

CHINESE LITERATURE



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Chiang Tzu-lung

Swallow and Dawn

"Hey, brother! Come on out."

"What d'you want?" demanded Hammer, a muscular, strapping young fellow, emerging from the office of the foundry.

Swallow darted a mischievous look at him. "I want to have a look at Dawn," she declared. "To find out if she's really all that good. How about taking me over?"

"We're having a meeting. Go and find her yourself."

"You know I blurt out whatever comes into my head. Don't blame me if I offend her," Swallow teased. For Dawn was her brother's fiancée.

"That's your business, not mine." Hammer went back to his meeting.

Swallow's job was to operate the crane in the smelting works. This she did so efficiently that the crane rumbled overhead like a peal of thunder. She herself moved like the wind, worked like a

Chiang Tzu-lung is a young worker in Tientsin, who has written many short stories.

house on fire and was known, besides, for her quick, biting tongue. Her 75-ton crane usually put up the best performance in the whole plant; however, at yesterday's meeting to sum up the work she had been outdone by Dawn in the foundry. Dawn had been to Swallow's home several times to see her brother, but on each occasion Swallow happened to be working, and so they had never met. Now her future sister-in-law had beaten her at her own game. Swallow was not going to take this lying down. As soon as she finished her morning shift, she decided to go and see for herself in what way Dawn was the better crane operator.

Approaching the hydraulic press, Swallow found three fitters putting their tools into the iron crate prior to checking up on the equipment before the second shift. Taking off her padded jacket she tossed it on a bench, then jumped into the crate herself. The fitters asked her in surprise, "What are you doing here, comrade?"

"I've come to pick up some tips from you. Let me hand you the tools," Swallow answered readily.

"You'd better stay down here and watch," they advised her. "This crate gets hoisted up to the height of a five-storey building, and floats there in mid-air like a balloon circling round the hydraulic press. Even men feel dizzy the first time up. We can't let you risk your neck."

"Don't look down on us girls. I tell you, I like climbing ladders, the higher the better. I won't hold it against you if I come over giddy." Swallow's eyes were gleaming with determination.

Since their team leader said nothing, a young fellow with a snub nose warned her: "Watch out then. We're starting." He winked at the others as if to say: Now we shall see some fun.

Swallow just smiled and turned to look at the crane operator, an attractive girl. "This must be my future sister-in-law," she thought. "I didn't know she looked so young. Well, this is my chance to see just how good she is."

To lift an iron crate with a 100-ton crane is like hoisting up an egg-shell by helicopter: the least vibration will start the crate swinging wildly in the air. As a "passenger", Swallow could gauge the other girl's skill.

The crate rose steadily up and up towards the top of the huge press, neither swaying nor rocking. Swallow felt as safe as if standing on firm ground. She filled a bowl with diesel oil from a bucket and placed it on the bottom of the crate; but though the crate moved up and down, turned right and left, not a drop of oil was spilt from the bowl. Nice work! Swallow was most impressed. The three fitters were so busy with their maintenance work they had no time to give directions; so as Swallow passed them tools with one hand, with the other she signalled to the crane operator. The fitters, pleased with her co-operation, from time to time glanced approvingly at this tall, healthy lass, her glossy plaits knotted up on her head, her eyes sparkling, her lips parted in a smile, all her movements so neat and nimble.

When the crane returned them to the ground, Swallow asked: "Is your crane operator's name Dawn?"

"No, this is Dawn's apprentice."

Swallow suppressed a start. So even Dawn's apprentice was such hot stuff!

"Well, comrade, after giving us a hand you might at least tell us your name," said the snub-nosed youngster.

"I'm Swallow, your section chief's sister."

The lad's eyes widened. "So that explains it," he cried. "Top crane operator in the smelting works and winner of the red banner — your fame has spread through the whole plant."

"Come off it." Swallow eyed him sternly. "Tell me, where can I find Dawn?"

"There she is." The youngster pointed to a furnace. "She's operating the crane over there."

Leaping out of the crate, Swallow flew off. A car piled high with white-hot steel ingots had just left the furnace, its leaping flames making this half of the workshop a veritable flaming mountain. Since Swallow's best record for hoisting molten ingots was one minute three seconds, she reckoned that Dawn's top speed could scarcely be less than one minute. She watched the 150-ton crane sail swiftly over, its hook already lowered. It paused over the flaming mountain to grab a steel ingot and conveyed this unerringly to un-

derneath the hammer of the hydraulic press. Swallow looked at the watch on her wrist. Only fifty-four seconds! Dawn's speed took her breath away. Here was truly a formidable rival. This reminded her that there was something wrong with her own crane. It had recently started rocking each time it grabbed an ingot; that was the main reason why she had lost to Dawn in the first month of this new year. Determined to locate the hitch, she put her jacket on and started back.

Hammer, coming in just then, asked: "Well, did you find her?"

"No," said Swallow. "When you get home, tell mum I'll be late back."

"What are you up to?"

"There's something wrong with my crane."

As Swallow was hurrying off, her brother called after her, "Don't be late. Remember what day it is tomorrow."

"It's the Spring Festival. So what?"

"H'm, a fine sister you are. Tomorrow Dawn will be coming. You should help mum fix everything up."

"Of course. I'd nearly forgotten: tomorrow's your wedding. Don't worry. I won't keep you waiting."

Back with her crane, she tinkered with hammer and pliers, studied the blueprint and checked on the measurements of various parts; but she failed to locate the cause of the vibration. Sweating with exasperation, she dismantled the brake but found nothing wrong with it. Reassembling the brake was a tricky job. As she was busy fixing the spring in place, she heard someone come up behind.

