

A stylized landscape illustration in a folk-art style. The top shows dark, rounded hills with small, simple buildings on their peaks. Below, a wide, light-colored path or road winds through a green valley. On the left, a cluster of traditional Chinese houses with dark roofs is nestled among pink blossoms. The foreground is dominated by more pink blossoms and a few more houses. The overall color palette is muted, with greens, pinks, and greys on a light background.

Report from

TUNGTING

— A PEOPLE'S COMMUNE
ON TAIHU LAKE

WU CHOU

Report from Tungting
— A People's Commune
on Taihu Lake

Wu Chou

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Publisher's Note

In 1973, *Peking Review* printed in installments an account entitled "A Visit to the Tungting People's Commune," which received readers' favourable response. This booklet under the present title gives the entire account, with some parts elaborated by the author.

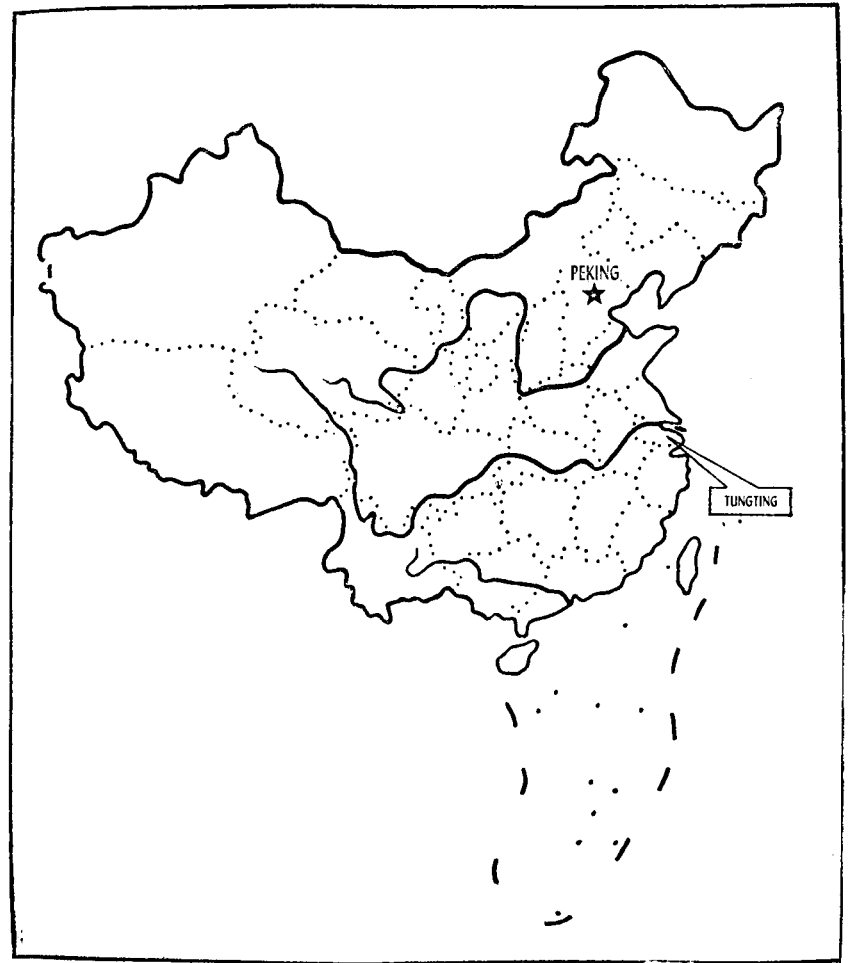
Within these pages is basic information concerning this average people's commune, including its founding and functions, political and economic conditions, the position of women, progress in health work and overall improvement in the commune members' livelihood. Its publication is undertaken with the hope that it will enhance our readers' understanding of the essential features of the Chinese people's commune.

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The Tungting People's Commune on the Map of China



I. How the Commune Started

THE Tungting People's Commune in Wuhsien County, Kiangsu Province, is situated southwest of the well-known city of Soochow. Formed in 1958 by the merger of 20 advanced agricultural producers' co-operatives in the East Hills area, Tungting is a peninsular commune on the shore of Taihu Lake.

Scenically located on fertile land, the commune has 11,000 families, or 45,000 people altogether. There are 30 production brigades, a total of 237 production teams, engaged in farming and other occupations. Some specialize mainly in food grain, fruit or tea production, while others take fishing and sericulture as their main lines. Pilochn tea, the white-peel loquat and the Tungting tangerine are local products widely known both at home and abroad.

Reminders of the Bitter Past

The Tungting Hills, land of beauty and abundance, were before the liberation a paradise for the wealthy, who built their villas here and lived in great luxury. The East Hills hostel is located in one of those villas and still shows signs of the exploiters' former extravagance. On entering the main building, one sees illustrations from historical tales, the main theme of which is the feudal code of ethics, carved in brick or wood on the gate tower, doors, window frames

and eaves. To the left of the building is an elaborate rock garden with a pond, a zigzag bridge and other natural or artificial scenes.

Some 50 years ago, a certain landlord used 3,700 taels of gold from the fortune he had squeezed from the local people to build this "carved mansion," which took three years to complete. Still, he was not the richest of the gentry in those parts before the liberation. The richest and most notorious landlords and gentry were four other families, and this landlord ranked sixth on the list of the most wealthy. These insatiable vampires owned over 75 per cent of East Hills' cultivated land. Riding roughshod over the people during their lifetimes, they did not relinquish their hold on the soil even after death, for their tombs occupied as much as 1,800 *mu* of good farmland.

As for the peasants in those dark pre-liberation days, apart from paying exorbitant rents to the landlords, they were subjected to all kinds of exploitation by blood-sucking merchants. No matter how hard they worked all year, they could scarcely keep alive. "Tangerines are red on the hill-sides, but our hands are empty." "The rice is golden-ripe, but we go to bed hungry." This is how the peasants described their misery in those dark days. Of the total 427 peasant families in Tuchiao village before liberation, 81 were reduced to beggary, 18 were forced to sell their children and 92 became farm labourers.

People's Communes Are Fine!

Liberation brought tremendous changes to the East Hills area after land reform was carried out and mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' co-operatives were formed. In

the three years following the establishment of co-operatives of the advanced type, total output of fruit, tea, fish, silk-worm cocoons and grain rose 47-90 per cent as compared with the time of elementary agricultural producers' co-operatives.* These initial achievements inspired the cadres and peasants with a greater enthusiasm in taking the socialist road and expanding farm production. However, they found the advanced co-ops still too small in scale and limited in manpower and funds, and were eager to organize into larger units.

Before the people's communes, many advanced co-ops were already helping one another in order to overcome difficulties they could not cope with alone. For example, the Hungkuang No. 2 Co-operative, which lacked manpower, reclaimed 1,500 *mu* of barren hill slope with the help of 800 members from five neighbouring co-ops. Another example is the Hsinmin Co-op which two other co-ops helped with a loan to buy a much needed 30-h.p. diesel engine. These and other instances opened the eyes of the cadres and peasants. They came to realize that more people meant greater strength and that bigger co-ops were superior to smaller ones.

From the winter of 1957 to the summer of 1958, farm capital construction centring around water conservancy projects reached a new high throughout China's countryside. This required far more manpower and material resources.

* These were co-operatives of a semi-socialist nature which were first formed in 1951. The co-op members pooled their land and major means of production as shares. Besides remuneration from labour, they received a certain amount of payment for the land and other means of production which they had put in.

Advanced agricultural producers' co-operatives of a socialist nature began to take shape in 1956. Co-op members worked together and were paid on the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work." All land and major means of production were collectively owned and payment was no longer made for them.

After the Founding

Through their own experience the peasants became increasingly aware that co-ops such as theirs no longer suited the need for greatly expanded production and must be enlarged. In some places people were considering merging their co-ops into a unit as large as a township (*hsiang**) and integrate it with the township government administration.

In the spring of 1958 four co-ops in the East Hills area merged on their own initiative. Later, another 13 followed suit. By this time, large, integrated "people's communes" had come into being in many parts of the country. Chairman Mao promptly summed up this experience and creation of the masses, pointing out: "**People's communes are fine.**"

On August 29, 1958 the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party adopted the "Resolution on the Establishment of People's Communes in the Rural Areas." It pointed out: "The people's communes are the logical result of the march of events. Large and comprehensive, they have not only made their appearance but are already widespread in several places. They are developing very rapidly in some areas and it is highly probable that there will soon be an upsurge in setting up people's communes throughout the country. This trend is irresistible."

Responding promptly to the call of the Party Central Committee and Chairman Mao, the peasants of two large and three small co-ops in the East Hills area requested urgently to form a people's commune. Within three days over 8,000 families totalling some 30,000 people applied for membership, and on September 21, 1958 the Tungting People's Commune came to be.

