamous promise of "goulash"³⁵
Created your own brand of beatniks.
Before the brilliance of proletarian fighters
You're no more than the flicker of a fire-fly.
You with your ladder of exploitation,
How can you ever reach
 The heights and see our vista.
You with your imperialist yardstick,
How can you ever measure
 The breadth of our vision.

Though our fighting post
Lies in this tiny village
The mountains and rivers of our motherland
Are always kept in mind.
The thin cobwebs of Confucian morality³⁶
Can never screen from us the radiance
Of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.
We expose our broad chests
To the winds from the Five Continents,
As we tramp along the road
Of integration with workers and peasants,
We'll shatter to bits
The idle millet dreams³⁷
Of you sparrows³⁸ in the bush.

— Horses' hooves pierce icy streams,
Lasso poles catch wolves.
"My youth belongs to the people,
I pledge my treasured youth to them."³⁹
— There was our Chang Yung
Who gave her life
To save the commune's flock of sheep.
His spirit hovers over the waves of Shuangho
His noble song shook the northern border.
"As long as there's still breath in me,
I'll work with might and main.
I dedicate my life to Chairman Mao."⁴⁰
There was our Chin Hsun-hua,
A noble eagle,
Soaring through the clouds!

"Come follow us!"
— Our heroes are calling.
"We're coming!" we answer,
— Our voices reverberate
Throughout the southern ranges, north of the pass,
On off-shore islands and along distant frontiers.
Thousands like Chin Hsun-hua and Chang Yung
Have joined the battle,
Thousands of young heroes
Are maturing.
Ah —
In the vast countryside, so much can be achieved.
A few swindlers
Can never negate these hard facts!
It is written on our great earth
And in the sky.
It's all written into the chronicle
Of our magnificent age
And written too into the ardent hearts
Of hundreds of millions of young people.
This is a great movement of rebellion
In the history of our times,
This is a battle against revisionism
That will shake the whole world.
Let the torch blaze ever brighter,
Beat the battle drums with greater force.
We are declaring war
On the old world!
On imperialism, revisionism and all reaction!

We shall break through
The snares of bourgeois rights,⁴¹
We shall destroy
The prison walls of traditional ideas.
Just look at us,
Eight hundred million with banners flying,
Listen!
Wind and thunder reverberate across our ninety thousand *li*.
Countries want independence
People want revolution
Nations want liberation!
With our brawny shoulders
We take up the heavy revolutionary load,
With callused hands
We take up our forbears' swords and guns.
Our own Party,
Please review our new contingents!
Millions and
Tens of millions!
For a whole generation
Of Chinese youth with high aspirations,
The future is boundless.
Over a thousand perilous peaks
Across a boundless expanse of seething waves
Successors will come;
Much can be hoped for.
We have Marxism-Leninism,
A mighty weapon to cleave the heavens.
We have

Mao Tsetung Thought,
Its brilliant beams guide us on our way!
Forge ahead, advance!
"Our hope is placed on you."⁴²
Ah!
Hope is placed on us.
Forge ahead then, advance!
Welcome the tempest,
Brave the flames,
Welcome the thunder,
Brave fierce waves,
Welcome the bright
Red sun of
Communism!

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien



NOTES:

1. Pagoda Hill lies east of Yanan in the northern part of Shensi Province. It was where the central organizations of the Chinese Communist Party remained from 1937 to 1947. The Yenho River flows through the town.
2. Referring to the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.
3. In old China, contract labourers, mostly young girls and women sold into bondage by their starving families, worked in textile mills under inhuman conditions. They were exploited by both capitalists and contractors, had no personal freedom and were virtually slaves.
4. Referring to the new upsurge in China's socialist economic construction in 1958.
5. Referring to the bourgeois Rightists who in 1957 opposed Communist Party leadership and our socialist system.
6. An enlarged meeting of the Central Political Bureau and the Eighth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party were convened in 1959 at Lushan in Kiangsi Province. There, the anti-Party reactionary Peng Teh-huai launched an attack on the Party and opposed the three red banners of the Big Leap Forward, the People's Commune and the General Line of going all out, aiming high and achieving greater, faster, better, and more economical results in building socialism. Peng Teh-huai's attack was severely criticized during the struggle in Lushan.
7. The Red Army was the precursor of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.
8. Lei Feng was a soldier in the Chinese People's Liberation Army who displayed a noble communist spirit. After his death in an accident while on duty, part of his diary was published under the title *Diary of Lei Feng*.
9. Referring to the nine articles published by the Chinese Communist Party in 1963 and 1964 criticizing the Soviet modern revisionist clique.
10. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution launched personally by Chairman Mao in 1966 shattered the two bourgeois headquarters of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao. The two struggles against these two bourgeois headquarters constituted the ninth and tenth major struggles between the two lines in the history of the Chinese Communist Party.
11. This is the title of a big-character poster written by Chairman Mao himself on August 5, 1966 exposing and criticizing the bourgeois headquarters of Liu Shao-chi.
12. The "four olds" are old ideas, culture, customs and habits. In the early days of the Cultural Revolution, the Red Guards launched a campaign of criticism of these "four olds" in order to sweep them away.



13. In the early days of the Cultural Revolution, Red Guards and members of other revolutionary mass organizations went on long marches to various parts of the country to visit and support each other and to spur on the development of the revolution.

14. On August 18, 1966 Chairman Mao received hundreds of thousands of Red Guards and representatives of the revolutionary masses at Tien An Men Square in Peking.

15,16,17. These words are quoted from the letter Chairman Mao wrote to the Red Guards of the middle school attached to Tsinghua University.

18,26,36. Confucius (551-479 B.C.), founder of the reactionary Confucian school, was the spokesman of the declining slave-owning class. "Benevolence" is the basic theme of the Confucian school of thought. Confucius said, "Those with benevolence love men." In actual fact he loved only the slave-owning class. "Rites" refer to the whole system and conventions of the slave-owning class during the Western Chou Period (c. 11th century-770 B.C.). By talking about returning to the rites Confucius was advocating retrogression and restoration of the slave system. Confucian morality refers to his ethical code and political thinking which served the interests of the ruling class.

19. Refers to the struggle of the proletarian revolutionaries in Shanghai in January 1967 during which they seized power from the capitalist-roaders.

20. The Red Flag Canal in Linhsien County, Honan Province embodies a series of canals and irrigation channels in the Taihang Mountains. This canal with a total length of 1,500 kilometres took the Linhsien people ten years (1960-1969) of hard work to complete. By bringing water in from the Changho River in Shansi Province, this extensive irrigation system has fundamentally changed the county which now no longer suffers from water shortage.

21. In 1968 Chairman Mao issued the call: **It is highly necessary for young people with education to go to the countryside to be re-educated by the poor and lower-middle peasants.**

22. Chairman Mao lives at Chungnanhai in Peking.

23. The Eighth Route Army was part of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army and so called during the War of Resistance Against Japan (1937-1945). The soldiers of this period were lovingly called "Old Eighth Routers" by the people. Later some of them went back to their own villages to take part in the building of a new socialist countryside.

24,28. During the difficult years of the War of Resistance Against Japan the soldiers of the 359th Brigade of the Eighth Route Army responded to Chairman Mao's call to launch a production campaign. They reclaimed waste land in Nanniwan, southeast of Yenan, and succeeded by their own efforts in producing ample food and clothing.

25. When the armies of the U.S. imperialists invaded the Korean Democratic People's Republic in 1950 the Chinese People's Volunteers went to Korea to fight shoulder to shoulder with the Korean People's Army. At the battle of Sanggam-ryong, the Chinese People's Volunteers fought with great valour and smashed the enemy's autumn offensive.

26. See 18.

27. Referring to the political and ideological struggle in the superstructure launched by Chairman Mao in 1974 to uphold Marxism and oppose revisionism, to uphold the proletariat and oppose the bourgeoisie. Confucius' reactionary teaching, the essence of which was retrogression and restoration, was the main ideological base of Lin Piao's counter-revolutionary revisionist line.

28. See 24.

29. Agrarian reform against feudal landownership was carried out in Yenan around 1946 and a re-examination of the work was carried out immediately afterwards.

30. The Tachai Brigade in Hsiyang County, Shansi Province, is the red banner leading agriculture in our country.

31. A programme for the development of agriculture was issued by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in 1956. It stipulated that in the twelve years between 1956-1967, the average grain production per *mu* in areas north of the Yellow River was to be increased to 400 catties. In areas south of the Huai River, including the Yangtse River Valley it was to be 800 catties per *mu*. To cross the Yangtse meant to catch up with and surpass this last target.

32. These two lines come from Chairman Mao's poem *Reascending Ching kangshan* — to the tune of *Sbui Tiao Keh Tou*. See *Chinese Literature* No. 4, 1976.

33. These references are to the counter-revolutionary views spread by Lin Piao and his gang in preparation for the restoration of capitalism. He slandered young people going to the countryside to be re-educated by the poor and lower-middle peasants, saying this was really labour reform in disguise.

34. Quoted from Mencius, a spokesman for Confucianism and the slave-owning class. The complete statement is "Those using their brains will rule; those using their labour will be ruled." This is typical of the ideas and political thinking of the reactionary ruling class.

35. Soviet revisionist chief Khrushchov spoke of "goulash" when he bragged about Soviet so-called welfare communism.

36. See 18.

37. An allusion from *The Tale of the Pillow*, a romance of the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907). The story is about a scholar travelling by road to Hantan. When he stopped at an inn one evening, the innkeeper gave him a pillow telling

him that when he put his head on it he would get his heart's desire. The scholar dreamed of living a lifetime of great wealth and high honour. When he awoke, he discovered that a pot of millet the innkeeper was cooking was still bubbling on the stove.

38. In his poem *Two Birds: A Dialogue* — to the tune of *Nien Nu Chiao* Chairman Mao compared modern revisionists to sparrows in the bush.

39,40. These were the words of Chang Yung and Chin Hsun-hua, both young school graduates who, during the Cultural Revolution, responded to Chairman Mao's call and settled down in the countryside. They both gave their lives for the country, one fighting to save the commune's flock and the other to protect public property from damage.

41. The essence of bourgeois rights — the legal expression of capitalist relations of production — is to protect the system of exploitation and social hierarchy of the bourgeoisie so that camouflaged by the slogan "equality" a system of inequality still persists. As vestiges of the old society remain during the historical period of socialism, bourgeois rights are still to be found in the economic sphere in our method of distribution — to each according to his work — and in our wage and commodity systems. These should be restricted under proletarian dictatorship.

42. Chairman Mao said in 1957: **"You young people, full of vigour and vitality, are in the bloom of life, like the sun at eight or nine in the morning. Our hope is placed on you."**

Chang Jui

Upholding the Banner

In their contest to build more fields and improve their soil Sparrow-hawk Brigade was beaten by Apricot Brigade. The news, coming like a bomb shell, instantly spread through all the thirteen brigades and 73 villages of Forward People's Commune; for it meant that the mobile red banner which everyone thought had taken root in Sparrow-hawk Brigade would now be planted in the fields of Apricot Brigade.

Early in the morning, a group of people left Sparrow-hawk to the accompaniment of gongs and drums for a commune-wide meeting on land-reclamation which was to be held in Apricot Brigade, where they would hand the banner over and learn from their successful rival's experience. The group was headed by brigade Party secretary Li Lao-tung, a man in his late forties, his eyes narrowing as usual in smiles, his face furrowed by rain and wind, his beard frosted in the piercing winter wind. Shouldering a yellow-tasselled red satin banner on which was embroidered in white silk the slogan "In agriculture learn from Tachai", he walked in big strides.

Behind him was deputy Party secretary Lu Ta-hu who was just over thirty. He was lustily striking a drum but pulling a long face at the same time. He had been the drummer when they went to meet the people bringing their brigade the red banner. Then, he was in quite a different mood. Chin up, grinning from ear to ear, he had beaten an accurate tattoo. Now the corners of his usually smiling mouth were drooping. Keeping his eyes on the drum, he was wielding the two short drum-sticks with all his might. A skilful drummer knowing many different beats, he was putting on a very ragged performance today.



Party Secretary Li had not slept a wink the previous night. Apricot Brigade's winning of their banner had truly pleased his heart. In August 1970, when the State Council convened the Agricultural Conference of the Northern Regions, he and Chao Chen-pang, Party secretary of Apricot Brigade, had returned in high spirits from Tachai across mountains and rivers. Impressed by Tachai's high-yielding fields Li had lost no time in organizing meetings to criticize and repudiate capitalist tendencies and mobilize the masses to build up new fields on the hills. In less than two years, they had changed many hillsides into mirror-smooth plots and their grain output had shot up. Chao Chen-pang, instead of learning from the basic experience

of Tachai, was impressed by its brick houses and high work-point value. As soon as the seeds were sown in spring he followed his usual practice of sending out all their craftsmen with saws, planes, hammers and chisels to the county town to make millstones or stone troughs or do other odd jobs. Those who knew no trade went along too as assistants, leaving behind only children and old folk who could barely cope with the hoeing in summer or the harvesting, husking and storing of grain in autumn, to say nothing of transforming the mountains and rivers.

Since the start of the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius in 1974, they had increased their yield by criticizing revisionism and capitalism, putting a stop to the development of capitalism, grasping revolution and promoting production. The year before, when the spirit of the National Conference on Learning from Tachai in Agriculture was relayed to the masses, more changes had occurred in Apricot Brigade. That very night, Chao Chen-pang went with a flash-light to Sparrow-hawk Brigade to challenge them. And Li, his face alight, had chatted with Chao till dawn.

So now Li was truly pleased to see Apricot Brigade's progress. On the other hand he was uneasy too, wondering why Sparrow-hawk had lagged behind. He recalled an incident which had happened a few days ago. As soon as the wheat was brought to the threshing ground Li led half the brigade's manpower to thresh and husk it while Lu Ta-hu and the rest built new fields on the hills. It was then that Chien Sheng-tsai, a middle peasant, had accosted Ta-hu.

"We're having this contest with Apricot Brigade," said Chien. "I hear their work-point value is almost as high as ours now. Being an advanced brigade we should show our superiority by surpassing them. We mustn't let them beat us."

After making a careful calculation of their labour power and the speed of their work, Ta-hu at Chien's instigation and without consulting Li made half his men work at unwarranted side-occupations. When Li got wind of this he criticized Ta-hu. Though Ta-hu later made a self-criticism at a Party branch meeting, Li was not sure whether he was really convinced of his mistake. Recalling Ta-hu's problem now Li examined his own shortcomings too and his work

as a leader. At cockcrow, he got out of bed and headed for the brigade office.

At dawn, the din of gongs and drums struck up in the brigade office. With one hand on the door-frame, Ta-hu stood with leaden feet in the doorway listening to the buzz of talk around. Always keen for his brigade to come out on top, it was his way to charge at all difficulties no matter how great. At the brigade members' meeting after Apricot Brigade had challenged them he had slapped his chest and cried, "Let's all pitch in. The red banner won't fly away even if it sprouts wings." Now that Apricot Brigade had come first, he, Lu Ta-hu, had to deliver the red banner to them in person to the accompaniment of gongs and drums even though it had not sprouted wings. It was hard to describe his feelings now — whether they were sour, sweet, bitter or peppery. Suddenly, he heard Li Lao-tung say, "Where's Ta-hu? We'll take the banner and get going." In dismay Ta-hu struck the door-frame with his fist and raced away towards the place where they were building fields. Li waited for him at the brigade office for a long time. As he failed to show up, Chien Erh-leng the gong player became impatient.

"The sun is high. Ta-hu's not coming. Let's go without him."

Shaking his head, Li said, "Wait a minute. I'll find him."

Heading for West Ridge Li spotted Ta-hu in the distance. He had taken off his jacket and, all on his own, was swinging a hammer vigorously at the stones as if he wanted to level a whole mountaintop with one stroke. His hands behind his back, Li walked up and coughed. Ta-hu started. Blood rising to his face, he lowered his head again and went on swinging the hammer.

"We're all waiting for you, Ta-hu."

"Someone must stay here, Party secretary," Ta-hu replied without turning round. "I'm not going."

"Why? You hate to send the red banner away?"

Ta-hu plumped the hammer down heavily. One hand on its handle, he turned to Li. "I, Lu Ta-hu, am the one who lost the red banner. It's up to me to win it back."

"How did you lose it? And how are you going to win it back?" Li demanded.

"By working like mad," Ta-hu answered without thinking.

"Is that enough? Don't say I'm preaching at you again, but you're too easily influenced. Instead of building fields on the mountains, you secretly and unjustifiably sent half the labour power to town to work on side-occupations. Wasn't that the root of our failure?"

Ta-hu fell silent. Drawing on his pipe Li went on, "It's getting late. Let's go to Apricot Brigade to learn from their experience and find out where we fall short."

Ta-hu picked up his padded jacket from the ground and fell into step with Li. Yet to himself he was saying, "Apricot Brigade certainly have some tricks up their sleeve to be able to take our banner away. I must learn their tricks and then win the red banner back in a few months."

That was Ta-hu's purpose in going to Apricot Brigade. Secretary Sun of the Forward People's Commune started the meeting there by saying, "The example set by Apricot Brigade is both typical and very encouraging — a notoriously backward brigade has caught up. This shows that it's only when we learn from Tachai and persist in the Party's basic line that hard work will get big results. Otherwise, not only would Apricot Brigade remain backward, even an advanced brigade will fall behind."