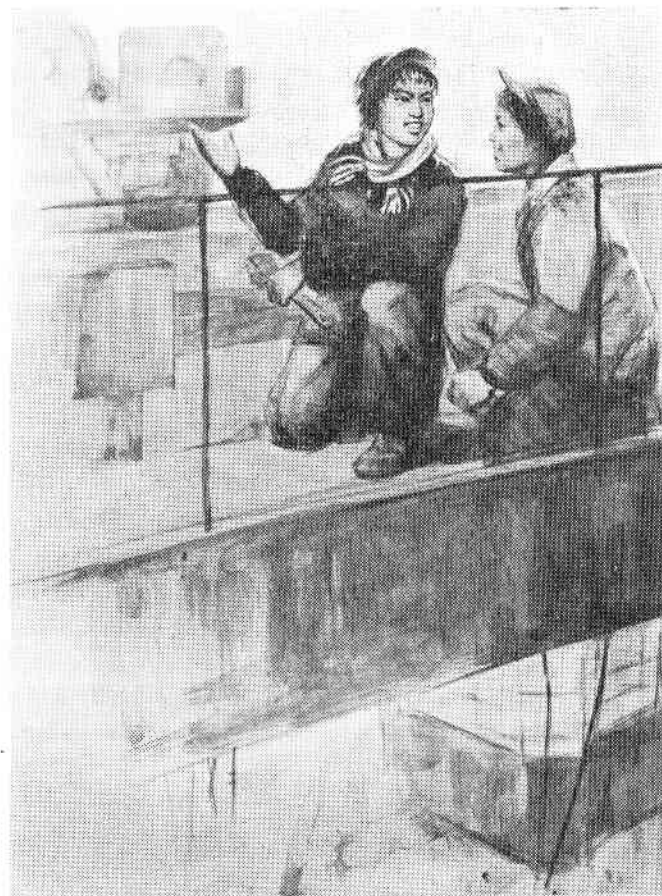
"Here, give me a hand," she called without looking up.

The new arrival did not answer, but pitched in to help. Swallow, raising her head, saw a well-built, attractive girl whose glowing eyes were looking down at her fondly.

"You're Dawn, aren't you?" she exclaimed.

The other girl nodded. Swallow jumped to her feet and seized the other's hands, pressing them so hard that Dawn winced.

It was Hammer who had told Dawn when he was leaving that Swallow had been looking for her.



"What for?" Dawn asked.

"She didn't like being outdone by you," said Hammer. "That hot-headed sister of mine is always raring for a fight, thirsting for battle. She has a single-track mind. There's probably something wrong with her crane. If you've time, why not have a look at it and lend her a hand?"

Dawn nodded thoughtfully. "I've been wanting to go and have a chat with her. But we've never been introduced."

"What does that matter? She's not shy, she's a regular tomboy.

Just be careful what you say or she'll take you up," Hammer warned her.

So as soon as Dawn knocked off she hurried over. She asked detailed questions about Swallow's crane and tried it out herself.

"Well, what's the trouble, sister-in-law?" Swallow asked.

"Look, don't call me that," protested Dawn with a smile.

"All right." Swallow winked, then whispered: "I'll call you Dawn for the present, and sister-in-law tomorrow."

"Quit teasing. You work the crane while I take a look from above."

"Be careful then." As Swallow started the crane, she saw Dawn leaning far out from the gantry to watch. She had never thought this sweet-looking girl was so daring.

"Swallow, the trouble's with the wheels," Dawn called down.

Swallow stopped the crane and climbed up, saying dubiously: "How could anything go wrong with such big chunks of iron?"

"Well, sister, when something goes wrong with the crane it means there's an internal contradiction. So we check up to find out the principal aspect of that contradiction. Rocking means something off balance, and the main causes are either a bent shaft or faulty wheels. Look, the two wheels on the right are so badly worn that they jolt and jerk when the crane moves. It's like a man lamed in one leg."

"That makes sense." Swallow examined the wheels and confirmed that this diagnosis was correct. Hugging Dawn she cried: "You really are smart!"

"There you go again." Dawn pretended to be annoyed.

"Yes, you've applied dialectics to maintenance work and spotted the trouble so quickly." Swallow was full of admiration for her future sister-in-law.

"Hard work and study, that's what makes people smart. We have to use our heads and accumulate experience through practice. Sweating pays off," rejoined Dawn earnestly. "But apart from going all out in our work, sister, we must study theory too. Then we can use dialectics to guide our work. That's the way to get good results."

"You must help me to study, sister-in-law."

"You must help me too. You're a faster operator."

"Don't make fun of me. Anyway, I'm all set to challenge you."

"I accept your challenge!"

After repairing the crane, they left the workshop together. It was already dawn. Fire-crackers were being let off outside the plant to welcome in the Spring Festival. Well pleased with their achievement, the two girls took deep breaths of the fresh morning air.

"No regrets, sister-in-law?" Swallow glanced at Dawn.

"What should I be regretting?"

"Now that you've helped me repair my crane, next month I shall outstrip you."

"Even if you fly off on wings, I won't lag behind you," replied Dawn confidently.

"We'll see." Swallow threw her arm round Dawn, who had taken a great fancy to the high-spirited youngster.

Along came Hammer, bringing the two girls breakfast. As they approached him, smiling, their red head-scarves fluttering in the breeze like bright morning clouds, they seemed to him the personification of spring.

Illustrated by Lu Yuan-lin

On the Banks of the Milo

June in Central China is a rainy season, and this year there was a higher rainfall than usual. Before the spring water had receded came the summer flood. The Milo, normally a mere stream, was in full spate now, brimming its banks. In its lower reaches it had become a great river.

As dusk fell, at long last the downpour stopped. The setting sun, emerging from the clouds, gilded the green fields and the turbulent water.

Party Secretary Lung of the team sent to install high-voltage cables had just come back by train from Changsha. Rolling up his trousers and slinging his kit-bag over his shoulder, he at once set off through the mud for the work site. Although over fifty, with hair greying at the temples, long years of work in the open had toughened him. As smoke from kitchen stoves wreathed over the cottages all around, he sloshed through fields redolent of paddy and climbed a hillock. From this vantage point he could see a row of newly erected concrete poles stretching off into the distance along

the east bank. He smiled with satisfaction. Trust Team Leader Lo to do a good job, he thought.

This high-voltage line was being laid to supply electricity to a new vinylon plant. Only a week ago, when Lung left to report to the provincial Party committee at Changsha, his crew had still been making a road, digging tunnels and transporting poles. Now, despite the heavy downpour of rain, the poles were already in place. Naturally he was pleased.

Thunder rumbled again in the distance. Lung turned to look west. The green fields on the opposite bank had disappeared under a misty, wide expanse of water. The dyke was a scene of intense activity, punctuated by the whistles directing repair work and the chug of diesel pumps. Lung strode on as fast as his legs would carry him across the fields and over two more hillocks till he reached the river bank. There he pulled up abruptly, frowning.