* An administrative unit below county level before the people's communes were formed.

Just as Chairman Mao has pointed out, the people's commune is characterized by being "**big and public.**" "Big" means that it is larger than the advanced co-op. With more land, more people and more funds, it can use manpower and the means of production more rationally. "Public" means that the commune has a higher degree of collective ownership than the advanced co-op.

The whole Tungting area has changed tremendously since the commune was set up. Multiple tiers of terraced fields with dense tangerine groves dominate the scene along a 20-kilometre stretch of lakeshore hillside lying east to west. At the foot of the hills is a delightful panorama of paddy fields and fish ponds. In 1973 the commune again had good harvests of their staple products: rice, wheat, rapeseed, fruit, tea, silkworm cocoons, pigs and sheep, and aquatic products.

Reclamation of reed marshes has brought more land into use. In 1958 when the commune was formed, there were 8,000 *mu* each of orchards, mulberry groves, fish ponds and paddy fields. All of these are larger now.

The commune's 980 *mu* of tangerine groves yielded a million kilogrammes of fruit in 1958. The area has now doubled and yearly output increased four and a half times. The commune members in Hsinmin Production Brigade have put in 43,000 workdays since 1964 building terraced fields with stone embankments where tangerine trees grow well.

Since the commune was set up, the use of land among production teams has been reasonably and fairly adjusted. A typical example was the Chienkuo Production Brigade, whose fish ponds were scattered along 16 streams. Some were five or six kilometres apart, making them very difficult to look after. Now none of the Chienkuo brigade ponds

are more than two to three kilometres apart, making management much easier. This adjustment pleases the members and results in far better yield.

Practice over the past 15 years has given ample proof that the people's commune has greater strength than the advanced co-ops in combating the elements and ensuring production. On the fringes of Taihu Lake there were 7,000 *mu* of fish ponds, nearly 3,000 *mu* of mulberry groves and 2,500 *mu* of cropland, and every water table rise was a threat to the fish ponds. Flood-waters in 1954 carried away all the fish and caused other damage. To correct this situation, the commune organized the collective effort of its production brigades and teams to enclose ponds, mulberry groves and cropland with 5,800 metres of embankments including five sluice-gates. They put in 350,000 workdays in the winter-spring of 1964-65 doing this.

An exceptionally heavy spring snowfall hit the East Hills area in March 1970, damaging and breaking the branches of some 30,000 tangerine and other fruit trees. But, under the commune's unified leadership, manpower and material resources were concentrated to tie up all fractured boughs and, with meticulous follow-up care, there was a good fruit harvest that year. In 1924, according to older peasants, there had been a lighter snowfall than in 1970 which, however, had resulted in serious calamity to the area, destroying 200 *mu* of tangerine orchards and bringing great distress to the growers. The contrast greatly inspired the peasants and increased their confidence in the people's commune as a larger collective. "People's communes are really fine!" they said.

More people, funds and other resources have enabled the commune to expand production faster. The commune's total income is almost twice what it was with the advanced co-ops, and the production brigades have been able to buy

big and medium-sized farm implements and machinery. The commune now has 281 diesel motors for irrigation pumps, 21 grain and fodder mills, 299 power-driven threshers, 24 tractors and 1,200 sprayers of various types. Farming processes are increasingly mechanized, while irrigation, threshing and food and fodder processing are being partially or completely mechanized. The number of commune-run factories and other enterprises is growing.

Increased production is accompanied by a constant rise in the commune members' living standards. Before liberation, per-capita income in the area averaged 36 yuan a year. It rose to 80 yuan at the time of the advanced co-ops and in 1973 jumped to 133 yuan (not including income from side-line occupations of individual households).

In the old days there were very few primary schools and only one middle school, for the poverty-stricken peasants could not afford to send their children to school then. Today the commune has eight middle and 36 primary schools. Every village has its primary school.

Scientific research groups of cadres, old peasants and young agro-technicians have been formed.

Marked progress has also been made in health work. The adoption of co-operative medicine has brought medical care to the rural population.

Thinking of the difficulties under the small-peasant economy, the commune members proudly say of the achievements they have made by relying on collective effort: "We are no longer like sparrows skipping along, but are now like eagles flying."

II. Integrating Government Administration with Commune Management

THE people's commune is a social structure that integrates government administration with commune management. It is at once a basic economic organization and a grass-roots unit of state power in China's socialist countryside.

Before the founding of the people's commune, the township people's council was the basic unit of socialist state power in the rural areas, while the advanced agricultural producers' co-operatives were the basic economic organizations—a separation of government administration and economic management under the township council and the co-ops respectively. The commune as formed in 1958 was virtually the merger of the many advanced co-ops within the confines of a township. It was under direct county leadership and in turn led the production brigades and teams.

The people's commune exercises state power and organizes its own economic activities related to production, distribution and consumption. People often call this the system of integrating government administration with commune management, or the five-in-one unit administering industry, agriculture, trade, education and military affairs.

The leading organ of the Tungting People's Commune, its revolutionary committee, has 36 members, of whom seven

are women. All committee members are elected by the peasants. Most do not leave production. Led by the commune Party committee, they practise collective leadership, while each has a special duty in leading one of the above five branches of work.

The commune helps the brigades and teams to work out their production plans, and supervises and checks up on their implementation. It also lends a hand in improving their administrative and financial work and distribution of income, and spreads advanced experience and methods among them in order to increase production.

Before the commune there were no factories or workshops. Then after 1958 the commune, with its larger size and greater strength, built about a dozen one after another. Set up to serve agriculture, they are a great asset in developing farm production. The fodder processing mills, for example, have facilitated pig-raising, while the fruit processing plant not only augments the production teams' income but also accumulates more funds for the commune. Fruit that rotted at harvest time because it could not be transported out quickly enough is now processed on the spot at this plant, and the losses avoided.

With the unified leadership of the commune, trade is more closely geared to agricultural production and other local needs. Basing themselves on the commune's over-all production plan, the trading organizations assess and supply the amounts of chemical fertilizers, insecticides, farm implements and other items needed by the brigades and teams. Also in accordance with the plan, they make prompt purchases of farm and side-line products and arrange proper outlets for them. Their supply and marketing services help considerably to boost production.

The trading organizations often take the initiative in helping the commune to expand its production. To meet the increasing market for timber, they proposed planting more trees. The commune subsequently decided to add 400 *mu* of bamboo and 1,000 *mu* of cedar and paulownia to its 1973 plan. The production brigades were given assignments suited to local conditions, the saplings being supplied at the right time by the trading organizations.

In 1973, following another good harvest, the production teams drew 1.6 million yuan from the bank for distribution among their members. According to past experience, the bank estimated that half of that sum would be redeposited as personal savings, 300,000 yuan kept on hand by members and the rest spent. The trading organizations immediately sent people out to learn what the commune members needed and then placed orders with the county commercial department for goods from Shanghai, Soochow and other cities. The commune leadership studies this problem of supply with the financial and commercial offices each year after the autumn harvest, since it directly concerns the life of the people.

Before the commune was set up, the schools were under the sole leadership of the county bureau for culture and education, which had little connection with the agricultural co-operatives. With the commune, the schools came under the dual leadership of the bureau and the commune. So, in the light of government policy and of local conditions and needs, the commune is in a position to handle educational affairs in a planned way, readjust the distribution of schools, train teachers and improve the quality of teaching. The Tungting commune has instituted universal education for children of school age. To develop their love for labour, they are given some farm work in the busy seasons accord-

ing to their age and ability. The teachers were formerly all appointed by the county, but since the commune was founded and the number of schools increased, teachers available from the county no longer sufficed. So the commune decided to train teachers from among its own young people. It also invites members of poor and lower-middle peasant origin to hold class and take a direct hand in running the schools.

All production brigades and teams have militia organizations. They have regular daily practice and sentry duty — indispensable to defending the dictatorship of the proletariat and the fruits of collective labour. As a shock force in productive work, the militia always volunteers for any hard job.

This brief account is to show that the integration of government administration and commune management results in close co-ordination of all commune activities and favours the building of a new, socialist countryside.

III. The Three-Level System of Ownership

— the Commune, Production Brigade and Production Team

THE collective ownership system of China's people's communes at their present stage generally operates at three levels—the commune, production brigade and production team. Ownership of the means of production, including farmland, forests, water resources, farm machinery and tools, draught animals, small factories and mines, is divided among the three levels. Ownership by the commune or production brigade is not yet the basic form; it is the production team that exercises basic ownership. This also applies to the Tungting People's Commune.