Ta-hu, who had come to pick up some tips from Chao, did not take this advice to heart. But Chao's speech disappointed him too. For the secretary of Apricot Brigade stressed the need to take class struggle as the key link, persist in the Party's basic line, criticize capitalism and build socialism so as to make a good job of land-reclamation. There was not a word about anything which Ta-hu could consider as useful experience. Anyone who levelled more land could talk that way, thought Ta-hu. As far as class struggle's concerned you don't deserve the red banner. The class enemies in our brigade are so meek they don't dare say a word out of turn. Didn't our old Party secretary pass on to you our experience in organizing shock teams and concentrating our manpower when we started reclaiming land? Yet now that you've got the red banner, you're so conservative that you keep your tricks to yourselves!

Ta-hu turned in disgust to look at his Party secretary. Fingering his beard, Li was listening intently to every word Chao said. Now and then he put something down in the notebook on his knee.

The time came for the banner to be handed over. Amid the din of gongs and drums Li walked up smilingly to the rostrum and gave it to Chao Chen-pang. His eyes fixed on the banner, Ta-hu forgot to beat his drum until Chien Erh-leng struck his gong hard just by his ear. Startled Ta-hu bit his lips and began drumming away for all he was worth.

2

The weather changed. Leaden clouds pressed down overhead. The two scissor-cut butterflies flapped against Ta-hu's window-pane buffeted by the howling wind. Inside, Ta-hu lay on his *kang* sulking, not bothering to turn on the light nor getting up to cook his meal.

"Is Ta-hu in?" Chien Sheng-tsai pushed open the door. Over his black padded jacket he wore a black corduroy vest. His long lean face was sparsely bearded. Not particularly skilled in any one trade, but a handyman who had often toured the countryside in the past and met men of all trades, he had all kinds of connections. The trouble with him was he was too calculating and would only do jobs he reckoned worth his while. Having been given much help and criticism in recent years he had to some extent overcome this shortcoming, and he sometimes offered good suggestions to the brigade. Still, he let slip no opportunities of finding pickings. Now he had come with a proposal for getting the red banner back.

Ta-hu, having recognized his visitor's voice, lay on his *kang* pretending to be asleep as he was angry with Chien for inveigling him to go into side-occupations so that they lost the red banner. Turning on the light Chien was astonished to see Ta-hu stretched out on the *kang*.

"Are you ill?" he inquired. When he received no answer he leaned forward and asked again, "Do you have a fever?"

"Go away," Ta-hu grunted, jumping out of bed.

"What? Blaming me for losing the banner," Chien laughed.

"You know as well as I do how it was."

Taking a cigarette butt from behind his ear, Chien sighed, "I made a bad suggestion the last time owing to my short-sightedness. But I meant well by the brigade."

Chien's meek tone mollified Ta-hu who was always easily talked round. "By taking men away for side-occupations we were pulling firewood out of our stove with the result that we lost the banner," he grumbled. "Well, let's forget about it. We're to blame for not working hard enough."

Chien shook his head. "As the saying goes, 'One clever dodge saves lots of sweat.' We worked hard enough, just didn't go the right way about it."

Ta-hu nodded his head involuntarily.

Chien went on, "In this freezing weather the earth is hard as iron. If we dig it with our ten bare fingers, how can we help falling behind other people?"

"How should we do it then?" Ta-hu demanded.

In no hurry to answer, Chien puffed slowly at his cigarette. Then cocking his head he said, "With explosives."

"Explosives!" Ta-hu brightened up.

"Right. Don't you know that Apricot Brigade booms with explosives these days?"

A smile appeared on Ta-hu's face for the first time that day. "Well! That's an ideal!"

"But a ton of explosives costs a thousand yuan," said Chien.

Ta-hu's heart sank. "So you're kidding. If we use the brigade's money to give you the pleasure of hearing blasts, how can we buy a tractor?"

"The money's just been offered us. Someone wants to buy stone slabs. We have plenty of stone-masons and stone. If we send a dozen men to quarry stone in the Southern Hills, in two weeks we'll make enough to buy as much as this." He raised three fingers.

Ta-hu frowned. "What? Taking men away for side-occupations again?"

Chien slapped his thigh. "What a one-track mind you have! Apricot Brigade is quarrying the Southern Hills too. Explosives

don't fall from the skies. How else did they get them?" As Ta-hu still appeared hesitant, he added, "This is the way to reclaim more land and win back our banner. Figure it out. A dozen men earning three tons of explosives in two weeks! Blasting will save us hundreds of work-days, won't it?"

Ta-hu had learned from his last mistake. He made a careful comparison before reaching a decision. The last time he had been after bonuses; this time he was out to reclaim more land at top speed. Two entirely different purposes. Besides, Apricot Brigade had started it in the first place. After weighing the matter over for some time, he at last made up his mind.

"All right. You can take fifteen men. Be sure to come back in two weeks."

"Shouldn't you notify the Party secretary first?" Chien asked doubtfully. "Where money's concerned if anything goes wrong it can be made into a political issue."

"Wasn't it started by Apricot Brigade? Besides, he's all for anything in line with big-scale land-reclamation," said Ta-hu. "I'll tell him tomorrow."

Chien stubbed out his cigarette and stood up. "Good. I guarantee to hand in three thousand yuan in two weeks."

"Don't do it the capitalist way," Ta-hu warned him. "If you slip up on that I'll bawl you out at the next brigade members' meeting."

Chien reassured him by saying, "The broadcasts these days say the whole Party's mobilizing to boost agriculture. As a brigade member, shouldn't I do my bit for agriculture too? We'll leave tonight and begin work early tomorrow morning."

So Chien left, his "explosives" having blasted away all the worries which had been preying on Ta-hu's mind. Light-heartedly Ta-hu took down a fiddle from the wall, blew away the accumulated dust on it, then tuned the strings and started playing, rather off-beat, an aria from an opera.

At the same time, in a tumbledown adobe house next door to the brigade office, Wang Wen-chang, the eldest son of Sparrow-hawk's landlord Wang Shan-jen, was humming an old melody out of tune. Before Liberation Landlord Wang had sent Wang Wen-chang to school

in the provincial town. Then by some bribery and pulling of strings he managed to get him a job in the civil court, which enabled the landlord himself to throw his weight about even more in the village. During land reform, seeing that all was up with him anyway, he decided to make a sacrifice to create a good impression for his son. He made Wang Wen-chang report where he had buried certain valuables to show that his son had drawn a demarcation line with him. Thus Wang Wen-chang was able to work in a factory after Liberation. In 1957, Wang Wen-chang seized the chance of the Party's rectification movement to attack the Party and socialism, with the result that he was classified as a Rightist and sent back to Sparrow-hawk Brigade to do manual labour under supervision. Since then he had crossed swords many times with Li Lao-tung and tried both tough and soft tactics to overthrow him, to free himself from the Party's control. Each time his careful plans ended in his being severely criticized by the masses. But right now, Wang was elated. Leaning against a pile of quilts at one end of the *kang*, his legs crossed and half a match-stick in his mouth, he was humming contentedly. His was the only family in the village which had no electricity for he hated brightness. The light from a small kerosene lamp placed on the bottom of an inverted bowl flickered dimly on his waxen face and on the red nose of his son-in-law, a heavy drinker who worked in a factory in town. Taking up a winecup, the son-in-law threw back his head and drained it in one gulp. Smacking his lips, he grumbled:

"You don't know where to present your offerings. Why treat Chien Sheng-tsai to good wine and food?"

Wang went on humming as if he had not heard. Disgruntled, his son-in-law went on, "Rabbits don't eat the grass by their burrows. It's too risky, a shady transaction like this right under Li Lao-tung's nose."

Wang laughed and patted his son-in-law on the arm. "Li may be very able, but he doesn't know the first thing about speculation. At the most I'll just have to grease Chien's palm again. You'll get your dough all right."

"I don't understand you. Wearing a Rightist's cap, you've had to knuckle under. Why look for trouble like this?"

Sitting up abruptly and throwing away the match-stick in his mouth, Wang retorted, "How can I get anywhere if I don't take a few risks? Don't you worry. You'll not be involved. I'm only pulling the strings behind the scenes. Someone else is acting for me."

"They lost the red banner, lost face too last time when you got Chien Sheng-tsai to go in for side-occupations. This time you're earning money and prestige for them."

"You're too short-sighted. To Li's lot the red banner means a great deal. If they hold it high, it will be the end for you and me. You think I really want to help Li by making Chien lure them back into a side-line? No. I'm preparing a trap for them. If they fall into it, that'll be the end of their holding up the red banner."

"You think they'll agree to Chien's quarrying for us?"

Wang guffawed. "Didn't you hear what I told Chien just now? I was playing up to him and covering myself by that talk of buying explosives, knowing their determination to reclaim more land. All clean and above-board, see, using all their latest jargon. Just wait and see how our explosives blow them up."

Suddenly they heard raised voices in the brigade office next door. Wang held his breath and pricked up his ears, but all he could make out was Ta-hu saying "criticize" and "denounce". Scared, he quickly blew out his lamp.

3

Li Lao-tung's room was lit up with the warm amber light from an electric bulb. On one wall a portrait of Chairman Mao was flanked by the couplet, yellow characters on red paper, "Remember class struggle. Bear in mind the Party's basic line." At the east end of the room was a big *kang*; ranged by the wall were some redwood chests on one of which were two stacks of books and a transistor radio. Li was sitting cross-legged by a low table on the *kang*. His fur jacket draped around his shoulders, he was copying into his notebook an

excerpt from the documents of the National Conference on Learning from Tachai in Agriculture.

"It is a long-term task 'constantly to imbue the peasant masses with the socialist ideology and to criticize the tendency towards capitalism', and at no time should we relax our efforts in this respect."

Li felt as if these words had flooded his mind with light. Turning back to the front page of his notebook he carefully copied out the Party's basic line: **"Socialist society covers a considerably long historical period. In the historical period of socialism, there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle, there is the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road, and there is the danger of capitalist restoration. We must recognize the protracted and complex nature of this struggle. We must heighten our vigilance. We must conduct socialist education. We must correctly understand and handle class contradictions and class struggle, distinguish the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy from those among the people and handle them correctly. Otherwise a socialist country like ours will turn into its opposite and degenerate, and a capitalist restoration will take place. From now on we must remind ourselves of this every year, every month and every day so that we can retain a rather sober understanding of this problem and have a Marxist-Leninist line."**

Li had copied this quotation from Chairman Mao into all his notebooks in recent years, for to him it was a lantern lighting up the road to socialism — a lantern for all who wanted to take that road.

Li had been through many class struggles in his time. The deep lines on his face recorded those struggles. At thirteen he began to work as a hired hand for Wang Wen-chang's father who treated him worse than his pigs and dogs. The lad did not take this lying down, but retaliated by sowing the fields sparsely and gathering in only half the potato crop. Later, when he got wind that Landlord Wang meant to sell him as a conscript, he ran away. After Liberation he returned to the village. During the movements to carry out land reform and agricultural co-operation as well as those to set up people's communes and to learn from Tachai, Li had time and again contested

face to face with Landlord Wang and his Rightist son Wang Wen-chang. He had learned from experience that his strength came only from relying on the Party's basic line. Only thus was he able to lead the villagers to overcome all difficulties and advance on the road of socialism. Today, studying the Party's basic line again brought him fresh enlightenment. Recalling their loss of the red banner, he asked himself: Did I keep the Party's basic line in mind all the time as well as in my pocket? Wasn't I partly responsible for Ta-hu's deviation from the right path? Was it simply because Sparrow-hawk levelled a few *mu* less land that we lost to Apricot Brigade? Is the red banner for land-reclamation the only thing we've lost?

Li did some hard thinking.

"Party secretary!" Chien Erh-leng dashed into Li's courtyard, scattering the chickens and making the pigs squeal.

"What is it?" Li asked.

"My dad has taken fifteen men to quarry stones," said Erh-leng frantically. "A few stone-masons who weren't able to go are kicking up a row with Ta-hu in the brigade office."

"Really?"

"Go and have a look quickly."

Li stuffed the pamphlet into his pocket and made for the brigade office.

The office, a converted old temple, was seething. Ta-hu, his jacket unbuttoned, his arms akimbo, was shouting at the men around him, "The side-line Chien's working on this time is for the collective. Don't try to confuse the issue. . . ." He looked up at Li's entrance. Instantly relieved, he pointed at the men around him and told Li, "Party secretary, Chien Sheng-tsai has taken some men off to quarry stone. It's so as to get the money for explosives — to speed up building new fields. They want to go too. Come and make them see reason."

The five men at once clustered round Li, all greeting him and talking at the same time, making it impossible to hear a word. Silently Li sat down on a bench and lit his pipe. He puffed at it impassively until they calmed down. "Have you all had your say?" he asked.

"Yes." "That's all." "What else is there to say?" they clamoured. "Good." Li knocked the ashes from his pipe. "Strike the bell, Erh-leng. We'll call a meeting of the brigade members."

All were dumbfounded. One or two slipped away.

"What for?" Ta-hu was bewildered.

"Let's see what the masses say. We'll do as they decide," replied Li.

Erh-leng stomped away. Li pulled out the documents of the National Conference on Learning from Tachai in Agriculture. "These documents have been broadcast for many days. Did you listen to them?" he asked.

"Yes," the men around him replied warily.

"Let me ask you a question then. What's the main contradiction we should grasp in making our county a Tachai-type county and in reclaiming land and improving soil in a big way?"

They looked blankly at each other.

"We must grasp class struggle and the struggle between the two political lines. The villagers in Apricot Brigade seem to have grown an extra pair of hands each since the conference. They are learning from Tachai in the real sense of the word. But why has the ill wind of capitalism risen here just as we should be pitching in to build new fields and improve our soil? Have you given this any thought? Isn't it class struggle? Hasn't the class enemy something to do with it?"

The men around him broke out in a cold sweat. The most alarmed, however, was the man crouching on the wall northwest of the brigade office. After sending his son-in-law away, Wang Wen-chang had climbed on to the low pigsty wall which separated his house from the brigade office in order to watch the fun. Li's appearance had disconcerted him, and now these questions of Li's struck him all of a heap. His hands lost their grip, he slipped and fell into the pigsty.

4

Fluffy snow fell from morning till evening, covering the mountains and ridges in white. The office of Sparrow-hawk Brigade was still brightly lit as the Party branch rectification meeting which had

taken the whole day already was not yet over. Comparing themselves with Tachai and Hsiyang County, the committee members were examining their shortcomings ruthlessly so as to learn a lesson from losing the red banner. Li looked purposefully at Lu Ta-hu who was sitting silently in a corner. Ta-hu turned away, drawing vigorously on his cigarette. His silence made Li's heart sink. Ta-hu, usually the one to encourage the villagers to speak out at brigade meetings, had been silent himself the previous evening too at a meeting criticizing capitalist trends.

"I think the Party branch should call off this quarrying business at once," someone suggested.

"I agree." "Hear, hear!" All the committee members raised their fists in support.

Li could have stood up and made a decision according to the principle of the minority submitting to the majority. But he felt that would be premature. Could they check capitalism by simply cancelling this job of quarrying? No. The crux of the matter was to correct the thinking of the Party committee members. To do this he must first know what Ta-hu had in his mind, find the root of his problem. So Li asked him bluntly:

"What's your opinion, Ta-hu?"

Without raising his head or stirring, Ta-hu growled, "I've been taking the capitalist road. I'll accept your criticisms. I've nothing to say."

Li raised his eyebrows. "What did you think it was, the socialist road, not the capitalist road?"

"I wasn't out to better myself," Ta-hu blurted out. "I wasn't trying to make money to distribute to the brigade members either. What was capitalist about it?"

"Tell me this. Last night, as soon as Chien took some men off, didn't several others clamour and make trouble? Doesn't that show it was the capitalist road? As the saying goes, 'One chop of an ax frightens a hundred trees.' By taking fifteen men away Chien stirred up the wrong thinking in some people who don't take a principled stand."

"That's not true. Chien wants to buy explosives to speed up our work and get the red banner back."

"Do you mean that anything's justified under the gilded signboard of land-reclamation? No. How would those who take the capitalist road gain your support if they didn't paint themselves red as camouflage? The responsibility of us Party members in leading positions is to see through their tricks and struggle against them."

Although realizing he was in the wrong Ta-hu would not admit his mistake. "Anyway," he retorted, "I haven't been after the lime-light in trying to speed up the work and win back the red banner."

"You keep harping on the red banner but, as I see it, you haven't got the red banner of socialism firmly set up in your heart. This is dangerous, Ta-hu. It means that, knowingly or unknowingly, you may turn into a protector of capitalism. . . ."

As if pricked by an awl, Ta-hu jumped up. "What? A protector of capitalism? Tomorrow I suppose you'll be calling me Wang Wen-chang's agent. I . . . I . . . I'm not fit in that case to be a deputy Party secretary. You can report that to the commune Party committee." Furiously, Ta-hu grabbed his notebook, meaning to leave.

Li sprang to his feet, letting the fur jacket around his shoulders slip off. Knocking his pipe on the table he shouted, "Come back, Ta-hu!"

Ta-hu was shocked to a standstill. He had never seen Li lose his temper like this. Walking up to him with lips clamped, Li looked fixedly at Ta-hu who avoided his eyes and squatted down with crossed arms. Li took out his red-covered notebook, turned to the first page and told Ta-hu, "Read this!" Obediently, Ta-hu took over the notebook and read the Party's basic line.

When he had finished, Li asked him, "What kind of a banner are we trying to win?"

"A mobile red banner."

"A mobile red banner? Tell me what is written on the banner."

"In agriculture learn from Tachai."

"Right. It's a banner of learning from Tachai, Ta-hu, which doesn't just mean levelling a few *mu* of land and building a few houses.