On the eve of his departure for the city, Party Secretary Hsiao of Sunny Brigade in Lotus Commune on the opposite bank had come to Lung with a request. Some of their fields were flooded, and because they had no electricity to drain them they wanted the cable-crew to fix them up a power line from the east bank. Lung promised to ask his bureau's permission for this, and he had phoned back instructions to Team Leader Lo to install this line at top speed. Now five days had passed, but not a single pole had yet been put up for this electric cable across the river.

Lung gazed thoughtfully across the racing water. He had trained Lo himself and for years they had worked together. Lo had drive and a sense of responsibility. Why, then, had no progress been made? Puzzled, Lung set off again at a brisk pace towards the work site.

"So you're back, Party secretary!"

Lung glanced round. A youngster was running down a slope with a load of angle-irons on his right shoulder. Under his wicker helmet his eyes gleamed with mischief. His nickname was the Imp.

"Well, Imp, what's new in our team?" asked Lung with a smile.

"Ha, there was quite a tussle between Team Leader Lo and Assistant Team Leader Hsiao the other day."



“Over what?” asked Lung in surprise.

The youngster shifted his load to the other shoulder. “I only arrived at the tail-end of it. Just in time to hear one calling the other subjective, and the other accusing him of a swelled head... They were both thoroughly worked up.”

“Then what happened?”

“I didn’t ask. It’s hardly my business, a contradiction between leading comrades.” The Imp pulled a face.

Lung did not pursue the matter. He realized, however, that the problem was more involved than he had suspected.

Night was falling. The nearby villages were nothing but dark silhouettes as Old Lung and the lad hurried on, chatting, towards their quarters.

2

At the foot of a hill on the east bank of the Milo stood white cottages screened by green willows. This was the village where Lung’s cable-crew was quartered.

There had been a row in their office at the west end of the village the day after Lung left for Changsha.

Although it was pouring with rain, the hardy linemen had gone off in their oilskins to work as usual. Time was pressing and there were not enough men for the job. Team Leader Lo was worrying about this in the office when in came his assistant team leader, Young Hsiao, with an old man who looked like a peasant.

“Team leader, this is Party Secretary Hsiao of Sunny Brigade on the opposite bank...” said Young Hsiao.

“As if I didn’t know him!” cut in Lo impatiently. “This is Comrade Hsiao Tzu-ming, your uncle. We met the other day.” Young Hsiao had been Lo’s apprentice and, though now promoted to be assistant team leader, in Lo’s eyes he was still a junior.

“Party Secretary Hsiao, you’re just the man I want,” continued Lo, turning to the old man. “Your brigade agreed to supply us with some workers. How is it you haven’t sent any?”

Shaking his bamboo hat, from which the water was dripping, the old man smiled apologetically. "We're in a fix, team leader. The river's still rising. Soon all our fields will be flooded. I've come to ask you for help."

"Ask *us* for help?" Lo brushed this request aside. "We're in one hell of a spot ourselves. We've no time now to install that line for you."

Putting down his bamboo hat, the old man pleaded: "We've got all the material ready. We only want you to lend us a little equipment and send a few comrades to supervise the work."

"We'd gladly help if we could, Secretary Hsiao. But at the moment we simply can't manage it. You see, installing this line affects the state plan. We've got to install 250 kilometres of cable within the first half of this year. This is just as vital as your increasing output. Besides, even if we could spare the men, it would be no joke fixing up a line to the other bank with the river in flood like this... We'll help you later on, I promise you that."

Turned down flat like this, the old man smiled disarmingly. "Yes, of course, you're busy too..." Away he went through the rain.

Young Hsiao who had witnessed this exchange was most put out.

"Team leader," he objected. "Didn't Secretary Lung call up yesterday telling us to help them right away?"

"It's easy for him to talk," exploded Lo. "He's bitten off more than we can chew. A man only has two hands."

"That's no way to look at it." Young Hsiao flushed with anger.

"If you don't like it you can lump it," snapped Lo, resenting this criticism from his former apprentice.

Young Hsiao said nothing, reserving his arguments until the team leader was in a better temper.

Lo was still seething with anger. But Hsiao's glum silence gave him pause. As the young man's former master and present team leader, he decided he ought to help his assistant see reason. So sitting down he said sternly:

"You're not just an ordinary worker now, Young Hsiao. As assistant team leader, you must look at problems from all sides,

consider all aspects. You mustn't be narrow-minded, mustn't show favouritism to your own folk..."

"Favouritism to my own folk?" Hsiao rounded on him as if stung to pour out his resentment. "You've got me wrong, Comrade Lo. Just because we're cadres, we should take a responsible attitude and not deviate an inch from Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Helping Lotus Commune combat water-logging is one way of aiding agriculture. But it's more than that. It shows whether or not we're carrying out the directive to take agriculture as the base and industry as the guiding force. Secretary Lung has sent us the bureau's instructions, but you've neither called a meeting to discuss them nor carried them out. You haven't reported back either. Now that the brigade asks for help, you fob them off. Yet you accuse me of favouring my own folk... You're too subjective, comrade."

Having no way to refute this, Lo roared like a lion at bay:

"You — you've grown too big for your boots. You've got a swelled head!..."

Fuming he turned and dashed out, nearly knocking down the Imp who was just coming in to fetch some dynamite.

3

Lung reached the village after dark. As soon as he entered his room, workers and villagers flocked in to see him. Some reported on their work, others asked whether there were any messages from home, while some children surrounded him too, clamouring for the balloons which he had promised to bring them from town... With a good-humoured smile he answered all their questions and distributed the letters and things he had brought. Then he slipped off to fetch his supper.

As soon as he returned with his meal, Assistant Team Leader Hsiao arrived. Just back from work, he still had on his muddy galoshes and sopping wet overalls. Mud had spattered his face. Although very fond of this young cadre who studied hard and knew how to use his head, Lung seldom praised him but made strict demands on him.

"I hear there've been quite a few changes here these days," said Lung meaningly as he started on his rice.

"The work's going ahead quite fast. The comrades have plenty of drive," replied Hsiao cautiously with a glance at Lung.