The Commune

The main function of the commune, insofar as production is concerned, is to help the production brigades and teams develop agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, sideline occupations and fishery. The means of production owned by the commune are usually confined to those enterprises and facilities which the production brigades and teams

are unable to handle, or which are more suitable for management under the commune.

At Tungting, these include a farm machinery repair shop, a sapling nursery, a fish hatchery, a fruit-processing plant, several fodder-processing shops, a brick and tile kiln, some irrigation stations, as well as several small quarries yielding granite, kaolin and sand. Most of these serve farm production and the peasants' daily life; the rest provide raw materials for state-owned industries. Together, they play an important role in consolidating and developing the rural socialist collective economy.

The fruit-processing plant has solved for the production teams the problem of fruit rotting arising from delayed delivery to the market. In 1971, for instance, three days and nights of heavy rainfall held up the loquat shipments. The plant processed them as a confection and prevented any loss. In 1972, there was an exceptionally good harvest of arbutus fruit. Although the teams did their best to ship out the crop promptly, they were still left with 25,000 kilogrammes on their hands. These were quickly processed at the plant, and saved.

Starting virtually from scratch in several small rooms, the plant had no funds in its early days. It began by processing the fruit sent in by the production teams, paying them after selling the products. Thus it gradually accumulated funds to expand and buy more equipment. Now, with an annual processing capacity of 750,000 kilogrammes of fruit, the plant, though still crudely equipped, had added 300,000 yuan to the commune treasury by the end of 1973.

Profits from commune-run enterprises mostly go into expanding reproduction. In 1958, when the commune was first set up, it had only this fruit-processing plant. A fish hatchery and farm machinery repair shop were added before

the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began in 1966. With earnings derived from these three enterprises, the commune later founded 12 more. The 15 establishments, with a total staff of 500, play an indispensable part in promoting the commune's economy at the three levels.

The Production Brigade

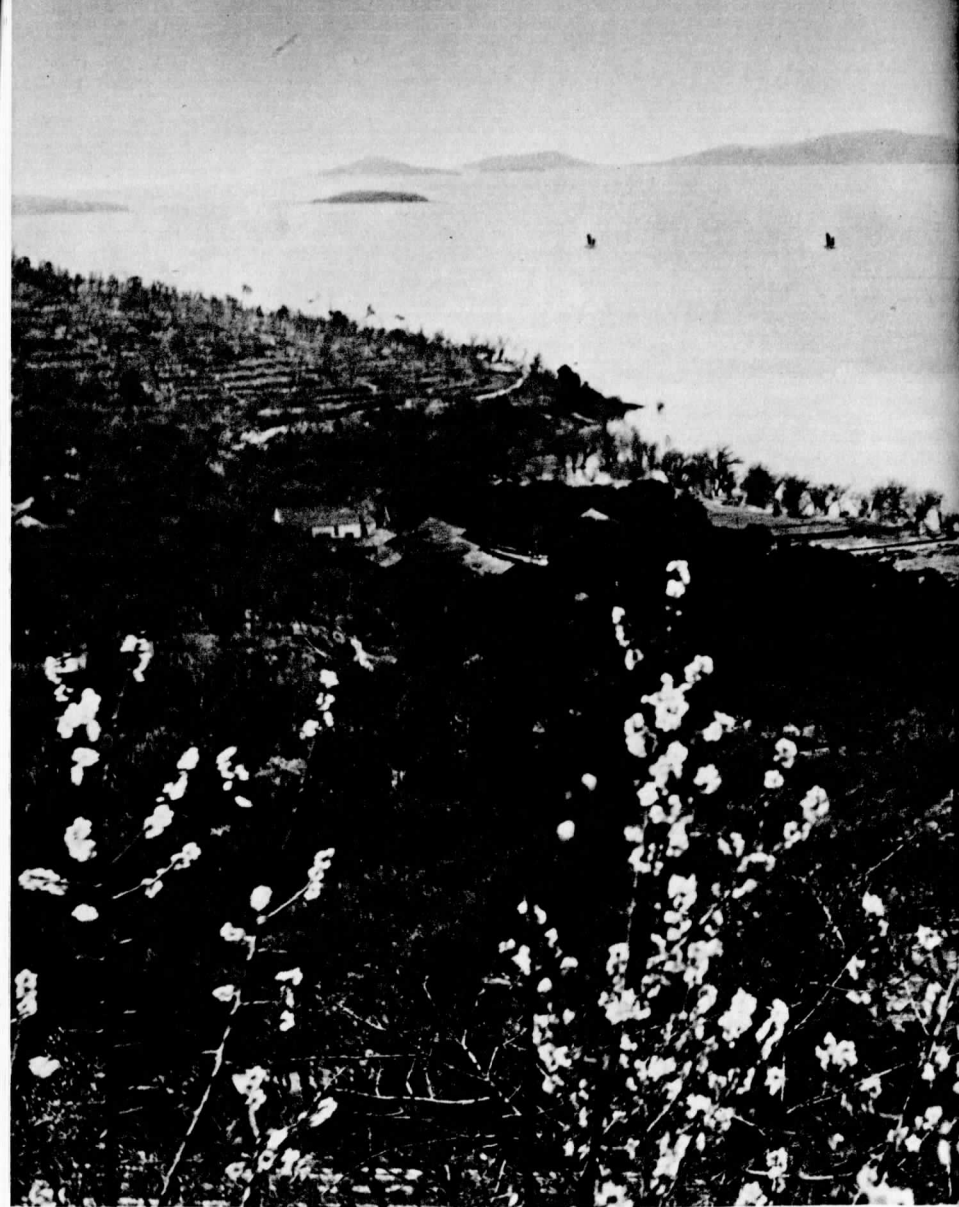
The production brigade, functioning under commune leadership, directs its teams in production and administration. The brigade participates in the preparation of the teams' production plans, and guides, examines and supervises their production, income distribution and financial work. It helps them improve management, initiates and runs brigade-wide water conservancy and other farm capital construction projects and, when necessary, organizes joint undertakings between the teams.

The production brigade also runs enterprises or undertakings which are beyond the strength of production teams, or are more suitable for management under the brigade. Take the Chenkuang brigade for example. It has a fodder-processing shop, a farm tool shop and a boat repair yard, which are smaller than commune-run enterprises. All these plus four tractors and a water pump serve its eight teams.

The brigade also attends to its own civil affairs, militia, public security, cultural activities, education and public health. It helps the teams implement the Party's policies and principles. In 1972, when the commune asked the Chenkuang brigade to plant 30 *mu* to watermelon, the plans submitted by the production teams, however, all but doubled the quota. They obviously saw greater profits in watermelons. But this would in turn necessitate a reduction in



Expanse of fish ponds and paddy fields.



Spring in Tungting Hills.

Building hills into terraced fields, Taisung Production Brigade.



The commune leaders join in productive labour.



Protecting tangerine groves against insect pests, Hungkuang Production Brigade.

Drying arbutus fruit in the yard of the fruit-processing plant.





The commune Party committee planning for a new leap forward.

the area sown to grain. To solve this problem, the brigade called a meeting of team cadres to study the Party's policy of taking grain as the key link while ensuring all-round development of other branches of production. As a result, the team cadres voluntarily reduced the area of their watermelon fields. This shows how the production brigade gives leadership to the teams through policy study or education by examples, instead of relying on administrative orders.

Production Team — the Basic Accounting Unit

Ownership at the production team level is basic at the present stage of development. Within the team's area, all land, and all forest and water resources other than those managed by the state, as well as draught animals, farm implements and small farm machinery, belong to the team. Neither the commune nor the production brigade can use them without compensation.

At the present stage, commune members have small plots for private use and can go in for some domestic side-line occupations. Their incomes, bank savings, houses and other means of livelihood are privately owned and protected by the state.

The production team is the basic accounting unit in the commune. In other words, it organizes production and distribution of income, handles its own accounting and is responsible for its own profits or losses. As conditions gradually develop, the current basic ownership at the production team level will switch to that at the production brigade level and then the commune level, which will eventually pass over

to socialist state ownership. But this will be a fairly long and gradual process.

We now give an account of No. 8 Production Team of the Chenkuang brigade to help readers get a factual understanding of the production team as the basic accounting unit.

Chenkuang No. 8 Team is run by a committee of nine, including the team leader, the deputy leader and seven members. They give collective leadership to the team, sharing among themselves responsibility for political and ideological work, production, finance and accounting, work among women, the militia and other tasks. The team leaders and other committee members are elected by the team membership through democratic process. They all participate in farm work.