This is an extremely significant banner which stands for persisting to take the socialist road. Do you think that we can uphold this banner by merely levelling more land? No. If you don't keep in mind the Party's basic line you won't be strong enough to uphold this banner; even if you win it you will lose it again. Only when you bear in mind the Party's basic line can you raise this banner of learning from Tachai."

After a pause Li went on seriously, "Who has Chien sold the stone slabs to?"

By way of answer Ta-hu shook his head.

"You've no idea? Didn't Chien tell you that the money had been offered us? He hasn't taken time off to go anywhere. Who came to offer him money?"

"Well. . . ." Ta-hu stammered.

"Has anyone come to our village recently?"

Before Ta-hu could answer, Erh-ching, leader of the militia company, cut in, "Only Wang Wen-chang's son-in-law. And he left last night."

Sincerely, Li said to Ta-hu, "This son-in-law of Wang's is said to go in for speculation. You certainly know that, Ta-hu. Better analyse these phenomena. Because you were thinking too much of the red banner and had forgotten class struggle, you fell into their trap at once when they approached you with talk of reclaiming land. Do we have to buy explosives? Can't we rely on our own efforts and make them? If you're really set on reclaiming land why not use the stones to build embankments for terraced fields instead of selling them?"

Li's excitement rose as he spoke while Ta-hu bowed his head lower and lower. In the end he hid his face and let out a long sigh. The other committee members were discussing what Li had said when Erh-leng threw open the door and dashed in, bringing with him sparkling snow-flakes and a gust of wind. The tense atmosphere in the room made him withdraw immediately. But Li called out to him, "Is there anything you want, Erh-leng?"

Erh-leng laughed, "I've come back from my reconnaissance."

"Reconnaissance?" All present were baffled.



"Yes. Ta-hu told me that Apricot Brigade must have some tricks up their sleeve to be able to surpass us. So he sent me there to find out what dodges they're using. This is called — how do you say it? — know the enemy and know yourself, and you can fight a hundred battles and win them all."

Ta-hu blushed. "Clear off! We're having a meeting."

Erh-leng stuck out his tongue sheepishly and turned to leave.

"Never mind, tell us their experience," Li suggested.

With the airs of a hero Erh-leng stalked to the table, picked up a mug and drank some water from it. "To start with I'll skip the workshop where they make their own explosives," he chuckled.

"Make their own explosives, do they?" Ta-hu looked up to demand.

"Sure. They're producing explosives in a big way," said Erh-leng. Ta-hu fell silent as if something had choked him. Erh-leng continued, "They're working so hard to reclaim land they've got the God of Earth scared."

The atmosphere livened as all the committee members burst out laughing.

"Don't laugh," protested Erh-leng. "I'm speaking the truth. But it's like magic the way they've built embankments with slabs of slate from the Southern Hills which look much better than our sand-

stone embankments. Quality first is their motto. They have in mind a long-term plan."

A murmur of admiration went up. All knew that though the mountains around Sparrow-hawk and Apricot Brigades were covered with rocks, these were all of sandstone, easily eroded.

"They are truly learning from Tachai," Erh-leng went on. "Building fields in the daytime while in the evenings the youth shock team uses carts and tractors to transport stones from the Southern Hills. And they find time to organize political study and repudiation meetings too. They're having a meeting this very evening."

Approving this with all his heart, Li said, "You all heard that, didn't you? The stone-masons in Apricot Brigade used to go out to do odd jobs on their own. What has given them the strength to quarry stones for the collective in this bitter cold? It comes from grasping class struggle and the Party's basic line."

Li glanced at Ta-hu in whose wide-open eyes was a look of doubt. It's not enough for Ta-hu to hear it with his own ears, Li decided. He must see it with his own eyes as well to be really convinced. So Li stood up and proposed, "To see something once is better than hearing about it a hundred times.' Let's go and have a look right now."

The committee members prepared to leave. Li picked up his fur jacket, shoved it at Ta-hu and ordered gruffly, "Put it on." He opened the door and went out. The heavy fur jacket warmed Ta-hu's heart, made his eyes moist. He lowered his head and followed Li out.

The conference room of Apricot Brigade was bulging with people as Li Lao-tung and his committee members slipped in and stood at the back. Ta-hu's eyes immediately fell on the red banner on the wall. It was only two days since he had parted with it. Now that he saw it again, bright red under the lamplight, it struck him as doubly beautiful and dear. Then his attention was caught by the discussion which was going on. Most of the speakers were men who had previously made a living by going out to do odd jobs in other villages. They were now opening fire at the capitalist ideas in their minds, linking these with what they had learned in political study during

the recent high tide of land-reclamation. Those listening responded with good-natured laughter or comments. Moved by their frank admissions, Li felt impelled to say something too.

When one speaker came away from the rostrum Li pushed forward, saying, "I want to have the floor." The room livened up as the presence of Li and his committee members was noticed. As Li went up the rostrum it quieted down again. So much so that you could have heard a pin drop.

"As everyone is criticizing capitalism, we, the leading cadres, should examine the capitalist tendencies in our heads too. Do we have any? The answer is 'yes'. So we should take the initiative to repudiate them and not be afraid of washing our dirty linen in public. Let me tell you about Sparrow-hawk. While you're quarrying stones in the Southern Hills for embankments and making your own explosives, we're trying to sell stones in order to buy explosives with the money. What's the root cause of our problem?"

Flushed and hot, Ta-hu felt he was sitting on thorns and brambles. He scribbled something on a sheet torn from his notebook, put it on Li's fur jacket on the bench and sneaked away.

When the meeting ended, Li shouted for Ta-hu but received no reply. Only some young people were still chatting in the room. Li's brows locked. The other committee members were furious too. Then Li saw his fur jacket and the note on it. It read:

I'm in the wrong, Party secretary. I'm going right away to cancel the sale of stone and to get the men to cut stone for our fields. Put the jacket on. Don't catch cold.

Ta-hu

5

Sunset clouds fringed West Ridge with red. Smoke from cooking stoves floated above the roofs of village houses.

Chien Sheng-tsai, his feet covered with mud, was squatting at his doorstep with a rice bowl eating his meal. The previous night, Lu Ta-hu had gone to the Southern Hills to organize a study class at which he took the initiative to criticize capitalist tendencies and

made a self-criticism. Everyone vowed to work hard at quarrying stones to build embankments for new fields. To everybody's surprise, Chien who had always liked to make money in side-occupations was most determined to return home to build fields. Fearing that he might come up with more bad suggestions in the Southern Hills and mess things up if he stayed, Ta-hu approved his return. Besides, he wanted to find out from him whether there had been anybody behind the proposals he made. So the two of them left for home after lunch the next day. Chien raced along as if someone were after him. When they passed the boundary stone of Sparrow-hawk's land he let out a long sigh of relief as if a load had been lifted from his mind. As a matter of fact, the past two days had been nerve-racking ones for Chien. It was a wonder that he had survived them, when he could hardly eat or sleep as if he had fallen seriously ill.

That day on the way to the Southern Hills Chien had stopped for the night at an inn in the county town, but Wang Wen-chang's son-in-law dragged him home where he produced two bottles of wine and some dishes. The two played finger-games and drank for some time. Then Wang Wen-chang's son-in-law produced another two bottles of wine and stuffed twenty yuan into Chien's pocket. Chien accepted these after only a show of protest, whereupon the son-in-law produced some receipts. "Uncle, sign them and you'll get your three thousand yuan."

"I can't write. . . ." stammered Chien. "How can I sign? Won't a finger-print do instead?"

The son-in-law pushed forward the stamping ink, Chien dabbed his thumb on it and made a print at the place indicated. Then he was taken, quite drunk by now, to a small store-room. Soon, his stomach churning and his throat burning, he threw up. After vomiting he felt so parched that he staggered towards the other room in search of some drinking water. Outside the window he overheard a conversation between Wang Wen-chang and his son-in-law.

Chien heard the son-in-law gloating, "Haha, I dragged Chien Sheng-tsai over just now and got him drunk. His finger-print will bring me in two thousand good rustling bank-notes."

Wang Wen-chang said approvingly, "Good for you. But look out for Li Lao-tung."

"Don't you worry," said the son-in-law. "I'm an old hand at this. Li can't pick any faults. I'm selling these stones a hundred *li* away. Nobody will ever find out about the transaction. And if something did go wrong, the receipt has Sparrow-hawk's stamp on it with Chien's name as negotiator. They can't make any trouble for me."

Breaking into a cold sweat, Chien sobered up. Forgetting his thirst and the two bottles of wine, he returned hastily to the inn. The next day, he took someone who could read to the son-in-law and asked to see the receipts.

"They've been sent away," the son-in-law told him curtly.

Strength drained from Chien. Nine oxen can't haul back a document sent in to the authorities, he thought. Now that the receipt stamped by Ta-hu had his finger-print on it, even if he jumped into the Yellow River he could never wash himself clean. This being the case, he had better beat a retreat. That was why he took the initiative to return with Ta-hu.

Chien was squatting on his doorstep, eating, when footsteps sounded behind him. Turning, he saw Wang approaching with a crate on his back. Wang was worried because Ta-hu and Chien had come back together. He was afraid that Chien might have let on who had put him up to going in for side-occupations. He wished that Chien would drop dead. He had been racking his brains for a way out when Ta-hu's voice drifted over from the brigade office. "I'm going up West Ridge to get Party Secretary Li. Ring the bell after supper, Erh-leng. We'll call a repudiation meeting." Wang quickly took a crate then and walked over to the Chien's. He'd hit on a plan. The sight of Wang gave Chien as much of a fright as if he had seen a ghost. He rose to go in.

"You're in for it, brother," Wang Wen-chang called.

"What's up?" Chien asked apprehensively.

Wang whispered, "I hear that the brigade is calling a meeting to criticize you."

As if struck by a club Chien nearly dropped his bowl. Wang added, "It seems that you're going to be criticized for leading others down the capitalist road."

"What? But both times you put me up to it!" Chien countered anxiously.

"That's no way to talk," Wang threatened. "I hadn't anything to do with it. And everybody in the village knows that you made the proposals. Besides, you'd better not mention me — if you do, it'll be so much the worse for you. They'll accuse you of being in cahoots with a class enemy and of sabotaging the movement to 'learn from Tachai'."

Wang's denial of all responsibility and the mention of "sabotaging the movement" so scared Chien that he dropped his bowl on the ground. Wang started then said, "You'd better go into hiding for one or two days." He sneaked away, skirting the wall.

Inside, Chien's son Erh-leng was shovelling down his meal, in a hurry to go and ring the bell for the meeting. He ran out when the bowl fell, just in time to see Wang's retreating figure.

"What did Wang Wen-chang come here for?" he demanded.

"Nothing special," his father stammered.

"Hum!" The son grunted disapprovingly and headed for the bell.

Stopping him frantically, Chien asked, "Is there a repudiation meeting tonight?"

"Yes. I'm going to ring the bell now."

Chien's heart missed a beat. "Who's coming under fire?" he asked nervously.

Erh-leng thought for a moment and answered, "The class enemy who sabotage the movement to learn from Tachai, of course, as well as capitalist tendencies." He walked away.

When Erh-leng came back to get his notebook his mother told him, "Your dad's gone off, taking a bag with him."

"Where to?"

Looking worried, his mother said, "His nerves seemed to be on edge and he kept sighing. He wouldn't tell me where he was going."

Erh-leng stamped his feet and ran straight for West Ridge.

Silhouetted against the sinking sun which had dyed the mountains red were the figures of two heroes battling with heaven and earth. Ta-hu was wielding a hammer while Li held a spike. Having learned that the brigade members had already made some explosives while he was away, Ta-hu was in high spirits.

Now Li told him, "From what I saw yesterday, I don't think Apricot Brigade has enough carts to transport stone. Why don't we send them some of ours tonight?"

"Fine," Ta-hu agreed readily.

As they were chatting cheerfully, Ta-hu leaned towards Li to say, "In my jubilation, I nearly forgot to tell you something important. Wang Wen-chang's son-in-law is the one behind this stone-selling business. I heard that Chien had gone to the fellow and demanded to see some receipts. And Chien is looking out of sorts these days."

"Is that so?" said Li, his brows knitted together.

Ta-hu went on, "So it seems that Wang is behind this after all."

Li said thoughtfully, "The capitalist forces in town and countryside gang up together. We'll send two men to make a report to the county Party committee and to make investigations. Let's have a talk with Chien this evening."

"Good. Let's go back now and have supper."

Li laughed and produced a bag. "I've brought it with me. My wife has prepared something good for the two of us." Then he confided, "I had a good dream last night, Ta-hu. I dreamt that we were in Tien An Men Square which was flooded with banners. Representatives from our brigade, Apricot Brigade, our commune, our county and all the counties of our country were there too, all holding red banners embroidered with the words, 'In agriculture learn from Tachai'."

When Li finished, his face and Ta-hu's glowed with happiness.

"Party secretary!" Erh-leng ran up panting and blurted out, "My dad has run away!"

"Why?" Ta-hu demanded.

Erh-leng told them about Wang's visit and the questions Chien had put to him.

"Come on," said Ta-hu. "We'll find him."

"Wait!" said Li.

"What for?" Ta-hu wanted to know.

"Chien only got home today. And as soon as he saw Wang he ran away. There's more to this than meets the eye."

"Some devil must have got into him," said Ta-hu.

"Right. We must catch this devil. You go to the county town, Erh-leng, and find out what receipts that son-in-law of Wang's has. We'll go after Chien, Ta-hu."

Li and Ta-hu found Chien in his daughter's home, a dozen *li* from their village. Lying on the *kang* deep in thought, he was very taken aback by their arrival.

"Let me off, Old Li," he pleaded.

"You're not our enemy." Li laughed. "And we abide by the Party's policy. Just make a clean breast of what you have done."

"I was a fool. I was tricked into making that finger-print. I didn't take their wine, I haven't touched the money either," cried Chien incoherently. "*Ai*, how can I clear myself!"

Encouraged by Li, he told them then in detail how he had come to propose going in for side-occupations the last two times and what he had overheard at the son-in-law's window. He wound up by saying, "They were just making use of me."

"If not for your self-interest, brother, how could Wang Wen-chang have got at you like that?" asked Li. "All this trouble stems from the spontaneous capitalist tendencies in your head."

Chien bowed his head while Ta-hu fumed. Twice he, Lu Ta-hu, had adopted Chien's proposals. Twice he had been pulled by the nose by Wang Wen-chang. Bursting with fury, he turned to leave.

"Where are you going?" Li queried.

"Back to the village to bash Wang Wen-chang!"

Throwing away the towel round his head Chien sat up abruptly. "I'm coming with you. I'm going to skin him alive."

A red sun soared over the mountaintop, the din of gongs and drums rose from Sparrow-hawk Brigade again. A long file of carts, a red banner on each, streamed down the mountain path in the morning sunlight. Li walked in the front pulling the first cart. Behind

him, Ta-hu was drumming *Happiness of a Bumper Harvest*, his favourite piece. The beat was crisper than usual.

As they neared Apricot Brigade, Chao Chen-pang its Party secretary and other villagers came out to meet them. The bands of both brigades played with all their might, each trying to outdo the other.

Ta-hu punched Chao Chen-pang and told him, "I've come to catch up in my studies."

"What?" Chao was bewildered.

"To learn from your good experience," said Ta-hu seriously.

Like a hurricane, the sound of gongs and drums rose again.

Illustrated by Chen Ya-tan



A Barefoot Doctor of the Yi Nationality (wood-block print) by *Chu Li-tsun*



Sentinel for the Revolutionary Committee

Up to the time of the Cultural Revolution I was not on close terms with Ting Ta-pao, a worker in our factory's repair shop. Some people called him "Master Loudspeaker", because over the door of his shop was a loudspeaker used to test the microphones being repaired which kept up a cheerful din the whole day long. Ting himself seldom spoke, however, almost as if his full, firm lips had been padlocked. Other people addressed him jokingly as "Director", as he had that ten-square-metre workshop all to himself. Still, no matter who addressed him, whether factory manager or some new apprentice, and no matter whether they called him "Ting Ta-pao", "Master Loudspeaker" or "Director", he invariably raised his head slowly and answered seriously, "Yes, what is it?" So all of us thought him a simple, decent fellow.

That small repair shop of his was known as the "ear-room". Before the Cultural Revolution, the Party secretary and factory manager Chen Chao decided that it wasn't convenient having people of all sorts swarming in and out of the factory at all hours to have their

microphones repaired; so he had this small annex built on the west wall. Jutting out from the square building it looked just like a little ear. This "ear-room" had two doors. That into the factory was usually shut; the other, on the outside, had over it a one-foot-square wooden placard inscribed: Red Flag Factory Repair Shop.

The Cultural Revolution breaking out in 1966 brought about big changes in our factory. There were changes too in this repair shop. In the first place, the loudspeaker over the door for sound-testing was now used every day for broadcasting important editorials and news from Party papers and periodicals. Passing workers, Red Guards and peasants carting vegetables to town would often stop there to listen. In the second place, the notice on the shop's wall which had originally said that repairs would be done within three days had now changed "three days" into "twenty-four hours".

During the high tide of the Cultural Revolution when the counter-revolutionary revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi was debunked, this loudspeaker became an even more powerful weapon and Ting made full use of it. At the same time he took to reading the big wall-posters every day, and whenever we held heated discussions and debates at the factory gate he always came to listen. No one paid much attention to him, however. Only the gatemen knew that Ting Tapaopao was the first to arrive every day and that he never went home till late at night.