"Yet you don't look very happy. Why not?" asked Lung bluntly, eyeing the young man.

Hsiao knew that the old secretary disliked beating about the bush, so he answered frankly: "After you left I had a row with the team leader."

"Tell me what it was all about," said Lung casually as he went on with his meal.

Hsiao was silent for a minute, then he gave a detailed account of what had happened. Finally he said: "Seems to me there's something unsound about his way of thinking and working style. His whole attitude was wrong."

As Old Lung slowly chewed his last mouthful of rice, he seemed to be chewing over what Hsiao had said. Then, glancing at the young man fondly, he commented: "I'm responsible in a way for some of Lo's faults. I haven't helped him enough. But how are we to solve ideological problems? Can they be solved by quarrelling?"

"My attitude wasn't good either," admitted Young Hsiao.

"Don't worry." Lung stood up. "Tell the comrades we'll have a meeting of the branch committee this evening."

4

The next morning dawned sunny with not a cloud in the sky, an ideal day for work.

The fine weather, however, only made Lo more frantic. After assigning various jobs for the day he went to the old secretary who was sorting out equipment and demanded: "What's to be done? We can't get any local labour. Now the weather's turned fine yet not a single villager has shown up to work, so we can't start installing the cable."

"Didn't you sign an agreement with the commune?" Lung straightened up and asked with a smile.

"That's just a useless scrap of paper. Lotus Commune hasn't sent us any men." Lo shook his head in disgust.

"Well, let's go over and find out the reason. How about it?" proposed Lung seriously, taking off his gloves. "The problem has to be solved. We can't just sit and wait."

Lo wanted to protest: What's the use? They'll probably ask you for help instead. However, unwilling to broach that distasteful subject, he said: "I've allotted the work for the day. I intend to go to the forty-ninth pole site and fix up that section; then tomorrow we can start to install the cable."

"Of course you can prepare for tomorrow, but what about the next day and the day after that? You'll still need help from the commune." Patting Lo on the shoulder, the old secretary smiled. "This 250 kilometres has bogged you down. Look at yourself, in your forties, with that beard. Why, you look like an old man... Leave the forty-ninth pole for today. Young Hsiao can go there for you."

His former master's concern warmed Lo's heart. Scratching his head, he grinned and said: "Right. Let's go."

After giving the assistant team leader a few instructions, they set off for the ford along the dyke planted with willows.

The river had risen another few feet, half submerging the willows at the foot of the dyke. The current was very rapid. Rows of barges and motor-boats loaded with sandbags and other materials for strengthening the dyke were cutting swiftly through the choppy waves.

As they walked, the old secretary commented on the rapid rise of the water and the rich resources of this locality. Lo listened with mixed feelings. At last night's Party meeting he had expected Lung to ask about the request for help from Lotus Commune; however, instead of touching on that subject, Lung relayed to them the bureau's instructions about supporting the agricultural front. And Young Hsiao made no mention of the row, as if he had forgotten all about it. Towards the end of the meeting, Lo started proposing that they should finish their task as quickly as possible before fixing up a cable across the river for the brigade. But before he had said more than

a few words Lung stood up to announce that, regarding these two tasks in hand, they should consider them in the light of the bureau's instructions before making any decision. Then the meeting adjourned. Now what was the use of asking Old Hsiao for workers? What if he brought up the business of installing a power line to his brigade again?

After crossing the river they climbed the dyke on the other bank. Before them stretched flooded fields, the green tips of the paddy tossing above the water like drowning men calling desperately for help. The river was lapping around some cottages. Commune members, one after another, were carrying loads of earth to strengthen the dyke; others, standing in waist-high water, were tamping the earth. Government functionaries, factory workers, PLA men and school-children — all had turned out to save the dyke. An electric pumping station was being set up; meanwhile kerosene-operated pumps were hard at work. The chant of the men tamping earth, the rumble of engines and the blast of whistles merged with the roaring of the river in spate to make a stirring symphony.

"Hey, mate! Work here's going like a house on fire," Lung called suddenly to a man in the crowd of workers.

Lo saw it was the brigade Party secretary, who was speeding towards them with two brimming crates of earth on his carrying pole. Putting down his load, Old Hsiao beamed and cried:

"So it's you. What brings you across the river today?"

"Well, I heard from your nephew that the Dragon King wanted to carry you off. I never expected to find you alive and kicking," joked Lung, grasping the old man's hand.

"We aren't accepting the Dragon King's invitation." Old Hsiao indicated the endless stream of workers on the dyke. "Township, government offices, factories, schools and the army — they've all turned out to help us. We mean to catch the Dragon King."

They squatted down for a chat on the dyke, overlooking the flooded fields.

"How big is this area under water?" Lung asked gravely.

"45,000 *mu* all told." Old Hsiao sighed.

"H'm... So much. What was your yield last year?" Lung produced a notebook and pen, as if he had come here today to learn about developments in agriculture.

"Counting both crops, 1,300 catties per *mu*."

"H'm..." Lung jotted the figure down, then turned to Lo. "Here. Help me with this calculation. 45,000 times 1,300. How much is that?"

Lo could not understand why Old Lung seemed more interested in the local people's harvest than in their own quota of 250 kilometres. Since he had not been listening carefully, he could only mutter: "It comes to quite a lot..."

"This year the crops were doing even better than last. If not for this flooding, we could have counted on 1,500 catties per *mu*," Old Hsiao added regretfully.

"What if we take emergency measures to drain off the water?" Lung asked eagerly.

"The crops could be saved." Old Hsiao turned to him in distress. "Our electric pumping station is nearly ready, and we've got all that's needed for fixing up a cable; but the generating-boat from the province can't be spared, and the power line here can't cross the river..."

Disturbed by this talk, Lo turned to look at the dyke where work was in full swing, pretending not to have heard their conversation.

Cheerfully Lung stood up. Waving his notebook, he laughed. "Well, mate, suppose between us we fix up a transmission line across the river?"

"That would be grand!" Old Hsiao sprang to his feet in delight. Catching sight of Lo squatting there glumly, he added diffidently: "But you've already got your work cut out, installing 250 kilometres..."