The part of the country south of the Yangtze River, crisscrossed by numerous watercourses, is noted for its dense population, and No. 8 Team is no exception. With 161 people in 46 households, the team has only 119 *mu* of irrigated land, half of which is lakeside land reclaimed after the commune was set up. This averages less than one *mu* (1/15 hectare) per person. There are 20 *mu* each of mulberry groves and fish ponds, a house for mushroom cultivation, a chicken yard and a number of pigsties. Over the past dozen years the team has accumulated enough funds to buy a walking-tractor, an electric motor and a green-fodder crusher, two grain threshers, a concrete boat and several hundred small farm implements. All these belong to the team, which has the exclusive right to use them. Under no circumstances can land be leased, bought or sold.

Generally speaking, a production team does not have an office as such, team cadres carrying out their tasks either in the fields or at home. The team leader has a thorough grasp of his team's conditions. For example, No. 8 Team's land

is divided into 82 plots. The team leader knows them by heart; he can tell at once what is planted on each plot and what the land is like. The team's production plan is drawn up in the following way:

The county authority first assigns tasks to the communes, taking into consideration their land, population and productive capacity. The communes then work out tentative cropping plans and send them to the production brigades, which in turn make their proposals to the production teams. In the light of the state plan and the needs of its own members, the team works out a production plan which is subject to approval at a general meeting of team members.

The drawing up of a production plan is not all plain sailing. There are often different views. In recent years two crops of rice and one crop of wheat a year have been planted here instead of one each as in the past. At first, when some team members proposed to follow the examples of the advanced communes and teams by changing rice cultivation from one to two crops a year, a dispute arose. Most members were in favour, but a few with conservative ideas showed reluctance for fear of failure. The team committee organized a general study and discussion on the matter, and the few dissenters began to see the importance of boosting the output of grain. It was then unanimously agreed to switch to double-crop rice and work out a feasible plan accordingly. The team's grain output continuously increased in the last ten years, and the amount of surplus grain sold to the state rose from 2,000 kilogrammes in 1962 to over 30,000 kilogrammes in 1973.

While the team obtained higher grain output, its sideline production dropped. As a result, the members' income had remained at about the same level. In 1971, when the team's production plan was being discussed, they raised the

point. A decision was made on the basis of their opinions to rear more silkworms and pigs and go in for other side-line occupations such as raising chickens and geese, growing mushrooms and cultivating pearls from mud clams. Consequently, income from side-line products in 1973 rose by 67 per cent over 1972. The present area of the team's mushroom beds has increased from 700 to 1,400 square metres, and the number of chickens from 300 to 1,000. The growth in side-line production has supplied the market with more commodities and, at the same time, increased the team members' income.

The following is a statement of income and expenditure of No. 8 Team for the year 1973 (in yuan).

Total income	50,167
From sale of surplus grain, oil-bearing crops and side-line products such as pigs, chickens, fish and silkworm cocoons.	
Total expenditure	25,603
For purchase of seed, fertilizer, insecticide and fodder, fees for tractor service, miscellaneous expenses and agricultural tax.	
Net income (48.7 per cent of the year's total income)	24,564

Owing to the People's Government policy of stabilizing and not increasing the agricultural tax when production rises, the proportion of the tax in the production team's annual total income steadily decreased. In 1971, for instance, the agricultural tax was 2.6 per cent of No. 8 Team's total

income. It dropped to 1.68 per cent in 1973 because both grain and side-line production went up.

Distribution is carried out according to the socialist principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work and more pay for more work." Those who take part in collective labour are paid according to work-points earned, which are based on assessment of both the quantity and the quality of the work done. The value of each work-point is fixed by the team in the light of the level of production in the current year. The number of work-points earned by the team members vary and their shares from the annual distribution vary accordingly.

The production team's plan for the distribution of income at the end of each year is finalized only after discussion at the general meeting of the members. This is one aspect of democracy in economic affairs. At the meeting, the team leader reports on the year's income, expenditure and balance, and reaffirms the state's policy regarding distribution—a policy which takes into account the interests of the state, the collective and the individual, and is designed to enable the peasants to increase their income every normal year on the basis of increased production. The plan of distribution is then submitted to the members for general discussion.

After setting apart a small portion of the net income for public accumulation, the remainder is distributed among the team members according to the principle of "to each according to his work and more pay for more work."

Public accumulation consists of the public reserve fund and public welfare fund. The former goes for expanded reproduction. The latter is spent on social insurance and collective welfare services such as nurseries and canteens during busy farming seasons, partial reimbursement of mem-

bers' medical expenditures under co-operative medicine, and subsidies for the old and disabled who are unable to do physical work and have no family to support them.

Acting on the plan formed through discussion at the general meeting, the team's accountant works out each household's and each individual's share of income on the basis of their work-points for the whole year. No. 8 Team averaged 124 yuan per person in 1973. This is not a high income, but a peasant family has little expense except for food grain and clothing. The peasants supply themselves with vegetables, meat and eggs from their private plots and side-line occupations and generally live in their own houses. Therefore, after the charges for food grain and firewood have been deducted from their share, the members still have something left to buy furnishings and daily necessities.

IV. Diversified Economy

THE Tungting People's Commune is a scene of growing prosperity. Its members have relied on collective strength to terrace and afforest the once barren hills and reclaim large tracts of lake bed by building a dyke in the lake. The East Hills are now beautifully mantled in green, with pine and cypress on the slopes, and orchards, tea farms and groves of mulberry and bamboo in the valleys. Fish ponds sparkle in the sunshine; paddy fields extend to the lake shore; reeds for industrial use and edible water plants grow thickly in the shoal. The fragrance of rice and fruit blend delightfully.

In 1973, despite excessive rainfall, the commune's eight main crops again registered a good harvest. Grain output was 379 per cent, fruit 441 per cent, silkworm cocoons 241 per cent and aquatic products 285 per cent above the 1949 figure.

Rice Growing

"Take grain as the key link and ensure an all-round development" expresses China's policy in agriculture.

The Tungting People's Commune produces mainly fruit, tea and other cash crops. Before 1969, it had to rely on the government for the bulk of its food grain, buying from state

stores 7.5 million kilogrammes a year. The commune Party committee considered the question of whether to carry out the government policy of taking grain as the key link or to "rely on the state for food grain and on oneself for cash," as some in the commune advocated—an important issue representing two different lines in developing agriculture. The former line geared farming to building socialism in the interest of the state, while the latter would lead to the flourishing of private side-line occupations and petty trading in pursuit of cash income at the expense of collective farming. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution brought this crucial problem into focus, and the commune Party committee placed it before the membership for serious discussion. The great majority concluded that since Tachai Brigade, the national pacesetter in agriculture, had succeeded in opening up new fields and growing more grain on terraced hills, why shouldn't they, a commune with plenty of marshy and other wasteland, reclaim it to grow rice? They summed up their past experience, realizing how grain production promotes a diversified economy and vice versa. The Tungting commune members made up their minds to become self-sufficient in food grain.

In the old days, large stretches of the lake shore were infested with bandits. The commune members now said it was time these wastelands were made into paddy fields. Giving them full support, the commune leadership organized 6,000 members from the 30 production brigades to go to the area in the winter of 1969. Camping out in the open in freezing weather, they began reclaiming marshland by building a dyke to delimit the lake, carrying earth to the work site day in and day out in wind and snow. Even in the winter weather, many worked in thin clothing and were sweating at that, their enthusiasm mounting as the work

progressed. One old grannie of 70 came to the site with granddaughter, bringing hot tea. When the workers ran out of carrying baskets, the members of a production team quickly wove 600 pairs, using their own willow branches, and delivered them to the spot. In the spring of 1970, when the project was nearly completed, a sudden storm struck and raging floodwaters breached the dyke. Forgetting the cold, cadres and members jumped into the icy water to plug the gap. In seven days of heroic struggle, they not only mended the breach but reinforced the entire dyke.

Besides building the 16,000-metre-long dyke, they dug five irrigation canals crisscrossing the 10,000 *mu* of reclaimed land. The whole project involved moving more than 800,000 cubic metres of earth and mud. The commune's grain yield rose in 1973 to 8,810,000 kilogrammes, nearly twice the 1965 figure, or 4.79 times the yield in 1949, the year of liberation.

The commune now self-reliantly produced 70 per cent of its food grain. But the members are not satisfied with this and, to further lighten the burden on the state, they continue to increase their per-*mu* yield so as to quickly become entirely self-sufficient.

The Tungting Tangerine

The East Hills region yields an abundance of tangerines, loquats, arbutus fruit and chestnuts. The most famous are the Tungting red tangerine, a choice early ripener, and the white-peel loquat with juicy, sweet flesh and small stone. The Tang Dynasty poet Pai Chu-yi wrote in praise of the fine Tungting tangerine groves:

*The red and gold of the tangerines
Glisten in the autumn landscape.*

But for more than a thousand years afterwards, the once abundant tangerine crops gradually deteriorated till, by the time of liberation, only scattered groves totalling 700 *mu* remained. Entire annual output was under 400,000 kilogrammes. Since the founding of the people's commune the peasants have made sustained effort to develop large-scale fruit growing by terracing hills and leading in water for orchards.