Ting first attracted my attention at a mass meeting called by the capitalist-roader Chen Chao ostensibly to "defend the Party committee". Actually he intended to announce at this meeting that the few of us heading the revolutionary rebels were to be suspended and made to review our mistakes. We, on the other hand, had decided to fight back, repudiate the bourgeois reactionary line and announce the setting up of a Workers' Rebel Detachment.

As soon as the meeting started and Chen Chao was just about to deliver his speech, Ting suddenly appeared on the platform. This took everyone by surprise, as Ting had been working there for more than ten years but never once gone up the platform to speak. Chen Chao gaped at him, nonplussed and rather put out, for a talk by Ting was not on his agenda.

Without so much as a glance at Chen Chao, Ting leaned forward impressively, his powerful hands on the table. The light shone on his honest face. Wide-eyed, he gazed searchingly at the audience. At once there was utter silence.

Ting spoke slowly but with deep feeling. Though he faltered sometimes, it was an impressive speech. He told us he had lost his mother while still a child and started work in a cigarette factory when only eight. At eleven he caught pneumonia, was kicked out and nearly died. Two years later his father, a docker, carrying a load up a gang-plank fell and was killed. His father's mates got him a job as a factory apprentice. He was sixteen at the time of Liberation. Since then, warmth had come into his life. . . .

He had worked at first as a fitter. One day work stopped on the assembly line because the store-room had run out of green wire. Impatient to be getting on with the job, he went to ask the technician if they couldn't use blue wire instead. The technician approved, but said he must get the engineer to okay it. As the engineer was away at the time, he went to the manager.

"This is for the engineer to decide," said Chen Chao. "Wait till he comes back."

This sounded ridiculous to Ting, so on his return to his workshop he talked it over with his mates and they went ahead with their job, using blue wire. When this came to Chen's ears he was furious and forced them to dismantle it. By the time the engineer came back, green wire was available too in the store-room. There had been many strange incidents of this kind. Chen Chao considered Ting a trouble-maker. Whenever they met he cut him, and finally he transferred him to work in the "ear-room" repair shop. Ting went there cheerfully enough, but at his new post he continued to give Chen no peace. One day, for example, some peasants brought in some faulty microphones made by the factory, and he took them to show the manager. Chen Chao lost his temper.

"If all our products were perfect, what would we keep a repair shop for?" he fumed. "We've technicians to handle all these technical problems. We don't need you butting in. It's none of your business."



As Ting recalled these episodes his anger mounted. Throwing out his arms, palms upturned, he suddenly bellowed: "Why isn't it our business? It *is*! Chairman Mao has called on us workers to take up responsibility and run our factories, but the management treats us like machines, even specifying with diagrams the way to hold a screw-driver or pliers. These days I've seen a lot, heard a lot, and done a lot of thinking. Now I understand! It's not just our factory manager who's been shackling us hand and foot — it's the revisionist line. Chairman Mao led us to stand up and seize our factories back from the bosses; but the revisionists want us to hand the factories back to the capitalists. Who knows what would have happened if not for the Cultural Revolution launched by Chairman Mao? This revolution is fine! I'm all for it! We must rebel against the revisionist line. . . ."

Ting's powerful voice boomed and reverberated in everybody's ears. Chen Chao, thoroughly flustered, had tried several times to interrupt him, but each time the angry masses stopped him. Ting's words had set them thinking hard. What a fine old worker he was!

I was so stirred that I vaulted on to the platform, threw my arms around his broad shoulders and shook him hard, not knowing what to say. Then, deciding to strike while the iron was hot, I took the microphone from him and launched into a criticism of the reactionary bourgeois line which would not allow the masses to respond to Chairman Mao's call and rise in revolt against the capitalist-roaders. That meeting cut the ground from under Chen Chao's feet. We concluded it by announcing the formation of our Workers' Rebel Detachment.

After the meeting many of us rushed into Ting's "ear-room".

"Good for you, Old Ting!"

"Master Loudspeaker has really sounded the charge against the revisionist line!"

Ting beamed at us and said firmly, "I want to join your rebel detachment too." He added, "We must rope in all the other hands as well."

"That's right," I agreed. "We must unite the masses to follow Chairman Mao's revolutionary line."

In this way Ting Ta-pao became one of the first members of our Workers' Rebel Detachment. His repair shop too became the hub of our activities. It was there that we held meetings, mimeographed leaflets and posted men on duty at night. For a time this "ear-room" also served as the liaison office where workers from other factories and Red Guards came to consult us on our experience and pass on their own.

A year passed. At the end of 1967 our factory set up a revolutionary committee, and I was elected as its chairman. Ting was still working in his repair shop. Only now he revarnished the sign on his door and wrote on it: Repair Shop of the Revolutionary Committee of Red Flag Factory.

Ting always looked a run-of-the-mill worker, yet some of the things he did stuck in our minds.

About ten o'clock one night towards the end of 1968 when the rest of my family were asleep, I threw a padded coat over my shoulders and started revising my summary of our year's work.

"Young Lo, Young Lo!"

I heard two knocks on the door and the sound of heavy footsteps. Who could it be? I put down my pen and quickly opened the door. There stood a burly fellow, his padded cotton cap and overcoat as well as the bulging kit-bag in his hand all covered with snow. Beads of water were clinging to his bushy eyebrows; his eyes were sparkling above his big white face-mask.

"Ting Ta-pao!" I exclaimed and pulled him into the room. Having closed the door I made haste to pour him some hot tea.

Ting took off his gloves and mask and accepted the tea. Instead of drinking it, he held the mug in both his hands to warm them, chuckling cheerfully at me.

"So you're back," I said.

A month ago he had gone with a team to the countryside to check up on the quality of our microphones and see whether the villagers were satisfied with our loudspeaker system.

"I've just come back from the station, Young Lo. We've found the key to our problem!" He put down the mug and rubbed his hands vigorously. "We made a whole lot of experiments in different villages till we hit on a way, which really works, of safeguarding the circuit." With a broad grin on his face, he opened his kit-bag and took out a notebook which he handed to me like a child showing someone its favourite toy.

Ting had been worrying for several years about the quality of our products. This showed his whole-hearted concern for the interests of the masses. He was therefore very happy when the revolutionary committee decided to send him to the countryside to make investigations. As the proverb says: Nothing in the world is too hard to do if we set our minds on it. As a true revolutionary, Ting had set his mind on improving the quality of our products, and now at last a way had been found to do this. I naturally shared his elation. As I leafed through his notes they conjured up for me the picture of his team toiling up mountain paths, carrying out various tests in stormy

weather, and installing an improved loudspeaker system which had broadcast instructions enabling the peasants of one village to battle successfully for eighteen hours to bring a flood under control. . . .

"Splendid!" I said. "Tomorrow I'll tell the technicians about this, Ta-pao."

"We must hurry. The poor and lower-middle peasants are counting on us. They say: 'The new revolutionary committees are following the right line; they're fine.'" He stood up, picked up his kit-bag, then gulped down the whole mug of tea. Wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, he chuckled, "Now my mind's at rest."

I saw Ting to the bus station through the snow.

"You've had a tough trip. Have a good rest tomorrow," I urged him.

"Rest? Don't you remember what day it is tomorrow?" He looked at me significantly and laughed.

Of course. The next day would be the first anniversary of the setting up of our revolutionary committee. I remembered that at the rally this time last year it had been suggested that we should celebrate this anniversary — make a regular festival of it — every year. Ting, however, had said, "Just making whoopee would be pointless. It would be better to have a discussion to check up on the line we've been following." Everybody approved this proposal. His memory was pretty good to remember the day after being away one whole month. Or had he hurried back specially for the occasion?

"All right then. . . . Hurry home now and get a good sleep. See you tomorrow."

I saw him on to the bus which had just come in, and it soon disappeared in the swirling snow.

When I got back and resumed work on my report, that unforgettable scene of the setting up of our revolutionary committee flashed through my mind again. I remembered that the varnish hadn't dried on our new "Revolutionary Committee" signboard, and Ting had speeded up the process with two infra-red electric bulbs in his "ear-room" all night. The next morning when the new signboard was hung up and the factory gate festooned with coloured ribbons, there was a great gonging and drumming, everyone was cheering, and

Ting, grinning from ear to ear, let other people push past him to the front. But when the crowd had dispersed he was still there, staring up at the signboard with a grave look on his face.

I went over and asked him, "What's on your mind, Old Ting?"

He turned to me, then pointed at the signboard. "From now on, in all we do or say, we must live up to this name." He told me then that after the others had left, Chen Chao had sneaked over to have a look too, snorting and shaking his head before he went off. "We feel on top of the world," said Ting. "But some people have had their noses put out of joint."

My own heart was warmed by the old worker's fervid feeling. Ting's grave look as he stared at the red characters on the gleaming new signboard conveyed his tremendous pride in our new committee.

Now, exactly one year later, the mass criticism campaign was in full swing and we were going ahead with the job of weeding out class enemies from our ranks. In production, we'd fulfilled our target ahead of time: the five hundred loudspeaker systems produced that month were all packed, ready to be sent off. This last year we'd been guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and backed by loyal activists like Ting; of course a few people had opposed us too. Chen Chao our former manager now working with the transport team, for instance, was making an examination of his past faults. Yet the transport team had reported that he was still saying, "The revolutionary committee is only a temporary set-up; these new cadres won't last very long." A review of the year's work made it clear that the overall situation was excellent but the struggle was still going on.

The next day, the comrades in charge of political propaganda fixed up the meeting place to look really impressive with portraits of Chairman Mao, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on the front and side walls and, on the back one, the big inscription: Revolutionary Committees Are Fine!

At three in the afternoon, members of our revolutionary committee and delegates from the masses started to arrive and exchanged lively comments. Ting, one of the first arrivals, sat quietly in a corner at the back smoking a cigarette.

On behalf of the revolutionary committee, I reported on the year's work. In conclusion I said, "Now I've some good news for you. We've fulfilled our production quota ahead of schedule. After this meeting, we're going to the bureau to announce this good news."

At the end of my report the meeting was thrown open for discussion. The masses had some criticisms and suggestions for the cadres, who also voiced certain criticisms and made self-criticisms too.

All this time Ting went on smoking. I noticed that he looked very grave, as if he had something on his mind. I was puzzled. What could have caused this change overnight? So I called to him:

"Ta-pao, let's hear what you have to say."

"Right!" He stood up abruptly, tossing his cigarette stub to the ground. Fixing me with his eyes he asked, "Tell me this. Did you know that those five hundred sets of equipment were sent out this morning?"

"Yes. They were sent to the company's warehouse."

"I told you yesterday about our new method of protecting the circuit. Why did you dispatch those sets without fixing them first? Go on. Tell us your reason." Pulling himself erect he looked round the assembly as if to ask everyone to decide which of us was right.

I thought: This time Ting's really overdoing it! Those sets of equipment were all packed up and ready to send out. What time did we have to add the protective circuit he suggested only last night? Regarding this technical improvement, I've already told the technicians and the section in charge of production to see that it's fixed on to all our products in future. How can Ting be so impatient?

"Five hundred sets of equipment. How long would it take us to reassemble them all?" I countered.

"How can we send defective sets to the poor and lower-middle peasants?" Ting shot back. "This is putting quantity before quality. What way is that for a revolutionary committee to act?"

"Master Loudspeaker's right," chipped in someone.

"We have to advance step by step," reasoned Chang Yu, vice-chairman of the revolutionary committee. "Before the Cultural Revolution we produced several thousand sets like these. Now it's only a question of another five hundred, with some improvements

in their quality too. Don't you know the date today, Ta-pao? We must all support the revolutionary committee. If we fetch those sets back now to reassemble again, we may not be able to fulfil our quota on time, and who wants that?"

"What . . . what sort of talk is that?" Ting was so taken aback that his full lips quivered. "If this had happened in the past I wouldn't have said anything—it would have been useless. But now that we have a revolutionary committee, I've just got to speak up. We're workers who've been tested in the Cultural Revolution. We're responsible to our revolutionary committee and to the poor and lower-middle peasants as well. We mustn't let them down, comrades!" By now, in his vehemence, he was fairly shouting.

Everyone there fell silent. From time to time a youngster peeped in at the door, a gong in his hand. Ting shooed him away. "Scram! Go on!"

As the lad scampered off his gong clanged, making me jump. He belonged to our propaganda section's team which was all set to announce our good news to the bureau as soon as our meeting ended. But now. . . .

Ting had fixed his eyes on me. All the others were watching me too. I felt quite flustered. Since the setting up of our revolutionary committee, how many eyes had looked expectantly at us?

Someone proposed, "Let's put it to the vote."

At once others objected that this would be too hasty. As it was already time for supper, I declared the meeting adjourned until after our meal.

When the others had left, Vice-chairman Chang Yu said to me, "I've a plan to satisfy both sides. First announce the fulfilment of our quota; then after New Year fetch those sets back to overhaul them. What do you say to that?"

Chang Yu was an experienced old cadre. I knew how keen he was to see our new revolutionary committee go steadily from strength to strength: hence this proposal to announce our success and ensure the quality of our products too. But this struck me as rather dishonest.

"Let's talk it over first, then decide," I answered.

As we went together towards the canteen, in the distance we heard Ting Ta-pao's voice raised in anger. Then I saw it was Chen Chao he was quarrelling with.

"Master Ta-pao," Chen Chao said, "you're just a maintenance man. What good does it do you to pick fault with the leadership? Those sets have already gone to the warehouse. How can they be fetched back?"

"I know I'm a maintenance man," Ting retorted. "But now that we've had the Cultural Revolution we can get those sets back."

Chen Chao laughed scornfully. "Sure, revolutionary committees are fine; but in the case of our own, even an honest old fellow like you finds all sorts of faults with it. What are we to think?"

With a sudden look of dismay Chen Chao broke off. Ting, clenching his fists in fury, his lips clamped together, was coming grimly towards him. With a show of calmness Chen added:

"Of course revolutionary committees are fine — we all know that."

He pulled his jacket straight and turned to go.

"Stop!" Ting bellowed.

Chen Chao halted, smiling sheepishly.

Ting turned to glance at the crowd which was gathering, then went right up to Chen Chao. Pointing a finger at his nose, he roared: "Right. The whole factory knows that I have criticisms of the revolutionary committee. They're a new set-up, a new outfit — I'm warning them not to take the old road again. Your dislike for the revolutionary committee is something the whole factory knows too. You want to overthrow it and go back to the old way; you can't deny that. If you think you can make me your cat's-paw, you're crazy. If you want to see the revolutionary committee collapse, you're dreaming. You must come clean and remould your old way of thinking."

"Why . . . I was just making a casual remark. . . ." Seeing the size of the crowd now, Chen Chao nodded and slunk away.

Panting hard, Ting pointed at Chen's receding figure and told me, "This morning when those sets of equipment were sent off, that swine lolling against his truck said to me, 'See that, Old Ting? They're going off!' He was gloating."

So! I bit my lips. Anger against Chen Chao and gratitude to Ting set up a tumult in my heart. Ever since the revolutionary committee came into being in the tempestuous struggle between two lines, people of different classes had adopted different attitudes to it. Some cursed it, others hailed it; some smeared it, others wished it well. . . . But this new revolutionary committee, with the irresistible vitality of youth, had been growing to maturity, drawing strength from Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line, from millions of politically conscious workers such as Ting. In the eyes of bourgeois historians such people are not heroes, but they and they alone are the true creators of history. It was up to those of us responsible for the revolutionary committee to remain on guard at all times to ensure that we never went astray from Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and relied closely on the revolutionary masses.

"We'll fetch the sets back, even if it means failing to fulfil our quota for the year," I decided.

"Why shouldn't we fulfil it?" asked Ting, looking puzzled. "Don't you believe we can? If we go all out we'll get it done in time — no doubt about it!"

"Right. I believe you. Let's call a meeting at once and get cracking." Ting's assured smile infected me with his own confidence.

"All right, let's go ahead." Chang Yu took off his glasses and polished them vigorously.

We "invited" Chen Chao to our meeting after supper too. So the meeting called to review the past year's work on the first anniversary of the setting up of the revolutionary committee turned into a meeting to educate the masses on the struggle between two lines, a meeting to grasp revolution and promote production. Immediately after it, we fetched back the five hundred loudspeaker systems delivered to the warehouse that morning. There were only five days left before New Year. We started work that same evening.

For five days, all pulling together, we put up a tremendous fight; and for five days Ting never left the factory. At the end of those five days, by racing against time we had won victory.

In the afternoon of New Year's Eve, amid a cheerful din of drums and gongs, the team to announce the good news mounted a gaily



Our Region Needs People Like You
(woodcut) by *Ma Chen-sheng*

decorated truck, on it an eye-catching red poster proclaiming our success. The truck was ready to start, but we could not find Ting. When I opened the door of his "ear-room" and went in I found him stretched out on some benches, sound asleep and snoring, covered only with the padded coat which he wore during night shifts. Very stirred by the sight, I took off my own padded coat and laid it over his legs. After a last glance at his honest face, which inspired me with such respect, I closed the door softly and left.

I ran on tiptoe to the gate and signalled to the people on the truck to keep quiet. Only when we were some distance away did we start beating gongs and drums for all we were worth.

The mighty torrent of the Cultural Revolution, surging forward, swept away the filth left by the old society. In the course of this struggle, millions of ordinary workers broke the restrictions that had been fettering them and showed themselves the creators of history. People still call Ting "Master Loudspeaker" because his familiar, booming voice can always be heard in any discussion on revolution or production. They still call him "Director" too, not sarcastically, of course, but out of respect. For this run-of-the-mill worker holds in mind splendid plans for the whole factory, for the whole country.