Lo's mind was in a tumult. He turned, meaning to explain the difficulties and urgency of their task. Before he could do this, however, Lung told Hsiao with a laugh:

"After all, mate, agriculture is our base. If this base isn't consolidated, our electric poles can't stand firm. Only when agriculture is doing well can industry steam ahead... Besides, think of all the

grain involved. If we don't save it, where can we get extra grain?"

"You know how to take a broad view, old man," declared Old Hsiao with feeling.

Glancing at Lo, still squatting there motionless, Lung asked: "What do you say, Lo?"

So here it came — the question he had been dreading. Though normally frank and outspoken, Lo could only stammer: "Y-yes.... Only we have to install 250 kilometres of cable... and with the river in spate..."

"Don't hedge, man," cut in Lung sternly. "On important issues, say clearly where you stand."

Knowing that it was impossible to evade the issue, Lo rose slowly to his feet and said with reluctance: "All right, we'll do as you want."

"Good. That's settled then," rejoined Lung emphatically.

"But later, on the question of local workers..." Lo began.

"We'll discuss that later. When fighting flood we have no time to think of fire-prevention." Lung turned back to Old Hsiao and proposed: "Get ready some boats and we'll start work tomorrow."

After saying goodbye to the brigade secretary, they went back to the ford. His eyes on the raging Milo, Lo muttered: "The river's so high, can we get a line across?"

"Paths are made by men. It's the masses who make history," replied Lung forcefully. "If we all pull together, we can move the highest mountain."

A few paces further on Lo asked again: "How many men shall we send to help them tomorrow?"

"We're not just helping them with a few men. This is our job. We'll use our whole task-force tomorrow."

Lo stopped in dismay, hardly able to believe his ears.

"We should put our own folk first," continued Lung, ignoring Lo's startled expression as he boarded the ferry boat. "We should do all we can for agriculture and never forget our six hundred million peasants. We must keep the whole country in mind."

At this, Lo realized that Lung had heard about his row with Young Hsiao. Lowering his head, he said nothing.

Standing in the bow, Lung cast a glance at Lo. Pulling the oar deftly with one hand, he pointed with the other at the buoys bobbing on the waves. "If we just lower our heads to row without keeping an eye on the course, then the harder we pull the more risks we run," he said. "We mustn't just concentrate on our power line and ignore the political line."

These words set the younger man thinking furiously. It began to dawn on him that there was something wrong with his attitude to helping the brigade and, indeed, with his whole way of thinking. However, he tried to justify himself, saying: "But, master, that 250 kilometres of line we have to install is part of the state plan. If we devote all our energy to fixing up this temporary line across the river, we won't be able to carry out the state plan or fulfil our own quota."

"No, we'll get that done too on time, not one day late, not one pole short of our target."

Lo's mind was in a tizzy. Could Old Lung be joking? He asked dubiously: "But how can we make time? Where's the labour force? It's only five days to the end of the month, and we aren't ready yet to start laying the wire."

"Just trust the strength of the masses. The masses are wiser than any individual."

Lo did not press the issue, but his mind was in no less of a tumult than the turbulent river. Aply rowed by the Party secretary who had worked as a boatman in the old days, the little craft sped towards the opposite bank.

5

The next morning, a large contingent of workers and peasants joined battle with the flood on the dyke. Before ten o'clock, two concrete poles for electric cables had already been erected on both banks, like long swords piercing the sky.

Old Man Heaven seemed bent on impressing these heroes with his might. Thunder cracked, lightning flashed; it rained cats and dogs half the night. At dawn the downpour ceased, but a southeast

wind sprang up and blew harder and harder, whipping up angry waves. It was indeed no easy task to lay a cable across the river in this weather. The usual way was to anchor a row of barges in the stream, pay out the line gradually over sheaves on the barges, then draw the cable up. But lacking the equipment for this, they decided to improvise by dragging the cable across. Lung took a boat to lead the way, assisted by Young Hsiao and some other youngsters.

A hazardous operation was usually what Lo excelled at, yet today he just stood on the bank as if in a daze, anxiously watching the linemen on the river. At the mobilization meeting the previous night he had made a self-criticism, and after the meeting he had a talk with Young Hsiao; so it seemed his ideological problem was solved. However, when they discussed their plan of action, fresh doubts cropped up in his mind. He suggested asking for barges from the provincial capital, and not starting work until the right equipment arrived. Of course, this idea of waiting and relying on outside help was opposed by the others. After Lo had been talked round he volunteered to take charge of shipping the cable across. In view of his ability and drive, the Party secretary would normally have entrusted him with the task. However, today Lung said: "This time you take charge of drawing in the line from the bank. I'll go on the river myself." Now, watching his old master's boat bobbing up and down, watching the whole scene of combat, Lo felt both stirred and ashamed.

In no time, the ends of three wires for the lead had been pulled across the river. As Lo blew his whistle on the bank, the drums started creaking and turning, and the silvery wires snaked through the leaping waves. In less than half an hour, two of them were hoisted up.

As Lo directed the drawing in of the third, a piercing whistle sounded from the river. Lung was waving his red flag from the boat. The drum stopped turning.

Lo ran to the drum and tugged at the wire: it was taut. It must have tangled with something under the water. His heart missed a beat.

The wind was howling, tossing up foaming billows. All eyes on the dyke were anxiously scanning the river. Lo was at a loss until Lung yelled to him to slacken the wire. Then he began to pay it out.

At the direction of the Party secretary, Lo paid out some hundred metres of the wire, in the hope that the current would sweep it free from its entanglement. However, as if caught by some giant hand under the water, the wire remained submerged.

Then someone called out in alarm: "Look! Men in the river!"

They saw two men swimming towards the middle of the stream. Lung rowed his boat after them. By this time the drum had drawn the wire taut again. When the two men reached the spot where it was caught, they dived below the waves. The people on the dyke waited with bated breath.

Clang! The wire on the drum abruptly slackened as a silver streak leapt up from the waves, making an arc in the air. A man carried up with the wire sank back into the river. Lung's boat shot forward towards a black dot in the water, and Lung helped a swimmer aboard. Then another boat which had come to the rescue conveyed the man to the shore. It was Team Leader Lo.

"Quick..." he panted. "Help Young Hsiao out..."

Lung rowed off to find Young Hsiao who had been swept away by the current, while men on shore also ran downstream to find him.