One hilly area, site of the present Luhua brigade, which produced only a few thousand kilogrammes of fruit before liberation, now abounds in fruit trees, with an annual crop yield of 150,000 kilogrammes.

Before the commune, when the Hsinmin brigade in the East Hills was still a co-op, it had only 20 *mu* in tangerines. To overcome poverty and backwardness, its Party branch proposed reclaiming the hills for the fruit. Some people discouraged the idea. "The warm winds from Taihu Lake can never reach the chill valleys of Hsinmin and heavy winter frosts set in early there. How can we grow tangerines?" they said. Others echoed, "It takes a long time and a lot of money to grow tangerines. Why not settle for sweet potatoes? They don't cost much to plant and bring quick returns!" A handful of class enemies seized this chance to mislead people. "Fruit trees don't bear for ten years," they argued. "Better do something that brings in cash immediately." After the Party branch studied together with the members Chairman Mao's teaching: "**Transform China in the spirit of the Foolish Old Man who removed the mountains,**" they were convinced that by working hard and following the socialist road they could certainly turn the barren hillsides into orchards. With the forming of the people's commune, the brigade put in over 40,000 workdays reclaiming wasteland

and building terraced fields, which increased the tangerine groves to 420 *mu*. Kwangchialin Ridge, located within the brigade, was once an execution ground where the Japanese imperialists slaughtered the Chinese. It is now covered with the tangerine groves of the brigade's No. 5 Team.

The Weitung Production Brigade beyond the East Hills has exerted Herculean effort to put in orchards. They blew up rocky slopes, used the rock to make embankments for terraced fields and filled in the blasted depressions with basketfuls of lakeside mud carried on shoulder poles.

This was how for over ten years the people of the East Hills, inspired by the spirit of the Foolish Old Man, covered over 20,000 *mu* of barren hilly land with trees and extended the scattered tangerine groves into a belt of orchards 20 kilometres long. Now the commune's 23 hills and 31 valleys are green with pine and bamboo, besides tangerine, loquat and arbutus groves. The entire East Hills are a riot of blossoms, fruit and lush trees in every shade of green. Comparing 1973 with 1949, the total area of orchards has increased from 4,000 to 9,000 *mu*, and the output of various fruits from 1.4 million to 7.58 million kilogrammes. The yield of Tungting tangerine has jumped to 2,770,000 kilogrammes from 380,000. The varieties of fruit have also increased. In tangerines alone, over ten species are now grown instead of five before. The East Hills have truly become hills of flowers and fruit.

Tangerine trees were planted in this area of China over a thousand years ago. In feudal times, the tangerines were a "tribute" product reserved exclusively for the emperors and imperial families. Now this luscious fruit is sold throughout the country for the people's consumption, and some is exported.

Fish Breeding

Pond-fish culture is one of the major occupations in the commune's diversified economy. It has 3,400 fish ponds with a total water surface of 9,200 *mu*. Fish growing has a long history here, but with low banks, shallow ponds and little for the fish to eat, the yield was low. When there were heavy rains, the ponds together with the fish would be washed out by torrential floods from the lake.

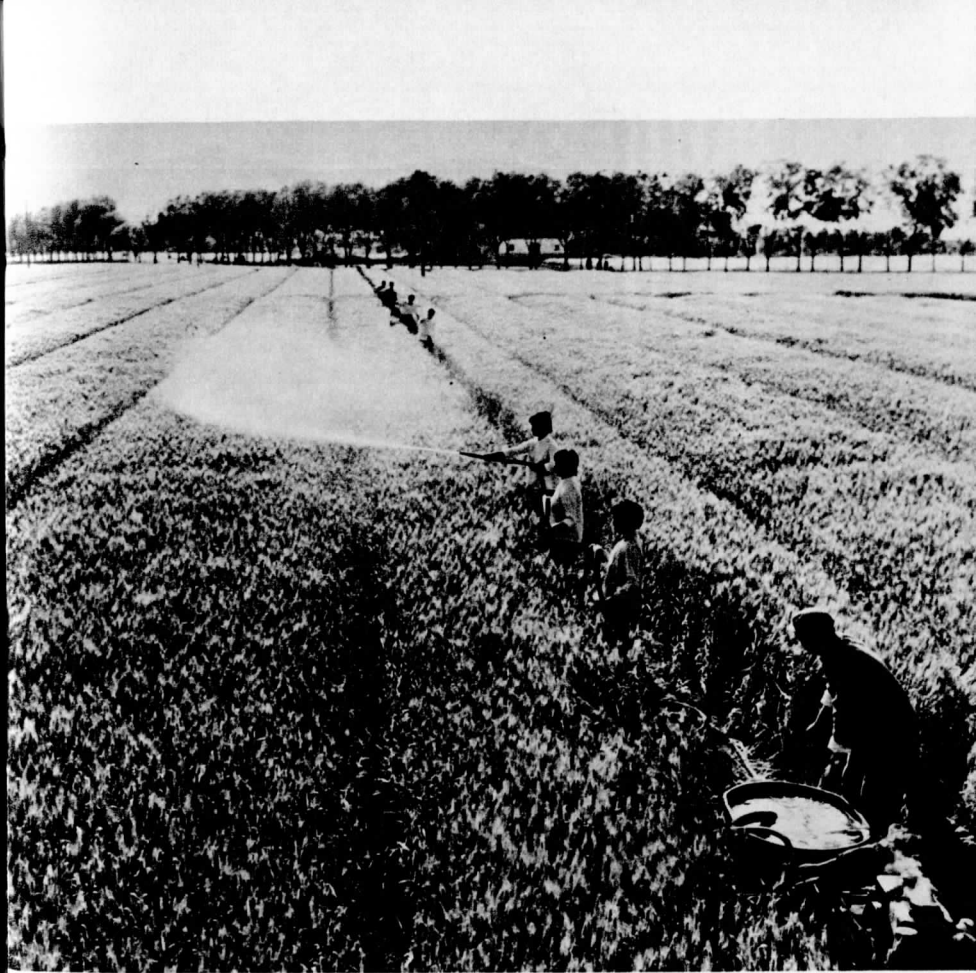
After the commune was formed, the members and cadres working together closely put in 350,000 workdays building around this lakeside area an embankment 3 metres high, 15 metres wide at the base and 6,000 metres long. Since then no gales or torrents have inundated the fish ponds, and the annual yield has increased steadily. The 1973 figure was 1,850,000 kilogrammes, 2.85 times that of 1949.

The key to successful fish breeding is to have sufficient fry. The commune used to depend on other regions for its entire supply. Every year it had to send scores of people out and spend hundreds of thousands of yuan making purchases. The prohibitive cost in both money and manpower, plus the low survival rate of the fry (20 per cent), had seriously hindered the commune members' efforts to raise more fish. They had requested to set up a fish hatchery but were frustrated by certain authorities under revisionist influence.

In 1964, Chairman Mao issued the call, "**In agriculture, learn from Tachai.**" The members warmly responded and criticized the wrong thinking of depending on others instead of themselves in building the countryside. The next year they set up a simple fish hatchery, and in the past nine years, especially since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the hatchery has grown rapidly. Now it nurses 60 million fry a year, enough to meet not only the commune's own need



A scientific research group examining a tangerine grove for insect pests.



Prospect of another bumper harvest.



High yield of the Tungting tangerine.

Picking Pilochun tea.





Harvesting silkworm cocoons.

Sorting spawners according to species for separate rearing.





A new bamboo grove.

but demands from other localities as well. The survival rate of fry is above 80 per cent. Compared with the past, the cost is greatly reduced.

At first, the hatchery only knew how to breed silver bream but not the grass carp that it very much wanted to raise. The hatchers decided to learn. After numerous experiments, they have successfully hatched by artificial fertilization seven species, such as bream, grass carp, the cross-breed of mackerel and grass carp and others, fulfilling all demands on the commune.

The facilities of the hatchery including breeding ponds and hatching vats are all made by the hatchery workers. The establishment is not very large and its methods are rather crude, but it meets the commune's needs without much financial outlay and therefore has won the praise of the commune members who say with satisfaction, "Self-reliance is really good!"