The year before last Ting Ta-pao joined the Party. Last year he was sent to study electronics in the workers' college organized by the bureau. As I myself have recently been transferred to the revolutionary committee of the company, I have less chance of seeing him. But each time I enter the office and see over it the signboard with the words "Revolutionary Committee", I remember Ting Ta-pao with profound admiration.

Hundreds of thousands of workers with the same high political consciousness are day and night defending our socialist system like sentinels at their posts.

Illustrated by Chen Wei

A Close Call

It was twilight on a snowy day in the winter of 1944. Two Eighth Route Army men advanced steadily across the white landscape despite the wind and swirling snow. Suddenly shots cracked from the western slope of Sword Mountain. Then wild howls rang out as some ninety Chinese traitors rushed in an inverted-V formation towards the pair. Though their situation seemed almost desperate, the two men remained calm and headed for Sword Mountain.

1

The burly fighter was twenty-eight-year-old Chen Kang, leader of a messenger squad of a regiment stationed in the Yimeng Mountain base area. His swarthy, thick-lipped face bore a modest expression, but shrewdness and courage glinted in his eyes. The shorter one was Hsiao Chiang, a tough fighter though only sixteen. They were carrying an important message to the second battalion in Kuchai Village, near Green Pine Mountain. This battalion was to set out before dawn the following day and join forces with other units to annihilate the Japanese invaders at Chaochuang Village. After study-

ing the situation, the pair had decided not to take the highway but to cut across perilous Sword Mountain with its fine cover of thick bushes and briars and head direct for Kuchai Village.

Recently the Japanese had got wind that the Eighth Route Army meant to attack Chaochuang but had no idea how big a force was to be sent against them, nor when. Greatly alarmed they reinforced their stronghold and dispatched puppet soldiers out to patrol the nearby roads, hoping thus to capture some liaison men. In addition, they chose ninety Chinese traitors whom they equipped and organized into a "night-raid contingent" that was to wait in ambush along the mountain paths day and night. The contingent had waited in vain for several days and nights and the men were growing weary and a little careless when they finally spotted Chen and Young Hsiao. They panicked as if confronted by a powerful force. Wild-eyed, Meng, the chief of the contingent took a quick look and sent up a signal flare. The bandits swarmed like maggots from their hiding-places behind bushes or in snow-covered pits. Shouting "Take them alive!" they rushed on the two Eighth Route Army men.

This was not the first time Chen had met with this kind of situation while operating in the enemy rear. He pulled Young Hsiao close to him and looked round carefully, then hurled two hand-grenades. Screened by the smoke and dust from the blasts, they crossed the enemy line at a run and made for Sword Mountain. The unexpected explosion flabbergasted the puppet soldiers who milled around in confusion for some time before they hurried after them.

Chen had been fighting the Japanese invaders around the Yimeng Mountain area for several years, so he knew the terrain well. Sword Mountain was steep, especially on the eastern side. There were slopes on the other three sides, mantled with pines, cypresses and thickets but its swordlike peak pierced the clouds at the eastern end, dropping sharply in a precipice. Along the cliff face grew trees that slanted downwards, their branches intertwining. In autumn Chen had come through here on his way to deliver a message and had encountered the enemy. He had escaped down the precipice by groping from one branch to another. This time Chen realized the horde of traitors could not be easily frightened off. He decided not

to waste time by fighting. They would try to shake off the traitors and climb down the precipice.

Darkness was falling when the puppet soldiers approached the foot of the mountain only to find that the two men had already disappeared among the bushes. Meng, the chief, ordered his men to fire at random. Leaves and the debris of shattered rock flew through the air. Chen smiled, for he knew they were shooting at random. He advanced calmly, taking the lead.

Suddenly Young Hsiao fell and began rolling down the slope. Chen turned and made a dash for the youngster. His padded coat was soaked with blood at the shoulder. He had been hit! Tearing a strip of cloth from his own coat, Chen quickly bandaged the wound.



When he tried to help the youngster on to his back, Young Hsiao resisted. Impatient, Chen squatted down and hoisted him forcibly on to his back, then set off faster than before.

Listening to the enemy's intensified firing, Young Hsiao tried to jump to the ground, but didn't have the strength. His wound throbbed painfully and his head felt like a block of stone. However, the idea that because of him his squad leader's life was endangered and their mission impeded gave him the strength to wrench himself away.

Surprised, Chen turned to help him along, but the youngster pushed him away. "Don't worry about me, squad leader," he said anxiously. "You . . . you deliver the letter . . . quick." Then becoming faint he swayed. Chen's eyes were moist as he cradled the young fighter. "I won't leave you behind, Hsiao, not as long as I'm alive. And we'll deliver that message on time." He undid his puttees and used them to tie the youngster to his back. With a quick glance at the peak, he set off at a brisk pace. The path grew steeper as he climbed and nearer the top ice covered the rocky trail. Even an unburdened man would have found that trail treacherous. After sliding backwards

several times, Chen decided to crawl the rest of the way, hanging on grimly to the rocks. Knowing that the youngster's safety and the success of their mission depended on his reaching the top quickly, he clenched his teeth and crept steadily upward.

The crescent moon climbed high in the sky, showering its silvery light over the snow-bound mountain. When Chen finally reached the peak, he looked down. Stunned, he stared at the eastern precipice — it was completely changed! The trees that had served as a ladder that autumn were practically all broken off, some near the roots. There were only a few trees left.

It was the work of the Japanese invaders. When the Eighth Route Army had attacked them a month before, the enemy blasted away the trees to eliminate the possibility of a surprise attack from the rear.

Shots sounded only sporadically now and the cries had become faint. Nevertheless Chen was uneasy. He fingered the message in his pocket and glanced from the moon already high overhead to his wounded comrade. Knitting his bushy eyebrows, he gazed a long while at the precipice.

2

Pale moonlight streamed into the mouth of a winding cave near the peak of Sword Mountain where Chen sat carefully dressing Young Hsiao's wound. As he worked he was thinking of a way to shake off the enemy and fulfil his mission.

The enemy had stopped firing and were spreading out to encircle the mountain. Puppet soldiers were stationed on all sides, even under the eastern precipice.

Young Hsiao's head was no longer like stone. He was beginning to feel better. The youngster had seen a lot of action in the year or more he had been in the army and the experience had toughened him. He thought a while, then shook Chen's shoulder. "Squad leader, we must try to break through now before the enemy has time to dig in. Let's fight our way down the mountain."

"Don't move, you'll make that wound hurt more," Chen responded impassively.

"Well, there are plenty of shelters on the mountain," the youngster continued. "I can hide here in the cave or in snow-covered hollows, and there are the trees and the crevices in the rocks. Don't worry about me, squad leader. They won't find me on this high mountain. You've got to get that message delivered."

"Don't get so excited." Chen smiled as he continued to calmly bandage the wound. "Let them try and encircle us. We'll find a way to get out."

Anxiety had made the youngster break out in a cold sweat. Chen himself was worried too, though outwardly confident. With the enemy blocking their way, how were they to get the message through? It was true that there weren't many soldiers under the eastern cliff, but he couldn't negotiate that precipice without a rope or vines. What bad luck that Hsiao had been wounded! The situation looked ominous, but he remained cool and collected, for any nervousness on his part would have increased his young comrade's anxiety.

He racked his brains. Was it possible to climb down the face of the precipice? He could hang on to the rocks jutting out from the sheer face. No, it wasn't possible, he decided. With the strong wind he couldn't make it down the slippery cliff in the darkness with his wounded comrade. And if they tried going down the trail they had come up? No, the puppet soldiers were massed there, waiting for them. They couldn't run the risk. He could assault the enemy so that Hsiao could get away and deliver the message. No, he thought, he's badly wounded. It was out of the question . . . unless all else failed. Ideas flashed through his mind, but one by one he rejected them all. Then he suddenly remembered the pine that grew downwards at the very top of the cliff face and the broad crevice just below it.

He'd hit on a plan! But before he could carry it out, he had to reconnoitre the terrain, observe the enemy's movements and give his young comrade time to get back on his feet.

He soon finished bandaging the wound. Moved by Chen's concern the youngster gazed at him through eyes blurred with tears. "Stay here and rest a while," Chen told him gently. "I'm going to see what the situation is. Then we'll discuss how to carry out our mission."

He was about to get up and leave when a gust of bitter cold wind stung his face. He shivered and paused a moment, then took off his padded coat and put it round Young Hsiao's shoulders. "We can't build a fire. Keep your wound covered."

Young Hsiao got to his feet and tried to return the coat, but Chen shook his hand. "Don't worry about me. Moving about will keep me warm."

3

Meanwhile dark clouds had moved in overhead, obscuring the moon and the stars. The wind was blowing harder now, howling through the black forest of trees and sharp rocks. The earth seemed to be shaking on its foundations.

As Chen emerged from the cave, he felt chilled through and through, as if he'd been doused with ice-cold water. He flung his arms back, squaring his shoulders, and stretched his legs, then he pulled out his Mauser and climbed up the highest rock on the peak. He leaned down to scan the foothill. The enemy bonfires snaked all around the mountain. Some of the puppet soldiers were huddled round the fires, while others patrolled nervously, gripping their rifles.

Chen's lip curled scornfully. Their predicament was obvious. Fear of being picked off in the dark had kept them from advancing any farther and fear of facing their superiors empty-handed had prevented them from fleeing. They probably planned to stand guard until daybreak when they could comb the mountain.

Chen decided to search for the overhanging pine tree. He crawled towards the edge of the cliff, but it wasn't there, nor could he find it to the south or the north. Gazing at the fires below, he felt the message in his pocket and thought of his young comrade lying in the cave. His bushy eyebrows knit once again.

Memories of the past surged through his mind. He remembered his mother's parting words four years before when he left for the army. Her voice had quavered as she pointed to the scar on her arm from Japanese shrapnel. Then he seemed to hear once again the oath he'd

taken before the red flag when joining the Party two years before. Finally he thought of what his commander and his comrades had said that afternoon as he was setting out on this mission and was inspired anew. These memories fired his determination like a battle drum calling for a new charge against the enemy. He clenched his callused hand. "The success of the task entrusted us by the Party, and my comrade's safety both depend on me. Even if I have to cross a mountain bristling with swords, I'll find a way out!" Confident, he began to search for the pine tree again.

Meanwhile, in the cave, Young Hsiao was anxiously mulling over their situation. Stroking his squad leader's coat, he tried to work out a plan to break through the enemy encirclement. A sudden gust of wind interrupted his train of thought. He looked at the mouth of the cave and came to a decision.

"We can't hesitate any longer. With so little time left to carry out this important task, I must get Chen to break out as soon as possible."

But Chen had finally discovered the overhanging pine. He swiftly unwound his puttees, knotted them together and put them in his pocket. Then he slid cautiously down the trunk of the tree. Near the treetop he secured one end of his puttees to a strong branch and let himself down along the face of the precipice until he found the broad crevice. He cautiously explored the opening with his foot, then slipped inside, bent low. He slowly straightened up. His hands met with a rock, then groping higher, he discovered that the place was about a metre high. Further exploration revealed that it was a metre deep — an excellent hiding-place. And from it, either of them could climb the rest of the way down the precipice without too much difficulty. What about the enemy? He pricked up his ears. All was quiet, except for the howling of the wind. He hauled himself up with the help of the puttee. His jacket flapped wildly in the wind and swirling snow and gravel beat down on him, forcing him to hold his breath and screw up his eyes. Yet he felt a sense of satisfaction as though he'd drunk at a refreshing spring. He climbed up quickly, full of vigour.

Young Hsiao was counting his cartridges when his squad leader came striding in. Though covered with snow, his face was flushed from exertion. The youngster stood up to greet him. Chen's eyes sparkled with confidence.

"What's the situation, squad leader?" Hsiao asked as he brushed the snow off Chen's jacket, then returned his squad leader's coat, putting it on his shoulders.

"How are you feeling?" Chen asked.

"Much better since you dressed my wound," the youngster replied making his squad leader put on the coat. Chen sat down beside the young fighter and began to brief him on what he'd found.

"I went out to have a look round a minute ago," the youngster interrupted, impatient. "What about trying to break through the enemy lines on the southern slope?"

"What's your plan?"

"We can creep up on them in the dark. When we get close enough you steal up, put out their fires with a few grenades and slip through. I'll stay behind and pin them down till you get away. Then I'll catch up with you. Time isn't standing still, squad leader. It's our only way out now."

Smiling, Chen heard the young fighter out, then gazing at Hsiao's anxious face replied gently, "We soldiers are not afraid of shedding blood for the revolution. But we mustn't take unnecessary risks, Hsiao Chiang. The enemy has surrounded us. If we try to fight our way out, we may be killed. We are both willing to make that sacrifice, but we must remember that we have an important mission to carry out. Failure on our part will affect the outcome of the battle."

"Well, how are we to . . ."

"We must follow Chairman Mao's teachings, putting into play all our energies and co-ordinating our efforts," Chen broke in. Then he explained his plan: one of them would wait in the hiding-place while the other attacked the enemy on the northern slope to lure them away.

Young Hsiao was surprised and pleased. However, after giving it a second thought, he asked anxiously, "Your plan's a good one, but what if we can't lure away those crafty bandits?"

"Co-ordination is the key link," Chen replied confidently. "In his *On Protracted War*, Chairman Mao wrote: **'Deliberately creating misconceptions for the enemy and then springing surprise attacks upon him are two ways — indeed two important means — of achieving superiority and seizing the initiative.'** All we have to do is follow his instructions."

Young Hsiao had listened, breathless. Now he admired his squad leader's caution and clear thinking. Though danger lay ahead, the young fighter hadn't a doubt about their success. He threw out his chest. "Let's carry out your plan. I'll take care of the enemy and you'll hide in the crevice and take the message to Kuchai. Okay?"

"No. You're younger and not strong enough. Besides you're wounded," Chen replied. "I'll take on the enemy. I've been fighting these bandits longer than you have and I have more tricks up my sleeve."

"No!" Young Hsiao burst out. "You always tell me that just as a knife grows sharper from grinding, so a man's mind grows keener from thinking. In the same way, by fighting many battles bravely, a man becomes a good soldier. This time I'm going to fight. . ."

"Don't worry. There are plenty of Japanese invaders left. You'll get a chance to fight them soon. Next time you can. . ."

"Next time! Next time! When will that day come? You always say the same thing, but each time you take on the most difficult tasks." Hsiao's boyish face wore a battle-hungry look. "You've told me that we must be prepared to sacrifice all in order to defeat the Japanese invaders and liberate the whole country. Now that we have a task to carry out for the revolution, I'm willing to give my life, not to mention taking a few risks. Let me fight the enemy, squad leader. I guarantee to accomplish the task."

Touched by the youngster's heartfelt plea, Chen said gently, "I understand, comrade. But we must act without delay. Let me go this time. I promise to give you the most difficult task next time." He thrust the message into the young fighter's hand. Young Hsiao

put it in his pocket, for he knew from experience that further argument would get him nowhere. He slipped his two grenades into Chen's bag, then began taking out his cartridges.

Chen stopped him. "No, your task is a heavy one. Don't underestimate the difficulties. You must be ready to fight." He pulled out his gun and loaded it, then buttoned his young comrade's coat at the neck. When he finally spoke his voice was full of concern. "Be careful. The hiding-place is small and there's a strong wind tonight. Watch out for your wound when you're climbing down the precipice. Whatever happens, be both courageous and cautious. You must deliver the message."

Young Hsiao nodded and gripped Chen's hands. "Head for Kuchai Village as soon as you've led the enemy away, squad leader." His voice was full of yearning. "I'll come back to meet you once I've delivered the message."

"Oh, I'll catch up with you before you get to the village," Chen responded. "Well, we've no time to lose. Let's go." The two comrades-in-arms clasped each other's hands, then left the cave side by side.

5

The night was pitch-black and the wind wailed mournfully. Chen helped his comrade climb down into the hiding-place, then headed north until he spotted the enemy crouching around a bright fire. He crept up in the dark, hiding behind the bushes, until he had reached the edge of the area lit by the fire. He was only twenty paces away, but the enemy hadn't detected his presence. Squatting in a hollow behind a rock, he scanned the enemy, slowly pulled out two hand-grenades and hurled them at the fire round which half a dozen puppet soldiers were sitting. Then with a shove he heaved a big rock down the slope.

At the sound of the blast, the enemy on the northern slope flattened themselves on the ground, panic-stricken. When they finally dared to look up, they saw that the fire had been put out, and a gap yawned in their line of fires. Then they heard the sound of something going

down the slope. An Eighth Router had escaped! A dozen puppet soldiers were sent in pursuit while the remainder stood guard and relit the fire. The dazed puppet soldiers on the other slopes got up and returned nervously to their posts following the orders their cunning chief had given. For after the losses they'd suffered from the Eighth Route Army's many feints, the enemy chief had decided that if one of the two Eighth Routers escaped, some soldiers would be sent in pursuit while the other sectors would continue their watch in order to catch the other one. They knew from experience that the second one was often the key man. If both men escaped together, two green flares were to be sent off immediately and all the puppet soldiers would converge on the pair. Their orders were to capture them at all costs.

Now the enemy remained on guard according to orders. That was what Chen had expected. Since the first step of his plan had gone off smoothly, he took out another grenade, which he threw at the newly-lit fire, extinguishing it once again. Springing up, he raced through the enemy line.

When the soldiers glimpsed the running figure, they concluded that it was the second fighter and sped after him. With trembling hands their signal-man fired the flares. Those two green lights in the black sky set all the enemy soldiers in pursuit of Chen. Like packs of hounds unleashed, they yelped as they converged on the north slope, their torches lighting up the mountainside.