6

Before dawn the next day, when it was still dark and a mist hung low over the river, Lo sounded his whistle to muster the cable-crew. Only four more days to go to the end of the month, and the cable had yet to be laid on four dozen poles. The odds seemed against their fulfilling their target on time. Lung was still not back from the opposite bank. So although Lo had taken a hard buffeting in the river the previous day, he was up before it was light to set to work.

At the sound of the whistle, the cable-crew came out and mustered with tools and equipment on the threshing-ground outside the village.

Lo was just about to assign his men their jobs when he saw the old secretary striding down from the dyke.

"How many local workers do you want today?" asked Lung, in high spirits.

"Don't bring that up." Lo sounded rather disgruntled.

"How many? Speak up." Lung eyed him quizzically.

"How many? Well, yesterday the commune promised to send us a hundred men, but so far..." Lo shrugged his shoulders and smiled with resignation.

"Give me the figure, can't you?"

From Lung's mysterious expression, Lo sensed that there was yet hope. "Just reckon yourself," he said. "More than forty poles, and we need men to signal, men to fix up insulators, men to install the wire..."

"All right. No need for a detailed reckoning. But you must reckon on the people's enthusiasm for socialist construction, reckon on the united strength of our workers and peasants. You can have thirty men."

"Thirty?" Lo's face fell.

"We mustn't take too many from the fields. Lotus Commune has thought of everything: they're sending us two tractors to lay the cable."

"Ah!" Lo was so delighted, he could not speak.

Behind the village sounded the rumble of tractors. The workers struck gongs and drums to welcome them. Lo was grinning from ear to ear. All his cares had vanished.

The two tractors, which soon rolled on to the threshing-ground, were hung with red paper messages of thanks to the cable-crew. Old Hsiao jumped down from one of the drivers' cabins. Lo ran forward and grasped his hand.

"Brigade Secretary Hsiao," he cried. "I apologize for my bad attitude."

"That's no way to talk." Old Hsiao smiled. "We peasants and workers are one family; we must help each other. You've given us very great help."

"Look who's there, Lo!" Lung pointed to the crowd.

Lo saw Young Hsiao approaching. Rushing up to him, he looked at him searchingly and, his eyes misting over, cried: "Why are you out of hospital so soon, Young Hsiao?"

"There's nothing wrong with me," was the cheerful answer.

Lo threw his arms round his assistant, as if afraid he would be swept away again by the current.

The previous day the wire had caught in the crevice of a rock in the river bed. When Lo and Hsiao dived down, Hsiao had found the wire and managed to prize it loose. As he was going up again, he saw Lo under him and gave him a tug; but then his hand holding the wire slipped and he was swept off by the current. He had been carried quite a distance downstream before Lung found and rescued him.

Amid sounds of jubilation, Old Lung and Old Hsiao, the two Party secretaries, advanced shoulder to shoulder to meet the rising sun, with Lo and Young Hsiao close behind them. From the top of a little hill behind the village they saw the electric power line spanning the river like a rainbow, and heard the sound of electric pumps on the opposite bank. All the water-logged fields would soon be green again. Behind them men were hard at work, tractors were rolling over the muddy plain, and silver wires, hoisted on high, stretched away towards the horizon.

Illustrated by Chen Yi-fei

An Unfinished Lesson

I went recently with some teachers from our technical school to visit the workers' college attached to the East Wind Electric Machine Plant. We hoped to learn something about their educational method. As our bus drove in, I was stirred by the great changes I saw in the plant for, screened by green trees, there were new buildings everywhere. Electric trains loaded with new machinery sped swiftly along, their shrill whistles echoing from workshop to workshop. Cranes with extended arms passed us on both sides of the road. The whole scene was evidence of a big leap forward in production.

Old Hu, a member of the plant's revolutionary committee, led us to an out-of-the-way corner where he pointed to a row of thatched bamboo huts. "Here's our workers' college," he said. "The students are all workers. Their teachers are selected from workers, staff and plant technicians. A year ago they built these classrooms themselves." I was amazed. With no help from outside they had built these classrooms, started courses and trained students of their

own. Recently, they had even designed a new type of electric machine. This certainly was no ordinary college.

As we approached one of the classrooms, I saw through the window that a political lesson was in progress. The students were listening intently. "Be self-reliant, work hard" was written on the blackboard in big characters. I gave a start at sight of the weather-beaten but ruddy face of the teacher. His alert eyes sparkled beneath thick brows and a tuft of silvery hair poked out from under his faded army cap.

"It's Chao Sung," I exclaimed.

"Yes," responded Old Hu. "That's Comrade Chao Sung. Deputy secretary of the Party committee. You know him?"

"I'll say so!" I cried, remembering my first contact with Chao Sung. It had been on the eve of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution when the municipal committee had instructed our bureau to start a technical school. I was transferred from a factory under the bureau to take charge of the construction of the school building. In order to save time, we decided to enroll students while building. So we commandeered an old shop for our office and promptly began enrolment.

The enthusiastic teachers and students suggested that their first lesson should be one on self-reliance and thrift in running the school. Rolling up their sleeves they repaired the shop with scrap and divided it into classrooms. In less than a month the job was finished. To save funds for the state, they decided that no new buildings need be constructed; they would start their school on the spot. We submitted this proposal to the bureau but received no reply.

One day, a telephone call came from the bureau summoning me there to report on the progress of our construction work. I hurried there and was taken into the directors' office. A man in a smart grey cadre's uniform, sitting on a sofa, was introduced to me as Deputy Director Chao Sung.

"Sit down," Chao began, without even the ghost of a smile. Then lighting a cigarette, he drawled, "Well, Young Wang, I've read your reports. It's a good idea to start the school by relying on your own efforts. But..." There was a pause before he went on,

“But you haven’t considered every angle of the problem thoroughly. Socialist construction today is different from what it was in the past. In war-time, under difficult conditions, we could even have classes outside beneath the trees. But, now that our country has been liberated for more than ten years, conditions have changed. We must keep up with the times. Make-shift improvisation and doing things on the cheap was all very well during guerrilla warfare, but it won’t do today. That’s why we must build new classrooms for the school.”