Silk Culture

The area south of the Yangtze River, known as river and lake country, is also a "home of silk." In the Tungting People's Commune, mulberry is planted mainly on the banks of fish ponds, and with the expansion of fish growing the area planted to mulberry has increased. The number of mulberry trees per *mu* has climbed from 500 to 800 and the local species has been gradually replaced by an improved one. The commune members have also learned better methods to fight insect pests and prevent plant diseases. This has resulted in much larger yields of mulberry leaves and increased the annual crops of cocoons from one to five. In 1973, the commune reared 162 kilogrammes of silk seed

and the total output of cocoons grew by 26 per cent compared with 1971.

Sericulture in this commune had its ups and downs, and the output was far from stable. This was due mainly to some people's wrong ideas on rearing silkworms. "Growing mulberry and tending silkworms is too much trouble," they said. "There's no end of work. Who can stand it! Better stick to tangerines." The commune Party committee asked the commune members to view the question in the light of the larger interests of the state—the requirements of the country's entire economy. It was only after this problem was straightened out that cocoon production began to grow steadily at Tungting. Now, mulberry is grafted wherever possible onto the trees along the banks of ponds and rivers or elsewhere in the villages, and it produces leaves the very first year. In 1972, the commune grafted mulberry onto 1,080,000 trees, planted 1,280,000 mulberry saplings to fill in sparse groves, set aside an additional 108 *mu* for mulberry planting and built 135 new rearing rooms. So, apart from fruit growing and fish breeding, sericulture has grown to considerable proportions in the commune.

Pilochun Tea

Pilochun is the romanization of three Chinese characters, pi-lo-chun. Pi means jade green, the colour of the tea. Lo means conch, the shape of its spiral leaf. Chun is spring, the season when the tea is plucked. Pilochun is one of China's famous and best-selling teas both at home and abroad. The growing of Pilochun tea is said to have begun 1,300 years ago. The leaves have a white down and give a pleasing flavour. The fresh leaves are very tender and require

great care during picking and curing. The commune members pick the tea very early in the morning, and the leaves are sorted and processed immediately. The first-grade Pilochun tea is the early spring bud and first leaf on each branch. It takes 55,000 to 60,000 such buds and leaves to make one *jin* of this grade of Pilochun tea.

Before liberation, under reactionary Kuomintang rule, the output of Pilochun declined and its quality greatly deteriorated. The tea growers, who suffered manifold exploitation, could scarcely eke out a living. People in the Tungting Hills used to moan,

*The Pilochun tea gardens languish,
Their leaves drooping low.
We pluck eighteen crops a year,
But live on waste leaves and chou.**

The lines aptly depict the miserable life of the Tungting tea growers of the past. After liberation the Chinese Communist Party and government, concerned for the tea growers, gave them a great deal of help. The cultivation of this famous tea got a new start. Especially since the commune, Pilochun tea figures in the commune's plan as one of the main cash crops. Both output and quality have improved rapidly. The Luhua brigade members, for instance, relying on collective strength, cleared a stony slope to open up 200 *mu* of new tea gardens. They followed up by working for two winters digging ponds and an irrigation canal. Involving 40,000 cubic metres of earthwork, the project made possible the pumping of water from Taihu Lake to the tea gardens up on the hills. The brigade's annual output of Pilochun tea has now reached over 2,500 kilogrammes, six times the pre-

* Gruel.

liberation level. The members of the Hsinmin brigade, who used to grow only fruit and mulberry, made up their minds in the learn-from-Tachai movement to grow tea on reclaimed barren hilltops and slopes. Their first sowing failed due to inexperience; the second encountered an unusually serious drought and the shrubs all died. But the members, led by the cadres, pressed on. They sowed 25,000 kilogrammes of tea seed in a third attempt. This time the shrubs throughout the 380 *mu* of newly-reclaimed tea gardens thrived. And so the brigade made the start from scratch, and is now striving for better and higher yields.

Besides growing tea in exclusive gardens, it is also interplanted with tangerine and loquat trees, and rows of tea shrubs around the orchards appear like ornamental hedges. Orchard development is thus accompanied by growth in tea cultivation. The commune's output of tea in 1958 was 6,000 kilogrammes; in 1971 it was 36,000. The 1972 and 1973 yields were respectively 37,500 and 39,400 kilogrammes.

Increases in Farm Production
(In 1,000 kilogrammes 1949 = 100)

Item	1949		1953		1958		1965		1973	
	Production	Percent	Production	Percent	Production	Percent	Production	Percent	Production	Percent
Food grain	1,840	162	2,980	162	4,450	242	4,750	258	8,810	479
Fruits	1,400	162	2,270	162	3,490	249	6,090	435	7,580	541
Aquatic products	480	227	1,090	227	1,420	296	1,550	323	1,850	385
Silk cocoons	110	181	200	181	219	199	228	207	375	341
Tea	5.5	172	9.5	172	6	109	28.8	524	39.4	716

V. Medical and Health Work at Tungting

STEPS were taken after liberation to remedy the shortage of doctors and medicine in China's countryside. Still, compared with the cities, a wide gap remained. It was only after Chairman Mao issued the call, "**In medical and health work, put the stress on the rural areas,**" that the situation began really to change.

There used to be only two hospitals in the entire Tungting People's Commune area, and both were in the town of Tungting away from the villages. Patients with acute and serious diseases had to be carried scores of kilometres over mountain trails for treatment. The medical expense was often beyond their means.

Now there is not only a hospital at the commune centre, but also a co-operative medical station with "barefoot" doctors and midwives in every production brigade, and one or two health workers in every production team. These have formed a medical and health service network. The commune now has 66 "barefoot" doctors (an average of two to a production brigade), 29 midwives (an average of one for each brigade) and 248 general health workers (one in each production team on the average). It has become the general practice here to take timely preventive measures against common diseases, treat minor illnesses in village health sta-

tions and serious ones in the commune hospital—a fairly big step forward in medical care for the area.

Apart from treating patients, rural medical workers publicize hygienic knowledge and help the people to improve health conditions. They stress the importance of preventing disease, popularize relevant knowledge and put it into practice. The disease rate has declined considerably, and contagious diseases such as blood fluke, encephalitis and diphtheria are controlled.

Promoting family planning is another task of rural medical workers. As this programme involves the vital questions of maternal and child health, children's education and women's participation in productive and political activities, it is considered an essential part of the rural medical work. In the Tungting People's Commune where the population is rather dense, family planning has shown definite results. The following table is illuminating:

	1969	1973
	(per 1,000 population)	
Birth rate	27.8	15.7
Death rate	8.3	6.8
Net reproduction rate	19.5	8.9

Hospital for the Peasants

The commune hospital is at the same time the basic-level administrative organ in rural medical and health work. It is a link between the county hospital and the co-operative medical stations in production brigades which together form a three-level health-service network. The commune hospital

also performs many non-administrative tasks such as promoting medical and health work in the area, especially relating to the consolidation and development of co-operative medicine and the training of "barefoot" doctors.

The hospital, situated in the town of Tungting near the commune headquarters, is a merger of the two hospitals in the town. Before this change the two had only about a dozen medical workers in two or three departments. Now the hospital has a staff of 65, including doctors and nurses. Most of the medical workers have been assigned to the hospital by the state after graduating from medical schools. The commune hospital mainly serves the peasants, as most of the in-patients are referred by "barefoot" doctors from the brigades. The rest are town dwellers and commune members of nearby villages. There are 70 beds in the hospital. Its out-patient department has clinics of internal medicine, surgery, fractures and sprains, gynaecology, obstetrics, eye, ear, nose and throat. There are dental and Chinese traditional medicine clinics including acupuncture and moxibustion, and also a room with equipment for fluoroscopic examination, a laboratory, dispensary and small workroom where medicines are prepared. With such extensive services available, the hospital out-patient department is a busy place.

Apart from treating patients, the hospital opens training classes for "barefoot" doctors and health workers from the production brigades. It also organizes doctors to go by turns to the countryside. There, they treat patients and carry out preventive measures alongside local "barefoot" doctors and conduct regular seminars on specialized subjects so as to teach them skills. All the commune's 66 "barefoot" doctors have had at least one hospital training course on basic principles governing diagnosis, prescription, injection, midwifery and

the preparation of Chinese herbal medicines, and can generally carry these out unassisted.

Co-operative Medicine — a New Institution

Co-operative medicine, backed by the collective strength of the Chinese peasants, is a new thing in China's countryside. Since its adoption in the Tungting People's Commune, the system has proved popular with the peasants and effective against disease.

Here is how it works. Three yuan per member per year is set aside in a medical fund administered by the brigade medical station, the member paying half and the production team contributing the other half out of its reserve. With this, a member pays only a 5-fen registration fee for each call including treatment and the doctor's services. Medicines are free of charge up to 10 yuan. Expenses over that amount are borne, again, half by the member and half by the team. This 10-yuan ceiling is variable, however, some brigade medical stations setting it at 20 or 30 yuan. But the ceiling is seldom exceeded, as the government has reduced the price of practically every medicine several times in recent years, and the widespread use of medicinal herbs has also lowered the cost of medical care. This last is important, for the use of herbs has generally reduced the cost of prescriptions to 10 or 20 fen, or less.