Chen spotted a light sweeping the ground ahead and ducked behind a rock. I mustn't let them see me, he thought, for if they realize I'm alone, our plan will backfire. Seeing the enemy converging on him, he decided it was time to play another trick on them. He fired a volley of bullets, then shifted to firing single shots for some time before going back to another volley. Like a drowning man clutching at a straw, the enemy soldiers were now convinced the two kinds of gunfire were made by two men.

The bandits who had been sent out to pursue the 'first' Eighth Router were still searching vainly towards the north when they heard the explosion. Looking round, they spotted the flares and the converging torches. When they heard the chatter of gunfire, they turned

back without a second's hesitation and swooped towards the spot where Chen was firing.

Chen frowned, calculating how far Hsiao had got by then. He must have climbed down the precipice and reached the foot of the mountain, he thought, heaving a great sigh of relief. Chen could have disappeared into the darkness, shaking off the enemy before they closed in on him, but he remained where he was. What if Young Hsiao hasn't gone far enough? he reflected. The bandits will follow me if I flee and, given their number and all those lights, they just might happen on Young Hsiao. So he began picking off those carrying torches. Frightened by such marksmanship, his pursuers didn't dare advance.

But Chen soon used up all his ammunition. As the silence lengthened the jeering enemy chief howled, "Take them alive" and with a wave of his arm signalled to his men to charge.

Chen was gazing towards the south. He saw in his mind's eye Young Hsiao delivering the message, and the attack on the enemy stronghold. Red flags fluttered in the wind. A smile lit up his dark face. He raised his eyes. The enemy was closing in. He threw them a withering look, then with a fleeting glance at the unguarded path leading north, he dashed to the brink of the precipice. He pulled out his last two grenades.

6

Hsiao Chiang waited in the hiding-place until Chen had lured the enemy northward. Then the young fighter climbed down the precipice, and turning towards the south, tore down Sword Mountain. He headed straight for Green Pine Mountain. Sometime later, two explosions rang out from the northern slope of Sword Mountain. He stopped and looked back. Gunfire and explosions resounded, shattering the night sky. He gazed back through eyes blurred by tears, trying to swallow the lump in his throat. "Squad leader! . . ."

He touched the message in his pocket, remembering Chen's words, and resolutely headed for Green Pine Mountain. He ran faster, his heart filled with hatred for the enemy.

Rat-a-tat-tat. A faint tapping of stones came from behind. It was the signal they'd decided on before parting. For a moment he didn't dare believe his ears. Could it really be Chen? He squatted down to listen, holding his breath. It *was* the signal. He hadn't been imagining things. Despite the strong wind he made out the rhythmical tapping. Then it grew louder. His heart racing, he cleared away the snow and searched until he found two pebbles. He hit them together. Rat-a-tat-tat.

"Hsiao Chiang!"

"Squad leader!" he cried springing to his feet.

"Hsiao Chiang!"

"Oh, squad leader!" He rushed towards Chen. "We've triumphed!" he exclaimed, a tear trickling down his cheek.

"Yes, we've triumphed, indeed." Chen touched the youngster's shoulder. "How's your wound? Were you hit again?"

"No. I'm fine. I didn't run into any trouble. And you? What happened?"

As they marched arm in arm towards Kuchai Village, Chen told his story.

He'd stood at the edge of the precipice ready to throw his last grenades and jump over the edge. But suddenly the enemy stopped and a raucous voice sounded, "Halt, brothers. The Eighth Routers



are tricky. Let's not take any risks unless we're sure to capture them. You go, Club-foot. If you take them alive, you'll be well rewarded."

A bandit with a slight limp came nearer. Chen brightened. In a flash he pulled out a dagger and crouched down. When Club-foot was close enough, Chen pounced on him, holding the dagger to the traitor's throat. Paralyzed by fear, Club-foot nearly collapsed. Chen clutched the man by the collar and told him quietly, "Quick, say that an Eighth Router is going to jump off the cliff." It was some time before Club-foot could pull himself together. His eyes glued to the glinting dagger, he shook so that his cap fell to the ground. But he finally nodded and said, "Ch-i-ef . . . chief . . . the Eighth Router is going to . . . jump off the cliff." Then he wrenched himself free and tried to flee.

"Where do you think you're going, you bastard," Chen cursed under his breath, giving Club-foot a kick that sent him rolling over the edge of the precipice. He picked up Club-foot's cap and put it on, then threw his two hand-grenades at the enemy. As they exploded, spewing smoke, gravel and snow, Chen bounded like a tiger into the enemy's midst and took cover.

A number of the traitors had been mowed down and the survivors had flung away their torches and flattened themselves helter-skelter on the ground. Presently the raucous voice sounded again, "Club-foot! Club-foot!" But only the roaring wind and soughing trees answered him.

The raucous-voiced traitor signalled to his men to advance. Getting up all their nerve, the puppet soldiers finally got to their feet and staggered towards the cliff in broken ranks. Chen took advantage of the confusion to mingle with them in the darkness, advancing a few paces. Then he slowed down and finally hid behind some bushes. Intent on capturing the Eighth Routers, the enemy didn't notice him. When they arrived at the edge of the cliff without discovering their quarry, they decided that Chen had jumped, pulling Club-foot to his death too. They flashed their lights below, revealing nothing but white wilderness. Their hopes deflated, they fired wildly into the abyss. Meanwhile, Chen crawled away. When he'd covered some distance, he got up and headed straight south.

Young Hsiao laughed, then turned to look at Sword Mountain. Bonfires glowed like so many will-o'-the-wisps. The spineless curs were yelping abuse at one another as blasts and gunfire rang out all over the mountain. It sounded as if an ammunition dump had blown up.

"They're still searching for us, squad leader." Hsiao smiled.

"They can search to their hearts' content. Let's hurry now. We want to deliver the message as quickly as possible."

They strode on, arm in arm.

Illustrated by Tung Chen-sheng



SKETCHES

Ling Yen

A Fortnight in Hsiyang

Last autumn I spent an unforgettable fortnight in Hsiyang County, Shansi Province. Here are some of my indelible impressions of that visit.

Our train arrived at Yangchuan at nine in the evening. We had to journey another eighty *li* or so to get to Hsiyang. A few minutes after our bus left the railway station, it started climbing uphill and then went down. Our motorcade stretched out for such a distance it could have made the whole road as bright as day had we been on a straight highway. But in our case we could only see the two bright beams made by our own headlights in front and often only a single flash behind, for our way wound round the hills. Soon the engine was revved up and whirring loudly, we were evidently going up a steep gradient.

We went on like this for nearly forty-five minutes until two cloud-piercing peaks appeared ahead. Our headlights lit up a couplet in bright red paint on the precipitous cliff face:

Raise high the red banner, grasp the key link; learn from
Tachai;

The hills and waters of Hsiyang we'll transform.

"Here we are in Hsiyang!" the driver announced.

Each and every one of us looked towards the window, our eyes eagerly searching the darkness outside. From a distance came a deep rumble, probably Hsiyang people blasting away at the mountains. We also saw small bonfires blazing out of distant dark pits round the hills. Whatever were those? Some comrades said that would be people making coke by the local method. Others said perhaps these were open-air stoves on the worksites where people were blasting. The driver's assistant chuckled at our comments. He told us that the flickering flames came from small kilns where lime was being fired. Since practically all the brigades in the various communes were building new villages and using up such quantities of lime, they had to fire it themselves.

This scene provided the answer to a problem which had perplexed us on the train coming down. It started when the train emerged from Niangtzukuan Pass. All of a sudden the spreading north China plain disappeared from sight. In its stead we saw hills and more hills wherever we looked.

"We'll be entering Shansi right away," said someone. Immediately, dozens of pairs of eyes turned to the window as if afraid that Tachai and Hsiyang might slip past undetected. The train chugged on, now climbing halfway up the mountain, now circling its waist, going under its armpit, or shooting straight through its belly, so that peaks and cliffs blocked our view. Most people from the plains have an unrealistic picture of mountainous regions, imagining them as beautiful green undulating ranges with towering peaks and magnificent trees. Hence it came as a surprise to see around us nothing but rocks and weird boulders on the bare hills.

"Is it possible to reclaim these hills?" one comrade couldn't help exclaiming. Another remarked sceptically, "Surely, the hills of Hsiyang can't be like these!"

"They sure are!" said a county Party secretary who'd had the

advantage of visiting Tachai before. "Tiger-head Hill is exactly like the hills here. That's why the people there used to say:

High hills and rocks galore,

A climb before each door.

And that's why Tachai was described as 'seven gullies, eight ridges and one slope'. However wild and barren they are, hills can be transformed."

Now we could see with our own eyes that this was true. Even in the darkness of night, our headlights showed us that Hsiyang looked quite different from the hills through which we had passed. Maize, millet and sorghum grew in rich profusion here. The sorghum, sown close together on terraced fields, had red tassels as big as rice bowls and the plants were growing so evenly you might think each had been selected for its height. The maize too was a splendid sight, long heavy cobs wrapped in broad green leaves topped by a tangle of reddish brown tassels. True, the hills here were no longer barren and we hardly ever saw a ridge which wasn't green.

On the day we visited Tachai Brigade, situated to the southeast of Hsiyang, we were very excited. As soon as our bus stopped we made straight for the new Tachai Village.

It simply wasn't what people would expect of a mountain village. Besides the big modern buildings of reinforced concrete — the hotel, restaurant and department store — we were captivated by the Tachai housing. This consisted of rows of two-storied attached houses of a most original and attractive design. The ground floor, hollowed out of the hillside like the old-style stone cave dwellings, had a modern tile-roofed storey on top. Ranged neatly against the undulating slope it appeared at once modern and yet with its own distinctive traditional features.

We strolled along the asphalt road between rows of these Tachai-type houses flanked by willows and low green fences. Dahlias and white roses seemed to be the general favourites here for outside nearly every door we saw these flowers, as well as apple trees. As it was September, the trees were laden with red fruit and the flowers were at their best.

We were accompanied by Kuo Feng-lien, secretary of the Party branch at Tachai. She stopped under a big willow to the east of the village.

It was a huge tree, gnarled and rugged with entwining roots. It must be well over a hundred years old. Before Liberation, this was where the landlord and rich peasants strung up the poor to flog them. That was why the poor peasants of Tachai called it the Tree of Suffering. How many times had the old willow heard the swishing of whips and witnessed the cold-blooded murder of the poor whose families, unable to afford coffins, shrouded them in tattered mats to bury them.

Kuo Feng-lien told us, "The village you see here was built after the terrible flood of 1963. This area used to be a dried-up stone gully. When it rained, flood water ran riot but as soon as the sky cleared you saw only gravel and sand. Even the sturdiest weeds grew sparsely here."

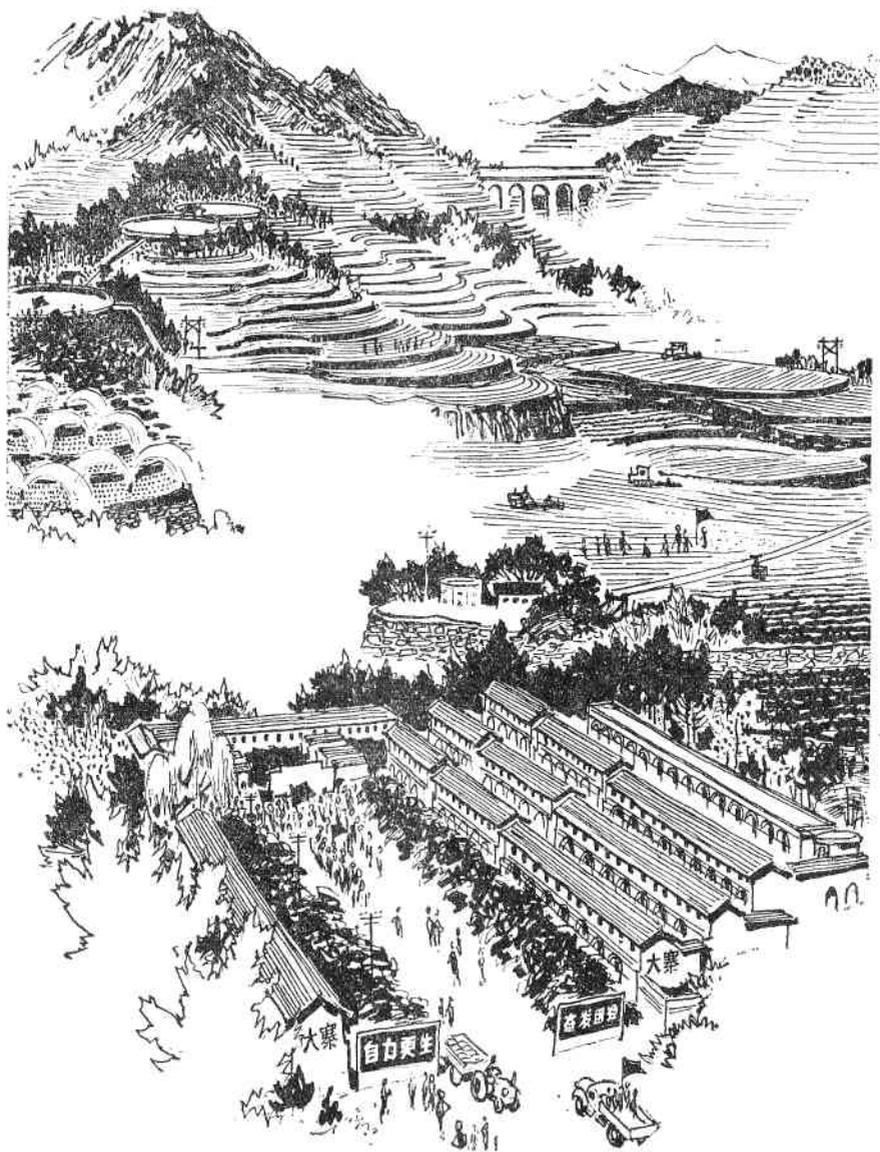
"Was this really a gully?" we all exclaimed. "What if the mountain torrents come again?"

"We've tamed that rocky gully and built our new village over it. Underneath is a stone culvert two hundred and ninety metres in length which we call our Tunnel to Conquer Nature. Mountain freshets rushing down like wild beasts have to tamely follow the course we charted and be led off to work for humanity."

We walked along a winding road in the direction of Wolf Lair Gully and the aqueduct. Wolf Lair, Tachai's biggest gully, had been a wilderness of boulders and gravel. The Tachai people battled here four times until it is now tiers of flat terraced fields, each big enough for tractors to work on it. They also brought water here by an aqueduct built between two ridges.

Kuo in her suit of plain cotton drill with a straw hat hanging on her back went ahead to show us the way, turning from time to time to explain this or that. When we fired questions at her, she always provided clear, crisp answers, much to our satisfaction.

Tachai's autumn is golden. All over its seven gullies and eight ridges, maize cobs stuck out, large as truncheons, with dangling whiskers. Ears of millet, bushy as a wolf's tail, swayed heavily in



the breeze. Tachai is halfway up Tiger-head Hill, a thousand metres or so above sea level. We strolled around for nearly four hours. Wherever we looked, green met our eyes and all the fields were smooth and flat. Fine crops filled all of them. The plants were well cultivated on the low-lying land as well as in the terraced fields. They were as carefully tended in far-away fields as in near ones, in the centre of the terrace or along its edge. Away to the east, the motor of the pumping station hummed cheerfully while a sprinkler showered clear water over the newly-sown wheat. In the irrigation canal by our feet, water gurgled merrily. Overhead, the cable conveyers, five pairs in all, carried crates of fertilizer up and down. No need to tote with a shoulder-pole or drive an animal up the hill, the overhead conveyers were giving a fillip to farming.

Some of our group reverted now to the new village and the villagers' living conditions which had so aroused their interest. A county Party secretary asked, "I hear there's been no change for several years now in the payment members of Tachai Brigade get, although every year your farm output increases and therefore your income must have increased a lot too. What do you do with the surplus?"

Kuo told us that the Tachai people were working for socialism but with their mind on communism which meant getting prosperous together. They believed that while carrying out the principle of "to each according to his work", it was necessary to limit bourgeois rights and put the emphasis on "to each according to his need" so that people would think more along communist lines. That was why members of Tachai Brigade lived in houses built and owned by the collective. Their children went to nurseries and kindergartens and through nine years of schooling all free of charge. Their co-operative health insurance covered more and more items.

The brigade Party branch felt that the peasants organized into communes had put themselves wholly in the hands of their organization. Therefore it was the duty of this collective to care for its members in every respect. Otherwise capitalism might creep in. As the leading core of socialist Tachai, the Party branch took care of the people's political ideology, their productive labour and the distribution of income. But that was not all. The Party branch also

concerned itself with such matters as birth, death, illness and old age; marriage, food, housing, transport and recreation; and even paid attention to providing extra good fruit, vegetables and different kinds of grain for festivals.

During our fortnight at Hsiyang we learned that it was difficult to find anyone at home in the daytime. However, while visiting Wuchiaping Brigade we unexpectedly came across an old woman.

This brigade was a very prosperous one with two hundred and seventy households, of which two hundred and fifty already lived in a new village very similar to Tachai Village except for the fact that their fruit trees were younger and the surrounding greenery not as luxuriant yet.

We noticed on our visits that the windows and doors of the stone dwellings were often adorned with strings of red paprika, for Shansi people are fond of hot peppery food. Passing by one door we saw a heap of fresh red peppers on the window-sill. Evidently the owner had left hurriedly for the fields so that these were as yet unstrung. To our surprise when the door curtain was flung back, an old woman emerged, a length of hemp string in her hands, ready to continue with her stringing. We swarmed round her, full of curiosity, and she hospitably invited us inside.