“But schools are different from factories,” I argued. “We can teach in any sort of building. For technical training we can go to the workshops. We’ve already re-built an old shop into a dozen classrooms. Won’t you come and have a look at them?”

“No need! Some planks nailed to a few posts I suppose — what kind of school is that? Can you train modern technicians in such a school? The authorities have allotted us a fund of several hundred thousand yuan. That shows how important they consider this school.” He stopped to take a sip of strong tea. “I’ve contacted the designing institute and the construction bureau, and we’ve chosen a building site on the western outskirts.”

In my surprise I blurted out, “Deputy Director Chao, hadn’t we better talk it over with the teachers and students before you . . .”

He cut me short, saying, “The bureau has already made the decision.” Rising to his feet he went on, “If they fail to see the need for this, you cadres must explain it to them. Well, I’ve got to go to a meeting now. We’ll talk about this again some other time.” With that he left the room. I was filled with dismay as I watched his back vanish through the doorway.

Back at school I told the teachers and students what Chao Sung had said. As I had expected, most of them were against the idea. Soon after, the cultural revolution began and the whole project was dropped because teachers and students put up big-character posters outside the bureau opposing it. Although later I left the school to work at a construction site in another province, I heard that the technicians it trained were being sent to various production posts.

Two years ago I returned from the province and went to the bu-



reau’s May 7 Cadre School to study. I was allocated to the first squad in the Dagger Company. It was known as Dagger-point Squad because the stout youngsters in it were the first to volunteer for difficult tasks. When I heard that I knew they must have a good squad leader, a bold, tough fighter.

The company commander who took me to the first squad pointed to a man squatting by the door and sharpening a sickle. “This is your squad leader,” he said. The man must have been in his sixties. He wore an old army jacket and a pair of coarse cotton trousers.

I was astounded to see it was Chao Sung, former deputy director of our bureau. He gave me a warm welcome and showed me my new quarters.

The last bugle had long since sounded, but I was still tossing about in bed, thinking over this unexpected meeting. What would it be like, being in the same squad as Chao Sung?

The next morning, I found the fields were a sea of jade in early spring. The cadre school had just finished digging irrigation ditches and was beginning to take manure to the fields. Our company's forty *mu* of wheat badly needed fertilizer. The two newly-dug manure pits by the fields were still empty.

Before we started work, Chao Sung gave me a long-handled scoop. "You've just come and aren't used to carrying heavy loads. You can fill the buckets." This said, he started for the field with two big buckets on a shoulder pole. I rushed after him and took over his load, saying, "You're not so young any more, Old Chao. You shouldn't strain yourself. Here, you take this..." I shoved the scoop into his hand and hurried on with the buckets. But as I came back from the field I passed Chao carrying two bucketfuls of manure. He gave me a smile and a nod as he hurried along the narrow ridge. I admired his energy.

Although we were all soaked with sweat, the manure we had carried was barely enough to cover the bottoms of the big pits. At the first work-break Chao Sung made me sit down on the ridge, and handed me the towel he carried over his shoulder. "Wipe your face," he urged. "Toting manure is no easy job, but you'll soon get used to it." Gratefully taking the towel I said, "We've all been doing our best but it's slow work. If we go on like this, I'm afraid the wheat will suffer. I've noticed that some companies use carts. Why don't we ask for one tomorrow?"

Chao Sung nodded. "That's a good idea. But... But you haven't considered every angle of the problem." I stared at him in astonishment as he lit a cigarette. "We've more than twenty companies in our school," he explained. "If they all stretch out their hands for a cart the leadership won't have enough."

"Well..." I was bowled over.

"So, no matter what we plan to do," he went on, "we should never forget self-reliance and thrift in running a school. Shall we put our heads together and think of some other way when we get back?"

The whistle was blown to resume work. With a smile Chao picked up his buckets and left. Gazing at his receding back I was impressed, sensing the change in him—the present Chao Sung was a different man from the one I'd known in the past.

The next morning before I was up Chao Sung had already gone out. His quilt was neatly folded and a copy of Chairman Mao's *On Practice* left beside his pillow. I wondered where he was.

He did not come back till it was nearly time to begin work. Meeting me in the doorway he patted me on the shoulder and said, "Come and have a look!" I followed him to a store-room where farm implements were kept. He showed me an old water cart, saying, "Let's use this to carry manure. D'you think it'll do?" This so-called water cart was only an old petrol tank fixed on a cart. Drinking water had been a problem when the school was first set up. It had to be carried in buckets from miles away. So the students had used this old petrol tank to lighten their load and save time. Since the school now had running water the cart was lying idle.

"Marvellous!" I exclaimed. "Only the cart's a little too wide for some of the narrow field paths. We'll never be able to pull it along them."

"Oh, yes," Chao assured me. "I've checked the paths..." The spade in his hand revealed the truth to me. Before daybreak he had gone with two comrades to inspect and widen some of the paths.

"You didn't want me to tote the load alone yesterday, did you?" he joked. "All right, we'll pull the cart together today."

"You're quite right to say that we should run the school by our own efforts. But do you remember how our bureau insisted on new buildings for our technical school?" I asked.

He scrutinized me carefully for a full minute, then said, "Are you from the technical school?"

"I was the man in charge of its construction. I reported on the work to you in the bureau."

"So you're Young Wang!" He shook my hand. "I learned a lot from that. In the old Yenan days, when the enemy blockaded our liberated areas, we had to work hard and reclaim wasteland. We were virtually empty-handed at the time. Then Chairman Mao called on us to get **'ample food and clothing by working with our own hands'**. So, we soldiers dug cave dwellings, made farm implements, opened up new land, gathered manure and dug irrigation ditches. By our own efforts we gathered in bumper harvests year after year, which ensured our victory in the revolutionary war. But after we entered the cities we were cut off from manual labour for so long that that glorious tradition of hard struggle was lost." He became quite agitated. "This cultural revolution has taught me a good lesson. It's given me a chance to study Marxism again and take part in physical labour in this cadre school. Just imagine! The very first day I set foot here I recalled the stormy war years and felt as if I'd returned to our big revolutionary family." His remarks gave me food for thought.

Carting manure is faster than carrying it in buckets. The manure in the pits was waist-deep after only half a day's work. The wind from the sea was as sharp as a razor but we all worked with a will. Then an accident happened. As the cart was tipped to empty it into the pit, the wire around the tank broke.