At the time of writing, 22 of the 30 production brigades of the Tungting commune had not used up their medical funds, three broke even, and only five had small deficits. Co-operative medicine obviously offers great possibilities in improving the health services in China's countryside.

"Barefoot" Doctors

A "barefoot" doctor is a peasant who does part-time medical work. This type of paramedical worker first appeared in the rice-producing areas of east China. With their medical kits slung over their shoulders, they called on patients in their homes, and when not occupied with medical tasks, they worked barefoot in the paddy fields. The peasants recognized this type of doctor as their own and fondly gave them the name.

Hsingkuang Production Brigade has some 290 households with a total population of 1,298 organized into seven teams. The brigade provides a house for the co-operative medical station and assigns two "barefoot" doctors and one midwife to work there. In the station, the "barefoot" doctors usually work in shifts, assisted by health workers, who learn as they serve. When a member needs medical attention, he can always find the "barefoot" doctor, if not at the station, then likely in the fields or other work site, where he (or very often she) brings along a medicine bag and works like everybody else.

These two "barefoot" doctors of the Hsingkuang brigade are very close to the people and serve them devotedly. There are many moving stories about the "barefoot" doctors Shen Pen-nan, a young man, and the young woman Hsing Yi-chen. Hsing Yi-chen was born into a poor-peasant family in the old society and is now a Communist Youth League member. She started her new work after a 3-month training course at the county hospital and promptly attends to every call, rain or shine, day or night. Though often disturbed at meal or rest time, she has never complained either of her heavy workload or of being continuously on duty. When

someone gives her credit for her work, she turns the conversation onto the good deeds of her colleague, Shen Pen-nan.

An ordinary youth of 26, Shen's formal education was only five years of primary school. After two months' training in the commune hospital, he began serving as "barefoot" doctor in the brigade, and continuously gained knowledge by carefully observing the doctors' clinical treatments. Sometimes he volunteered to accompany a patient to the commune hospital and stayed with him there so as to nurse him and learn the entire process of treatment. With this basic knowledge in diagnosis, medication and minor surgery, he was sent to a large city hospital for an additional 3-month course, which filled in gaps in both his medical theory and practice. He made fast progress through hard work and frequent summing up of what he had learnt, and has mastered more than 100 acupuncture points and treats many common diseases in the medical, surgical, fractures and sprains, and children's departments. He has been several times a delegate to the county and district medical conferences.

How is it that this young "barefoot" doctor with so little formal education has made such progress in only three years? The basic explanation lies in his background.

Shen was born and brought up in the Tungting countryside. The sufferings of the poor peasants, including his own family, due to lack of medical care in the old society, made a deep impression on him. The situation improved somewhat with liberation, but due to the influence of the revisionist line in medical and health work, most of China's hospitals remained in towns and cities, giving little help or comfort to peasants who fell ill. In 1969 the commune decided to adopt the co-operative medicine plan. When Shen was assigned as "barefoot" doctor at the newly set up medical station in his brigade, he was over-

joyed and dedicated himself to the task of improving the health service in his home village. "Medical attention should be close at hand; the doctor should also call on patients in their homes," Shen said. He has made great demands on himself both in work and in gaining knowledge, not wasting a moment or missing any opportunity. He learns from anyone with experience in Western or Chinese traditional medicine. He has bought and studied many medical books, knowing the importance of theory in improving his service to the people. Shen's close associates observe, however, that the main reason he is so competent is that he has deep feeling for the poor and lower-middle peasants, and that he loves the socialist society.

The Use of Medicinal Herbs

With self-reliance as watchword, the commune hospital pharmacy has, since March 1970, prepared nearly 100 varieties of plasters, pills and drugs for injection from medicinal herbs. New drugs, especially for injection, are tested first on animals and then repeatedly on the medical personnel themselves for safety and efficacy in clinical use. These herbal drugs are popular and have proved their worth. Owing to the speedy progress made in the hospital's scientific research in combining Western and Chinese traditional medicine and in the use of medicinal herbs, visitors have come from other brigades and communes and even other provinces to observe and learn. The number of visits has exceeded 1,000 in a single year.

The Party committee of the Tungting commune firmly supports the integration of Western and Chinese traditional medicine, assigning a committee member to be responsible for this work. Scientific research into the curative proper-

ties of medicinal herbs is in full swing. East Hills in the Tungting area provides an abundance of these herbs, more than 600 species having already been identified and analysed.

In the past four years, the Tungting People's Commune has gathered more than 70,000 kilogrammes of medicinal herbs for use throughout the commune. Some members were skeptical of the efficacy of herbal medicines. The "barefoot" doctors, however, were sure they would be accepted when people saw the results. Once a 9-month-old baby had a very high fever, and its white blood cell count was found also to be abnormally high. Taking the baby to the city hospital would have delayed treatment and endangered the baby's life. The parents were very worried. Then someone suggested seeing the nearby Weitung brigade's "barefoot" doctors who had had good results with medicinal herbs. The baby was taken there and its trouble diagnosed as acute nephritis upon careful examination by a "barefoot" doctor. After being given herbal medicine, the baby was much better, its temperature soon returned to normal and it recovered completely after a few more doses of the herb preparation. The total cost of medication was two yuan. People's confidence in the local herbal medicines grew.

Herbal drugs for injection can now be prepared in 26 of the commune's 30 brigades and, in two brigades, physiological solution for infusion is made, indicating the beginning of a new phase in medical care in the area.

The merits of co-operative medicine are increasingly patent; "barefoot" doctors are progressing rapidly in professional skill; and medicinal herbs are being used on a growing scale. These new developments have brought about initial changes in China's rural health service, which had long been characterized by a dearth of both doctors and medicines.

VI. Women Play Their Part

THE Tungting People's Commune goes in for varied production which involves many kinds of farm work. Thanks to the active participation of all able-bodied women in collective production, the commune seldom suffers from shortage of labour power. Many members quote the adage, "Women shoulder half of heaven," saying it well applies to the women of Tungting.

Change of Political and Economic Status

The change of women's political and economic status in China today is the outcome of many hard struggles.

In the old society the toiling masses of women were tied down from morning to night with cooking, fetching water, washing clothes for the family and many other chores. They suffered multiple oppression. Regarded as inferior to men and economically dependent on their husbands, they had little say in the family. The women of Tungting, besides toiling at household chores, often had to help earn a living for their families by rowing boats, catching fish or gathering firewood. Some even went out to serve as live-in house servants, wet-nurses, etc. for landlord and capitalist families.

All this changed with liberation in 1949, which brought women political emancipation. In the Tungting commune

today, nearly 500 women hold leading posts at commune, brigade and team levels, as well as in the militia, the Communist Party and the Communist Youth League organizations.

Women are playing an increasingly greater role in production. Each of the commune's 237 production teams has a woman leader or deputy leader, and women account for 46 per cent of the commune's total labour force. Many jobs, such as gathering and curing tea, picking fruit and rearing silkworms, are done mainly by women. In some production teams young women are tending to replace men in growing rice and wheat so as to release men for doing heavier jobs such as scooping up pond mud for fertilizer or digging into rocky hillsides to build terraced fields. In some jobs such as weeding and harvesting rice, young women are often faster and more skilful than men.

Chairman Mao has called upon Chinese women to **"unite and take part in production and political activity to improve the economic and political status of women."** The women of the Tungting commune are responding enthusiastically to this call.

Good at Farm Production

Many women stand out for important contributions they have made to collective production.

Wang Tung-hui of Kuangjung Production Brigade is no longer young. But she does a good job of raising pigs. She never leaves a sow when it farrows, even at night, and when the young do not suckle, she feeds them gruel with a spoon. She watches each pig carefully and tends any that are sick. It is in no small measure due to Wang Tung-hui's effort that the number of brigade-owned pigs has greatly increased.

Weng Chin-feng is head of the Hsinmin brigade women's association. When a pipeline had to be laid to bring water up to the hillsides, she led a group of women to do this job which requires strength and skill. A few of the men had their doubts. "Never saw women lay a pipeline," they said. But Weng Chin-feng and her group went ahead with the work, learning on the job, and eventually they succeeded.