"How old are you, aunty?" we asked.

"Going on seventy!" she answered, mopping the table.

From the awards decorating the wall, we discovered that one member of her family was a revolutionary martyr. She herself worked in the brigade nursery. Since two of the kiddies were down with flu, she had taken them home with her to be quarantined. Now both were sound asleep on her *kang*.

We listened with attention while she told us something of Wuchiaping's history. Wuchiaping and Tachai had once belonged to the same advanced co-operative. In 1957 when Liu Shao-chi tried to suppress the co-operatives, local class enemies seized the opportunity to spread rumours against the co-operative movement. They said that Wuchiaping was getting a bad bargain by sticking to Tachai. It was true of course that, compared to Tachai, Wuchiaping in those

days was much better off since there had been more rich peasants and upper-middle peasants there before land reform and they had some good land by the hillside while Tachai was truly poor and barren, suffering always from either flood or drought. The result was that Wuchiaping raised a rumpus and broke with Tachai. After that the two villages took two different roads. While Tachai battled against nature, going all out to transform its land, more than forty of Wuchiaping's able-bodied men went off to do business as black-marketeers instead of caring for their land. Soil conservation and irrigation were so badly neglected that the fields could not retain either water, fertilizer or topsoil. Within a few years Wuchiaping went to the dogs.

The old woman told us this with great distress. "Talking about getting rich," she said, "it depends on how you do it. Tachai ran their collective to win well-being and a better life for all their members, but ours was run by people who just wanted to get rich themselves. With such men in the saddle how could the collective do well?"

To hide her own agitation at these recollections, she moved over to the *kang* and gently stroked the sleeping babies. One of them woke up at her touch, so she sat down and nursed him on her lap as she continued, "Wuchiaping's malady was finally cured by Comrade Chen Yung-kuei."

She told us their former county Party committee used to cite Wuchiaping as an advanced unit year after year, because they had a higher income.

"But Chen Yung-kuei saw where we were heading and was worried," she said. "In 1965 he came again and again to our village to help fight against class enemies and criticize revisionist ideas so that we halted the bourgeois trend. In April that year we teamed up again with Tachai in a joint brigade and so started our march along the Tachai road. The first year we scored a great victory in building up and reconstructing our fields. After a winter of hard work we opened up a road, hacked out a tunnel, dug a canal, straightened the elbow of a river and made sixty *mu* of Tachai-type fields. After the Cultural Revolution, following Tachai's example we took greater strides so that by 1974 we completed more than twenty fairly large

irrigation projects. Over eighty per cent of our fields were turned into Tachai-style good fields with proper irrigation. Our output reached the Yangtse Valley target, eight hundred catties, in 1970 and by 1974 we exceeded a thousand catties per *mu*. Then last winter, in four months we razed six hills, built conduits running one thousand metres and a hundred *mu* of level fields."

"Now," she said in conclusion, "we're getting to be a bit like Tachai. But the point is, when we were well off we looked down on Tachai, yet when Tachai went ahead they worried about us and helped us to catch up."

One fine evening it was past eleven when we returned from a concert put on by Tachai Brigade's own cultural troupe in its own assembly hall. We were just getting ready for bed when loud explosions made us jump. What had happened? Sung, our young attendant, rushed to our door to reassure us that it meant only that another project had begun in Hsiyang. She told us that the key to developing Hsiyang at a faster rate was the speeding up of irrigation projects. Once all these were completed, Hsiyang, high up in a rocky mountainous region, would become like the Yangtse Valley where rosy clouds shimmer over ten thousand *mu* of lakeland and the banks are lined with green willows. Reeds would be in flower there while the fragrance of paddy filled the air.

We were all inspired by this vision of Tachai's tomorrow. **"Nothing is hard in this world if you dare to scale the heights."** We are sure that these revolutionary aspirations of the Hsiyang people will soon materialize.

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

New Sisters of the Grassland (wood-block print) by Li Huan-min



NEW FILM

Tien Shih

Breaking with Old Ideas

Breaking with Old Ideas, a colour feature film released at the beginning of this year, deals with the revolution in education in China. Presenting the stirring struggle over the setting up of a new communist type of college to train young people through productive labour, it reflects the fierce contest between the bourgeoisie and the working class, and between the revisionist and the proletarian lines, warmly endorsing the proletarian revolution on the educational front.

Sungshan College in this film is set up during the Big Leap Forward in 1958 on the basis of Chairman Mao's directive that **"education must serve proletarian politics and be combined with productive labour"**. This new phenomenon of a college of communist labour which comes into being during the revolution in education deals a heavy blow to the revisionist line promoted by Liu Shao-chi and his followers, and is inevitably most strongly opposed by them. *Breaking with Old Ideas* shows us the conflicts and contradictions between Lung Kuo-cheng, principal of this new college who carries out Chairman Mao's correct line, and Tsao Chung-ho the vice-principal who adheres to Liu Shao-chi's wrong line.



Lung Kuo-cheng studies the book *Comrade Mao Tsetung on Educational Work*

Lung Kuo-cheng, who as a boy worked as a cowherd and later became the head of a state farm, is transferred in the fiery months of the Big Leap Forward to be Party secretary and principal of this new agricultural college at Sungshan. Before his arrival, Deputy Head Chao of this prefecture has already sent Tsao Chung-ho, the vice-principal, and some other staff members to draw up plans for the building of the college. Tsao is a supporter of the old educational system. According to him, this new college should be built in a scenic spot close to town with good communications, and should have large buildings for its library, laboratory and classrooms. Lung Kuo-cheng, however, is dead against this and proposes building the new college on the top of a hill close to the poor and lower-middle peasants. So at their very first encounter the two men take completely different stands and express diametrically opposite views as to what an agricultural college should be.

Lung is determined to run this college according to Chairman Mao's teachings on education. When he comes to one of the centres where

they are enrolling new students by giving them tests, he sees that many of the children of poor and lower-middle peasants who want to go to college are being kept out. The college dean Sun 'Tzu-ching who is in charge of the recruitment of students, having been trained under the old system himself, is faithfully carrying out Tsao's policy of admitting only those who have had a good schooling. On the pretext that many girls and young men from worker and peasant families have no school certificates and their educational level is too low, he will not even let them sit for the entrance examination. When Lung discovers this, he immediately throws open the door of the examination hall to let these youngsters in, then invites an old man in straw sandals, a representative of the poor and lower-middle peasants' association, to act as the chief examiner. This at once effects a big change in the recruitment. The first to be chosen is the young stockman Hsu Niu-tsai, then the peasant girl Li Chin-feng who is skilled in breeding new strains of crops, then the young blacksmith Chiang Ta-nien,

"These calluses on his hand are his best qualification!"



Raising high Chiang Ta-nien's hand, Lung says with feeling, "The first requirement for entrance to our college of communist labour is that the student must come from the labouring masses. These calluses on his hand are his best qualification!"

Everybody present cheers.

At the start of the first term, Lung takes his staff and students to open up wasteland, cut down bamboos and weave mats to build the college themselves. He urges the teachers to integrate with the labouring masses and to remould their thinking in continuous struggle. He shows great concern for the development of each student.

However, the vice-principal Tsao who regards himself as the authority on educational matters vigorously opposes Lung's revolutionary line. Sneering that the college is just a labour camp, not like a college at all, he tries to promote bourgeois pedagogics completely cut off from real life, the masses and productive labour. Following the Soviet revisionist line, he gives first place to intellectual attainment, wants the students to confine themselves to book knowledge and concentrate on getting better marks, and is against taking part in collective labour. So a fierce struggle is waged over the issue of whether or not the educational system should be revolutionized.

One day Dean Sun holds forth at length in the classroom on "the function of the horse's tail", completely ignoring the fact that horses are seldom seen in these mountainous regions of south China where water-buffaloes are the main draught-animals, and turning away a poor peasant who has brought a sick buffalo and asks him to cure it to be ready for the spring ploughing. Hsu Niu-tsai is so disgusted by this that he puts up a wall poster: "We Want Fewer Lectures on Horses, More on Pigs and Buffaloes." Staff and students at once gather round eagerly to discuss this.

Tsao the vice-principal fumes, "This has upset our whole curriculum!"

Lung, however, retorts enthusiastically, "If this small poster can upset our whole curriculum, doesn't that show it's hit the nail on the head?"

In this way Lung takes the side of the revolutionary students and teachers engaged in class struggle, in production and scientific



Hsu Niu-tsai puts up a big-character poster to criticize closed-door teaching

experiment, who are determined to revolutionize education and denounce the wrong line advocated by Tsao. At a meeting of the college administration Lung uses an analogy made by the old representative of the poor and lower-middle peasants' association to refute Tsao's slander of the educational revolution. The old peasant takes one clod of yellow clay, one of red clay, and kneads the two together to show that education and productive labour should be integrated. This simple analogy is easy to grasp and many teachers and students welcome it; they propose drawing up a new curriculum geared to different farming seasons, and having lessons in the fields instead of in the classrooms.

The revolution in education sweeping this college infuriates Tsao who clings stubbornly to the old revisionist line, as well as Deputy Head Chao who backs him. They send Lung off to visit "famous" colleges elsewhere in order to "broaden his vision", hoping that this will make him knuckle under to them.

One evening during Lung's absence, fifteen students including Li Chin-feng go out to help the peasants of a nearby production brigade

stamp out a serious outbreak of pests in their paddy fields. This makes them miss the next day's examination. Tsao seizes this chance to accuse them of breaking the college rules and puts up a notice announcing their expulsion, to the great indignation of most of the teachers and students.

Meanwhile Lung, visiting an old-style university, sees a boy from a poor peasant family who has studied there for a few years reject the clothes his mother has made for him on the grounds that only a "country bumpkin" would wear them. This strengthens Lung's conviction that, to have real socialist schools, we must oppose the old revisionist line in education. On his return to the college, he immediately overrules the order expelling the students and hurriedly fetches back Chiang Ta-nien, one of those who has been driven away.

The college Party committee meets to debate the question of those students who missed their examination.

Tsao tosses a pile of blank test-papers down before Lung.

"In these blank papers," says Lung, "I see a high level of political consciousness, deep proletarian feeling, our students' sweat, and tons of grain harvested by the poor and lower-middle peasants. Those students did well. They were absolutely right!"

"We're not a state farm or production brigade. We're a college," argues Tsao. "If we call ourselves a college, we must have a unified standard."

Lung debunks this gravely, saying, "The proletariat and the bourgeoisie have never had a unified standard for running a college. Take the case of these fifteen students. According to our standard, they're good students; according to yours, they should be expelled. How can these different standards be unified?"

Lung's words win the approval of the other committee members. Tsao storms out of the room before the meeting ends. At this point some peasants from the nearby production brigade bring a letter expressing their whole-hearted thanks to the fifteen students. This letter shows the peasants' appreciation of the proletarian educational system which is training these youngsters to be good successors to our revolutionary cause.

The surging tide of the revolution in education in this college speeds up the ideological remoulding of its members so that even a bourgeois intellectual like Dean Sun, trained under the old educational system, finally changes many of his old ideas.

Li Chin-feng and other students, nurtured by Chairman Mao's proletarian line in education, quickly become politically mature. When Deputy Head Chao sends a work-team to a nearby brigade to push through Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line — enlarge the peasants' private plots, encourage free markets, increase the number of small enterprises with sole responsibility for their own profits or losses, and fix output quotas based on individual households — Li Chin-feng boldly opposes these measures. At a meeting to discuss them she points out that these measures, if carried out, would encourage individual farming and mean a return to the old road. Chao's secretary and stooge Chien threatens to have her locked up, giving her nothing to eat and organizing a meeting to criticize her.

At this meeting, Lung sternly rebukes Chien and Vice-principal Tsao for their slander of the college and of the girl. Moved by the revolutionary spirit of Lung and Li Chin-feng, Tsao's daughter Hsiao-mei goes up the platform and tears up the letter of recommendation procured by her father to enable her to enter a "famous university". Another student Yu Fa-ken, who has been seriously influenced by bourgeois ideas and whose motive for studying was to "learn some skill so as to make more money", now sees his mistake and smashes the bamboo container in which he kept his money. Chien and Tsao, finding themselves so thoroughly refuted and isolated, beat an ignominious retreat.

At this critical stage of the struggle, Deputy Head Chao makes a last desperate bid to silence Lung. He threatens to expel him from the Party and dismiss him from his post, then gives orders for the college to be closed down.

However, Lung fights back fearlessly. He calls a meeting of the Party committee and declares to all the revolutionary teachers and students, "We firmly believe that the line we're following here is absolutely correct. No matter how fierce the storm, nothing can stop us from pressing forward." And just at this moment they

receive a letter from our great leader Chairman Mao in which he has written: **“Comrades, I approve entirely of your work.”**

Chairman Mao’s loving concern, the support of all the revolutionary teachers and students, as well as the backing of the poor and lower-middle peasants, enable this new-style college of communist labour to advance irresistibly, overcoming all obstacles, along Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line. They display the spirit expressed in his poem:

**We can clasp the moon in the Ninth Heaven
And seize turtles deep down in the Five Seas.**

The title of this film conveys the essential feature of this college. That is, to carry out the proletarian revolution in education we must make a complete break with the old educational system, and with all traditional property relations and traditional ideas. This revolutionary theme runs through the whole film, which eulogizes this new socialist phenomenon and successfully projects the image of a typical proletarian hero, Lung, a militant with strong class feeling who upholds the revolutionary banner. By depicting the different characteristics of Li Chin-feng, Chiang Ta-nien, Hsu Niu-tsai and other students, the film also shows the spirit of the young educated peasants of the new generation brought up according to Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line, and affirms the infinite vitality of the proletarian educational system. At present the proletarian revolution in education in China is making vigorous headway, and this film has had a great impact on the masses.

An Yi Village Welcomes Newcomers
(woodcut) by *Ab Ko*



On Chairman Mao's Recently Published Poems

The publication of our great leader Chairman Mao's poems, *Reascending Chingkangshan*—to the tune of *Shui Tiao Keb Tou* and *Two Birds: A Dialogue*—to the tune of *Nien Nu Chiao*, has inspired amateur poets and song writers from all walks of life. They have given full expression to their appreciation of the two poems and have discussed them in the light of their own experience. Here we publish comments by three amateur poets: a worker, a peasant and a soldier.

— The Editors

Huang Sheng-hsiao*

I was filled with enthusiasm and determination on reading Chairman Mao's two poems at the beginning of this year.

I am a longshoreman born and brought up on the banks of the Yangtse and have been working on the docks for over forty years. Only after Liberation was I able to learn to read and write by attending a workers' night school.

*This veteran worker of the Yangtse Transportation Administration writes poetry in his spare time. Some of his poems have been published in book form, for example the collection *Conveying Mountains of Freight We Follow the Party Line*, and translations of his *I Am a Longshoreman* and other poems were published in *Chinese Literature* No. 12, 1975.

I have carefully studied Chairman Mao's writings on literature and art and tried to carry out his directives on creating poetry. Thus I have been able to write poetry and prose in praise of worker, peasant and soldier heroes and beat the battle drum for socialist revolution and construction.

Once I was aboard a boat towing rafts of logs from Szechuan. As our boat cleaved the swift torrents near Peishih, I wondered at the sheer cliffs overhanging the river on both sides and at the perilous Wu Gorge. That magnificent sight made me set down these lines:

Full steam ahead, our boat,
With rafts in tow, charges.
In a flash Peishih is behind
And Patung just ahead.

But when I read this poem to the crew, they shook their heads: "You haven't expressed the feelings of us boatmen who haul logs and timber through waves and wind to make pillars for the construction of our motherland." So I sought help from Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*. "**... Life as reflected in works of literature and art can and ought to be on a higher plane, more intense, more concentrated, more typical, nearer the ideal, and therefore more universal than actual everyday life.**" This threw light on the problem for I'd jotted down those lines while looking at the scenery through the cabin porthole. If I wanted my work to reflect real life and be on a higher plane, I had to combine revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism. I had to know how to go to the heart of things: how to select useful material from everyday life so as to sing of the aspirations and the revolutionary heroism of the proletariat. With the earnest help of the crew, I tried hard to gain experience from life and then rewrote my poem.

This grand procession is a magnificent sight,
The wide Yangtse is filled like a busy thoroughfare,
When the lead raft enters Hupeh Province,
The last still lingers in far-away Szechuan.
.....

To fill urgent needs on both sides of the Great Wall,
Kueimen Gate has been opened to let the raft flotillas through.

I read my new poem to the boatmen. This time they nodded, and said that I had caught their revolutionary spirit. Thus through practice I came to understand that I must learn from Chairman Mao and use the method of integrating revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism. This is the only way that poetry can reflect the flame of revolution, the only way that its role of uniting and educating the people while attacking and destroying the enemy can be developed.

Yin Kuang-lan*

Amidst the upsurge of socialist construction throughout the country, two poems by our great leader Chairman Mao have been published. I cannot help expressing my joy in song:

Two new poems by Chairman Mao!
Each word a bold call to advance.
Eight hundred million heroes take their brushes in hand,
How enchantingly lovely, our vast land.
Two new poems by Chairman Mao!
Each word a shell to blast revisionism.
Revisionists tremble with fear, while everywhere
Unfurl the red banners of Marxism-Leninism.