Especially noteworthy are the women's shock teams praised in the village as capable "iron girls." A typical example is the Iron Girls Squad of the Chienkuo brigade No. 2 Team. Led by Chin Lung-ti, the squad of 14 worked in the team's 200 *mu* of paddy fields, doing all jobs from transplanting to harvesting. They opened up a 1.9-*mu* experimental plot in their spare time, seeking ways to increase rice output further. By their hard and skilful work, they have outpaced the young men in emulation campaigns and won praise from men and women alike. At a production team meeting in 1970, they were given the official title "Iron Girls Squad" and cited as a good example to follow.

Protecting Women's Interests

Now that women members take part in production and political activities on an equal footing with men, how are the household duties and children taken care of? For an answer, let's look at Weitung Production Brigade with 850 women, constituting more than half the brigade population.

Taking into consideration women's physiological conditions, the production teams assign them appropriate, lighter jobs. Also, their work day is an hour shorter than the men's. To help lighten their household duties, the brigade provides dining-room service all the year round, expanding this service



Young women of the Chenkuang brigade on their way to the fields.



"Barefoot" doctor Shen Pen-nan checks on the commune families' health.

The commune hospital prepares Chinese medicine for its patients.





The Luhua brigade primary school.

Story-telling time at a kindergarten, Weitung Production Brigade.





The commune department store.

The Yeh Kun-fang family at home.





Bank deposits are the common thing with commune members today.

during busy seasons for the members' convenience. Women doing the same work as men used to receive about 20 per cent less. Now they receive equal pay for equal work.

Each of the Weitung brigade's eight teams has a day nursery, while the brigade runs four kindergartens with 99 children cared for and taught by a staff of 25.

Nursery teacher Chu Feng-chu, in her seventies, is highly thought of. She began this work in 1955 and has devoted herself to it ever since. Some of her tots are now in senior middle schools, others have graduated and are working, while some have joined the People's Liberation Army. Even at her advanced age, Chu Feng-chu refuses to retire, saying, "I had several children in the old society, but they all died of sickness or starvation. So I regard all the children at the nursery as my own and do my best to look after them so that their parents can work for socialism without having to worry. I'm old, but this is something I can still do for our socialist motherland. It makes me happy!"

VII. The Commune Members' Livelihood

FOR centuries past, the Chinese peasants were trampled underfoot by exploiters and lived in misery. With the founding of the People's Republic of China, hundreds of millions of impoverished peasants were emancipated. Their living conditions have steadily improved ever since. The Tungting commune is an average one in south China. With members' income on the rise, their life, though not rich, is improving every year and is certainly far better than before liberation.

Luhua Production Brigade is mainly a fruit-producer, with about the same living standard as others in the commune. We shall cite some examples of changes that have taken place in this brigade in the everyday life of liberated peasants.

The brigade's No. 2 Team has 33 families with 181 people, who tend 156 *mu* of orchards and 34 *mu* of lakeside paddy fields. All members who can do physical work take part in collective production, for they know that farming is not just for improving their own livelihood but first of all for speeding up socialist construction. Their slogan is: "Contribute more to socialism."

How do the commune members arrange their everyday life? During the busy farming seasons, they work about ten hours early and late in the day with a 3-hour mid-day rest.

In the slack season, they work eight hours, from seven to eleven in the morning and twelve to four in the afternoon. Apart from meetings, all off-hours are free. Every member is entitled to four rest days each month (two during the busy seasons). Women members are given further consideration according to their physiological need.

In the old society, half of the 33 families lived in dilapidated thatched huts which have long since been torn down. Now 12 families have moved into new houses built by themselves, while six others have renovated their old dwellings. Old peasant Pan Ching-yu, now on in years, sweated as a farm hand for landlords before liberation. He could not afford decent clothing, to say nothing of a house to live in. Liberation made him his own master and brought him a better livelihood. Since the commune, his life has further improved and, in 1962, he built a tile-roofed brick house of three rooms, each costing about 500-700 yuan.

Tang Li-chuan, who takes charge of work among women members of the brigade, has a household of eight. Besides her husband and herself plus two daughters and a son in their teens, there are her husband's parents and a sister. The family is not strong in labour power, and its economic situation is rated only average.

In 1972, the entire family put in 1,600 work-days, earning a total income of 1,600 yuan, or 200 yuan per person. After deductions for food grain (20 fen per kilogramme), straw (4 fen per kilogramme), cooking oil, salt and the children's school fees (9 yuan a year per pupil), they had some 900 yuan left at the year end with which to buy clothing and other necessities.

Between 1967 and 1972 they used 1,300 yuan from their savings to buy furniture, 120 yuan for a sewing machine, and 2,000 yuan to add three rooms to their house. This total

expenditure of 3,420 yuan within five years would have been inconceivable for an ordinary peasant family before liberation.

Old peasant Yeh Kun-fang of No. 2 Team lived a hard life in the old society. In the years immediately following agrarian reform, at which his family was given land, the Yehs still had some economic difficulty because they were short-handed and had to start from scratch. They received regular government subsidies. Their life improved with the formation of the agricultural producers' co-op, and it has become still better since the setting up of the people's commune. Later, his son became economically independent and married; the other three members of the family — wife, daughter and himself — continued living under one roof. In 1964, the Yehs built a new house of three rooms — a living room between two bedrooms — and also a separate kitchen. These cost over 2,000 yuan, which the family had saved over several years. This too was something unthinkable in the old days for poor peasants like the Yehs, who had no roof over their heads and never knew where their next meal was coming from.

In 1972 the three members of the Yeh family put in 760 work-days, earning 760 yuan or an average of 253 yuan per person. Their net income was 415 yuan after the deductions for food grain and other items. This figure did not include the family's income from their private plot and side-line occupations. That amounted to 185 yuan from two items alone — 75 yuan for the 7,500 kilogrammes of manure they supplied to the team and 110 yuan for two of their own pigs which they sold.

They have a fifth of a *mu* in private plot, on which they grow vegetables, broad beans and the oil-bearing rape, all of which belong to the family. There is no tax of any kind

on such produce. Like other peasants, they work on their private plot only during their own free hours, collective production coming first.

As they own a house and a private plot to grow vegetables for their own consumption, they generally have some money to put aside each year after paying for their food grain and other necessary items. In the last few years, they have used 400 yuan to buy two chests of drawers, a wardrobe with long mirror, a transistor radio and a clock.

Though the incomes of these average peasant families are not very high, their life as well as the life of the peasantry throughout the country will further improve alongside the growing prosperity of the socialist motherland.

VIII. Afterword

UNDER the leadership of the Party, the Tungting People's Commune has shown great progress after 15 years' hard work. Today there are fish-ponds and mulberry groves in the southern and southwestern areas, rice-fields and lotus ponds in the southeast, and pine, bamboo and fruit trees on the northern and northwestern slopes. It is a thriving scene: fruits in plenty, grain piled high in the granaries, and ponds abounding in fish and lotus-root. The commune's annual grain output shot up from 1,840,000 kilogrammes in 1949 to 8,810,000 in 1973, and fruit output from 1,400,000 kilogrammes to 7,580,000.

Now, with more and better land, improved working conditions and higher living standard, will the commune members stand still, or will they continue their march forward? Not content with their present successes, they determine to learn from Tachai's revolutionary spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle to further increase output and variety of products. A new development plan has been worked out. Hsinmin Production Brigade plans within five years to reclaim an additional 100 *mu* for orchard, 200 *mu* each for bamboo groves and tea gardens, and to dig a 1,000-metre-long ditch to lead water uphill. The targets for the first year after completion of the plan will be: grain 350,000 kilogrammes, domestic fowl 7,000, collectively-raised pigs 700, total income 700,000 yuan. Besides the Hsinmin brigade, the other 14 engaged mainly in fruit-growing are planning to build

power stations and lay pipe to lead water from Taihu Lake uphill so as to fight drought more effectively. Six brigades mainly occupied in fishery plan to enlarge their small fish ponds and dredge the shallow ones. In order to increase fish yields, they will introduce into the ponds various breeds of fry and net each kind of fish by turn. Large numbers of the mixed fry are to be bred. The nine grain-producing brigades are to undertake water conservancy projects to improve the soil, and increase per-*mu* yield so that the commune will soon become self-sufficient in food grain.

Recalling the past and looking to the future, the commune members are convinced that if they want to conquer nature they must follow the revolutionary line closely, work hard and keep up the fight against every kind of idea which is inconsistent with socialism. They know from their own experience that it would be daydreaming to think of building a new, socialist countryside without tortuous struggle and strenuous efforts. Successes were hard won; there was no plain sailing. Hitherto, by persisting in putting proletarian politics in command and working hard, they have, with their own hands, turned the barren ridges into hills of trees and fruit. Guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, they are determined to continue their advance along the road of socialism, make still greater contributions to China's socialist construction, and turn the East Hills into a richer and more beautiful countryside in the years to come.

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