I started singing and composing folk-songs after Liberation. At first it was for me a way of expressing my love for Chairman Mao and the new-found happiness of all of us poor and lower-middle peasants. The more I sang, the happier I felt. Afterward, when I began studying Chairman Mao's works, I understood that the poor and lower-middle peasants sing to voice the feelings of our class, not just the feelings of one individual. Thanks to the guidance of Chairman Mao's writings on literature and art, I have drunk at the fountain-head of creative writing, the people's commune. For some

*An outstanding peasant singer of Anhwei Province, well-known for the folk-songs she has composed. See *Chinese Literature* No. 7, 1974 for her poems *Chairman Mao Sends Me to the Rostrum* and *Golden Bull Ridge*.

years now I have been striving to strike root where the revolutionary struggles are, by living among the poor and lower-middle peasants. In this way, I have succeeded in writing folk-songs that the people love to sing. I have tried my best to express the love and hatred of the poor and lower-middle peasants, how they are learning from Tachai and fighting to harness rivers and transform mountains.

I am now studying Chairman Mao's poems and trying to put into practice the creative method of combining revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism. I hope to write more revolutionary folk-songs that the workers, peasants and soldiers can easily appreciate, memorize and sing. I often sing my songs in the fields or at gatherings and I ask for the masses' opinions in order to raise my creative level.

Chairman Mao's two magnificent poems have inspired me to strive harder to make folk-songs a weapon to serve the workers, peasants and soldiers and to carry on the struggle to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Shih Yung-fu*

A PLA man, I write poems in my spare time. During the inspiring years when I served at a sentry post in a northern border area, I wrote some fairly militant poems which stirred my companions. However, I gradually became influenced by the revisionist line in literature and art and began to use my pen as if it were a dainty embroidery needle. Intent on "skilful conception" and "refined language", I captured pleasant moments instead of reflecting the grandeur of real events. Many of my comrades-in-arms pointed out that my poems failed to depict current struggles. After studying Chairman Mao's essays on creative writing and his poetry, I realized that we revolutionary fighters should mirror vital events in life. Each poem should be a bugle call to urge the revolutionary masses onward, a dagger to thrust at the enemy. Since the beginning of the movement to criticize

*Two collections of his poetry *I Love the Highland* and *Thoughts at the Sentry Post* have been published. See *Chinese Literature* No. 4, 1968 for his poem *Long Live Chairman Mao*.

Lin Piao and Confucius in 1974, my comrades-in-arms and I have trounced Lin Piao and his gang, repudiating their crimes of negating the Cultural Revolution and attacking new socialist things. On reading my enthusiastic poems in praise of the Cultural Revolution and new socialist things, my comrades encouraged me: "Keep on like that and never stop writing impassioned, inspiring poems."

As I study Chairman Mao's two poems today, I am confident that I will carry out my resolve to grip my pen as I did my gun at the sentry post. I'll use it to stand guard on the front of proletarian poetry, ever ready to charge the enemy stronghold in order to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat.



On the Long Poem “The Song of Our Ideals”

The Song of Our Ideals published in this issue was written collectively by worker-peasant-soldier students who entered Peking University in 1972 to study in the Chinese Department. It is a long lyrical poem eulogizing the new socialist phenomenon of school-leavers going to the countryside to integrate themselves with workers and peasants. Brimming over with political enthusiasm, it reflects one aspect of the striking changes brought about by the revolution in education since the Cultural Revolution, providing eloquent proof that a splendid future lies ahead, for worthy successors have been trained to take over the mighty task of communist revolution which was pioneered by the older generation of revolutionaries. At the same time it expresses the fervour and lofty revolutionary ideals of the younger generation.

All people strive to realize certain ideals in the course of their daily life and struggles. They are drawn to these ideals as if by a magnet, and this is especially true of young people. But

What are the ideals of revolutionary youth?
How to interpret them,
How to carry them out?

This question is posed clearly in the introductory passage of this poem. This is indeed “a very serious test-paper” for all.

Each individual and each class will give a different answer to this question. The first section of the poem discloses from different angles of the class struggle and life in Chinese society the battles which have been waged over this question between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. This is a very fierce struggle. Youngsters “hoisted aloft the sails” of their ideals,

And the winds from all sides
Filled them, till they billowed.

The young revolutionaries advance in the tempests of class struggle, and their ideals become firmly established in the course of these fiery struggles, especially in the Cultural Revolution. As the poem says:

The mighty pens that depict our ideals
Must always express
The deepest class feelings;
Only by integrating with workers and peasants
Can we make progress
Along the only road leading
To our revolutionary ideals!

Once revolutionary ideals have been established, the poem very naturally turns to the question: How to realize them? The second section is mainly devoted to answering this question and describing the life and struggles of the educated youth in the countryside as they try to put their ideals into practice. The revolutionary ideals of the proletariat must be deeply rooted in the reality of mass struggle. And so responding to Chairman Mao’s great call, “**Young people with education go to the countryside . . .**” they go from Peking to Yanan, from the city to villages where they find ample scope and the soil best suited to the growth of the seeds of their ideals. Here they take root and grow to maturity.

The morning gong
Calling us to work
Strikes the first note
In the song of our ideals.

The blazing prairie fire
Has coloured red
The first lines
Of the lyric proclaiming our ideals.

.....

As the hammer rang, it reinforced
The song of our ideals
With the cadence of continued revolution.
The fire in the furnace
Tempered every single note
In the song of our ideals.

Only then did they truly realize:

There never could be any poetry
In individualistic ideals.
The ideals of revolutionary youth
Must be fashioned by the whole proletariat
Calling on millions upon millions to participate!
Our beautiful reality
And glorious ideals
Are tightly joined
By the red line of revolutionary struggle.

By this time the question may appear to have been answered; however, the poem does not end here. The third section, raising the question to the plane of the political struggles in the world today, further underlines the theme of the need to consolidate proletarian dictatorship and combat and prevent revisionism. With trenchant sarcasm the writers expose the shameless charges made by the renegade Lin Piao and the modern revisionists that for school-leavers to go to the countryside was "labour reform in disguise" and "Chinese youth have no ideals". But confronted by our younger generation of proletarian revolutionaries, these vilifications by the modern revisionists, just like the hopes of the imperialists who predicted that China's second and third generations would "change colour", are doomed to prove empty dreams.

The poem also depicts forcefully and passionately the militant spirit of these youngsters in the countryside, as well as the deep significance of the realization of their revolutionary ideals.

It is written on our great earth
And in the sky.
It's all written into the chronicle
Of our magnificent age
And written too into the ardent hearts
Of hundreds of millions of young people.
This is a great movement of rebellion
In the history of our times,
This is a battle against revisionism
That will shake the whole world.

Ending with a fervent crescendo, the poem reaches a magnificent climax, raising high the blazing torch of revolutionary ideals.

For a whole generation
Of Chinese youth with high aspirations,
The future is boundless.
Over a thousand perilous peaks
Across a boundless expanse of seething waves
Successors will come;
Much can be hoped for.

.....

"Our hope is placed on you."

Ah!
Hope is placed on us.

As a lyric with a political theme, this long poem has its own special artistic features and distinctive style. The question it poses is a crucial one in our political life, that of how to bring up the younger generation and what kind of successors we should train. To pose and answer this question, the writers use the method of integrating revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism, using typical and evocative images and poetic language. An example is the description of how these young revolutionaries, once their ideals are clearly defined, proceed to carry them out in practice. Outside the wall of Chungnanhai where Chairman Mao lives, they write their pledge:

"We're going to the countryside
To make a thorough-going revolution."
Each word so large it covered
Eight whole sheets of paper.
We spent the hours writing

From dusk till dawn,
For we wanted our beloved
Chairman Mao to see from his windows,
In the glow of the rosy morning clouds,
Our pledge of determination,
And smile with satisfaction.

Their revolutionary fervour and heartfelt feeling are expressed through such vivid images and concrete actions that we seem to hear the beating of their hearts. Another instance is when the poem describes how these youngsters are re-educated by the poor and lower-middle peasants and the older generation of revolutionaries.

On a night of raging blizzard,
My blunt old pick
Suddenly disappeared.
Following footprints I reached the end of the village
Where, from the mouth of a cave, a red hot furnace glowed.
My old pick was being reinforced with steel.
An "Old Eighth Router" sat by the bellows,
His cheeks rosy under a thatch of frost-white hair.

Graphic and poetic images of this kind express abstract ideas and deep truths in so natural a way that their impact is not confined to the youngsters described in this poem but also moves its readers.

The authors of this long poem were born after the birth of New China, brought up under the red flag.

When I opened my eyes
For the first time,
Our motherland
Was bathed in the rosy light of dawn.
My first steps
Were taken
On the deck of our red vessel
While, rushing towards us,
Great foam-capped waves came rolling
As our speeding vessel plied its course.

The narrator and chief character of this poem represents the whole group who wrote it. So in a sense the central character is the millions of educated youngsters who have gone to the countryside and

produced this poem with their experience of fiery life and struggles, while the worker-peasant-soldier students of the Chinese Department of Peking University have simply written down the poem on their behalf. For these students too had settled down in the countryside, and were then recommended by the poor and lower-middle peasants to receive higher education. After graduation from university they would return to the vast countryside to continue realizing their revolutionary ideals.

This selection of youngsters from the ranks of workers, peasants and soldiers to study in college and then return to work at their former posts is, like sending school-leavers to the countryside, just one of the new phenomena in the proletarian revolution in our educational system. These worker-peasant-soldier students have acute political consciousness as well as comparatively rich practical experience, two of the most important requisites for doing literary or other work. This is a poem written by students with these qualifications who have collected a wealth of material on outstanding young people and their deeds during their study in the university and then written it up by abstracting it and blending it with their own experience and feelings.

Reading this long poem, we cannot but be stirred by the proletarian revolutionary ardour expressed in it and the heroism of these young people advancing in struggle. It assures us that the mighty task started by our forerunners is going vigorously ahead, being carried on by worthy successors. This gives us every confidence in the future!

Some New Woodcuts

Since the Cultural Revolution, millions of young people have gone straight from school to settle in the countryside and in border regions. They have gone, full of confidence, to where the motherland needs them most to receive re-education from the poor and lower-middle peasants and to play their part in the construction of our new socialist countryside. These youngsters are now working keenly at various posts, and everywhere throughout the country one hears of exemplary characters among them, as well as exemplary deeds and new modes of life. The five woodcuts reproduced in this issue depict some of their activities and acclaim this new socialist phenomenon.

These woodcuts reflect the fighting spirit and firm resolve of our educated youth who have integrated themselves with the poor and lower-middle peasants. One of them, *Our Region Needs People Like You*, shows an old man of the Yi nationality welcoming school-leavers who have come to the mountainous region of Liangshan in southwest China. Smiling, the old man has taken the hands of two of the new arrivals in his own massive hands, demonstrating the Yi people's warm feeling for these youngsters. This pair, a boy and a girl, as

well as their classmates around them, look happy and deeply moved, evincing their genuine eagerness to be re-educated and their determination to help reconstruct this mountain region. In addition to depicting characters this woodcut also shows the surroundings in detail: the works of Chairman Mao which the school-leavers have received as a gift as well as the mattocks to which red flowers have been tied, and the ten-year plan on the wall. All these details help to emphasize the main theme.

An Yi Village Welcomes Newcomers deals with a similar subject but its artistic treatment is different. It depicts some demobbed PLA soldiers who instead of going to work in the cities have volunteered to settle down among the Yi nationality in Liangshan, eager to take part in the reconstruction of the socialist rural areas. The background shows a mountain village in spring and Yi villagers, young and old, men and women, are welcoming these new arrivals come to join them. An old Yi woman, her face beaming, is clasping a woman soldier by the shoulders as if greeting a member of her own family, while another woman soldier, looking in the direction pointed out by a little Yi girl, has on her face an expression of delight and high hopes for her new home.

Poems for the Grassland presents a girl fresh from school who has come to settle down in the Mongolian grassland. School-leavers have made their way to all parts of the vast grassland, and every state farm is a battleground for them. The spirited school-leaver in this woodcut is wearing a broad leather belt and carrying a rifle on her back, just like a sentinel guarding her motherland's border. Both with her actions and her pen she is writing stirring poems for the grassland. The composition is balanced and lively, the atmosphere poetic. Close by, horses are grazing in the lush grass; further off are a high pylon and herds of cattle. The strokes are bold and fluid, meticulous but not finical. The contrasts of large areas of black and white give the whole picture added forcefulness, emphasizing the heroic spirit of this young girl.

The two coloured woodcuts done by the traditional Chinese method of wood-block printing have made good use of old techniques to depict modern life. Such printing involves four different processes:

drawing, engraving on wood-blocks, then printing and mounting. The drawing and engraving of these coloured woodcuts were done by the artists themselves. *A Barefoot Doctor of the Yi Nationality* shows a girl full of revolutionary ideals and verve carrying her medical kit and an umbrella through the wind and rain as she makes a tour of mountain villages to visit her patients. Her devotion to serving the people is seen in her honest face and rapt expression. The depiction is concise but full of meaning. Her red scarf evokes the splendour of ardent youth, while her pale blue sleeves and the embroidered border of her tunic suggest her serenity and serve as an effective foil to her pure, simple features. The colours of the background and the peach blossom in bloom provide a strong contrast of green and red, giving the picture an exotic flavour.

New Sisters of the Grassland portrays a Han girl learning Tibetan from a Tibetan girl. It conveys that their close friendship is based on the ideal of serving the autonomous region, an ideal shared by the Hans and the Tibetans. In the use of colours, the artist has paid attention to the special features of this region.

CHRONICLE

National Dance Festival

During January and February this year a national festival of dances (solos, pas de deux and pas de trois), the first of its kind since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, was held in Peking.

Participants in this festival came from fifty-one professional and amateur troupes of various provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, including some from central government organs and army units. They put on two hundred and sixty-two items, all produced in recent years. The whole repertoire accorded warm praise to the Cultural Revolution and new socialist things. It reflected actual class struggles and depicted praiseworthy deeds in the revolutionary mass movements of learning from Taching in industry and learning from Tachai in agriculture, as well as in the work of strengthening preparedness against war and national defence.

A salient feature of this dance festival was that all the items, taking class struggle as the key link and adhering to the Party's basic line, strove to mirror the militant life of workers, peasants and soldiers in the three revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment.

It could be seen from this dance festival that successful attempts had been made to create the images of worker-peasant-soldier heroes through the art of dancing. A number of items were also the result of implementing Chairman Mao's directive, "**Make the past serve**

the present and foreign things serve China” by drawing on the vocabulary of the ballet and Chinese folk dances and remoulding some of their vital modes of expression for the portrayal of workers, peasants and soldiers.

The festival likewise testified to the growth of a contingent of dancers who are doing their best to carry out Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line in literature and art. Newly emerging forces are maturing. If not for the Cultural Revolution, it is inconceivable that worker-peasant-soldier amateurs could have taken part in a national dance festival. But today we see images of workers, peasants and soldiers created on the stage by workers, peasants and soldiers themselves, the creators of history.

National Acrobatics Festival

In March this year Peking saw the opening of the National Acrobatics Festival. Participating in this festival were thirty-two troupes from twenty-seven provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions as well as the Kwangchow, Kunming and Shenyang units of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, the Railway Engineering Corps and the Railway Administration.

Acrobatics have a long history in our country. Since the Cultural Revolution, the art has taken on new lustre in the vigorous development of the revolution in art and literature marked by the appearance of the model revolutionary theatrical works. Vividly reflecting the Chinese people’s buoyant, fearless revolutionary spirit, acrobatics are very popular with worker-peasant-soldier audiences.

This festival was a review of the fruitful results of the revolution in acrobatic art throughout the nation. It showed that further progress has been made in the implementation of Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line on literature and art as well as his principles: “Let a hundred flowers blossom; weed through the old to bring forth the new” and “Make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China”. It also contributed significantly to increasing

the fruits of the proletarian revolution in literature and art and promoting the development of socialist acrobatics.

Works by Young People in the Countryside

A series of works written by educated young people who have settled down in the countryside were published recently by the Shanghai People’s Publishing House. These new books warmly acclaim the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the splendid deeds of young people who have gone to work in the countryside — a new socialist phenomenon in China.

The collection of short stories entitled *Spring on a Farm*, through descriptions of different aspects of the militant life on a state farm, vividly reflects the healthy growth of the educated young people in the vast rural areas, conjuring up the images of a number of young fighters determined to devote themselves to farming.

The novel *Waves of the Sword River* relates how a group of Shanghai school-leavers go to settle in Sword River Commune to make revolution and how, together with the poor and lower-middle peasants, they struggle against class enemies, erroneous lines and natural calamities. Through these episodes the novel shows that China’s younger generation, tempered in the Cultural Revolution, is advancing forward like the rolling waves of the Sword River.

Demarcation Line is a novel depicting the militant life of educated young people working on a farm in Heilungkiang Province. It mirrors the fierce struggle between Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line and the revisionist line in the course of running the farm.

Sweat Songs, a collection of poems, eulogizes the arduous struggles of young people working on both sides of the Tianshan Mountains and in the villages beside the Heilung River. Rich in local flavour, the verses express these youngsters’ strong revolutionary spirit and their determination to conquer nature.

The writers of these new works are educated young people who have taken part in the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle,

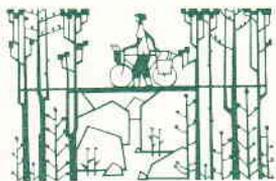
the struggle for production and scientific experiment. Their works are distinguished by political enthusiasm and strong militancy. The publication of this series marks another victory on our literary front. It serves to encourage those young people who have settled in the countryside to make further efforts to integrate themselves with the workers and peasants and to create more and better literary and art works.



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