"Hold the tank," someone shouted. But its weight was making it slide down out of control. The men pulling the cart were slipping downwards too. Splash! A man jumped into the pit. He propped up the tank with his shoulder and hands until the others were able to haul it back. It was Chao Sung. His clothes were soaked in muck, his jacket was torn and his face scratched. But under his thick brows his eyes seemed brighter than ever.

Very soon our task was completed. In a broadcast from the school headquarters our company was commended. The same day our company headquarters decided to call a meeting to exchange experience. Chao Sung was chosen to speak for our squad at the meeting.

That evening the thatched hall was brightly lit. Groups of May 7 fighters seated on small wooden stools took turns singing before the meeting started. The first to speak was Chao Sung. I was impressed by the tone and content of his speech. Though I had been only three days in the cadre school I had learned a lot from him. His determination to struggle hard and take on the heaviest jobs, and his quickness in saving the cart moved me profoundly. The fact that First Squad had become the point of the "dagger" company, I realized, was largely because of its leader. Chao deserved praise from the company as well as from the whole school.

A burst of applause aroused me from these reflections. I heard Chao Sung saying earnestly, "It was a good thing to use the cart to carry manure, but I forgot to inspect it for safety and so there was an accident. Then a good thing turned into a bad thing. By summing up our experience we realized that this accident didn't happen just by chance. We are so used to thinking of ourselves as the dagger-point squad, so used to being praised, that success sometimes blinds us. Then how can we walk without tumbling? Now I am more than ever aware that we must always be vigilant, never forget to be modest and prudent, never forget the work style of hard struggle. Only thus can we carry on the revolution continuously. . . ."

Some time after that Chao Sung went back to the bureau. I never expected to meet him here again at the East Wind Electric Machine Plant. I felt quite excited. Old Hu seemed to have read my mind when he said, "After Chao Sung returned from the May 7 Cadre School he became deputy secretary of the bureau's Party committee. He came here to work for a short time to gain experience at the grass-root level. It was at a time when we were being called on to double production and the foreign-aid materials we were making had to be delivered ahead of schedule. We were short of workshops then because capital construction had not caught up with the situation. We were all anxious. It was Chao Sung who decided to turn the buildings used for the former workers' college into workshops. 'Schools are different from plants,' he said. 'Classes can be carried on anywhere. Technical skill can be learned in the workshops.'

It was under his leadership that the teachers and students built this row of classrooms out of bamboo and rice straw. He came back from the bureau today to take part in labour at our plant, so we asked him to give our students a lesson on the Party's glorious tradition of hard struggle." At this point the bell rang for recess.

"Time's up! But I haven't finished this lesson yet." It was Chao Sung's voice in the classroom.

Standing outside the window I glanced at the big characters on the blackboard, "Be self-reliant, work hard." My thoughts were racing like a swift-flowing river. It was quite a while before I was able to calm down. Indeed, the lesson Chao Sung taught is not finished and we must go on with it in times to come.

Illustrated by Ma Chuan



Lion Dance (scissor-cut with copper foil)
by Yang Yung-hsiang and Chang Po ▶

Storm Warning

Characters

Chang Li-hua (a girl)	} <i>weather forecasters in a PLA weather station</i>
Little Chin (a girl)	
Young Chi	
Uncle Li	<i>an old poor peasant</i>
Young Han	<i>cook in the weather station</i>

1971.

A mountain region.

As the curtain rises, a spotlight picks out the weather-forecast board on which is written: "4 May 1971: fine." But it is raining hard and thunder is rumbling. Li-hua, standing in front of the blackboard in her raincoat, is looking with consternation at the sky.

Li-hua (*in dismay*): Another wrong forecast!

(Sound of a bicycle bell. Young Han hurries in, drenched to the skin, wheeling his bicycle. He has draped his army jacket over a bucket on his carrier.)

About the writer see the article on p. 114.

Han (*sneezes. Looks at the forecast and flares up*): Pah! Still "fine" is it? I'm drenched.

Li-hua (*apologetically takes off her raincoat*): Put this on, Han. You mustn't catch cold.

Han: Thanks. I'm already half drowned. How do you expect me to cook you a good meal for today's Youth Festival, eh? Just look. All the beancurd and vermicelli I've bought have turned into beancurd-and-vermicelli soup.

(*Offstage someone calls Li-hua. Chin hurries in.*)

Chin (*excitedly*): Li-hua, lightning just struck Grey Stone Gully. Some people had a narrow escape.

Li-hua (*shocked*): Really? I...

Han: See how dangerous it is to forecast clear weather when there's going to be a storm.

Chin: Some storms strike out of the blue. Have you never bungled your cooking? Never burned rice?

Han: I'm only thinking of you. If this is the best you can do, how are you going to manage in a war?

Chin: Look, comrade, can't you make allowances? This small station of ours has only just been set up. We've no radar equipment or communications network yet... Well, it's no use talking to you. If you think you can do better, let's swap jobs. I'll do the cooking, you do the forecasting.

Han: What way is that to talk? You made a wrong forecast: are you still in the right?

Chin (*pugnaciously*): If you...

Li-hua (*intervenes*): Little Chin... Young Han's right. Forecasts like today's are really dangerous, especially for a plane if it gets caught in a thunderstorm. In war-time, it could be even more serious... (*With determination*) Little Chin, we must learn to forecast storms accurately.

Chin: Right. We'll show 'em.

Han: That's the spirit. I wish you success. (*Wheels his bicycle off.*)

Chin: Li-hua, (*resolutely*) I'm going to read up all the material, both Chinese and foreign, about forecasting storms.

Li-hua (*with feeling*): But the facts show that book knowledge isn't enough... We must go to the masses, Little Chin. Only when we link up our theoretical knowledge with our specific conditions here can we really grasp the laws governing storms in these mountains.

(*Blackout.*)

(*Change of scene: one year later. In the yard of the weather station the forecast reads: "4 May 1972: fine." The day is sunny with flecks of white cloud in a blue sky. Willows sway in the warm breeze; birds chirp, springs gurgle; all looks green and fresh in the observation station. On the lawn is a thermometer hut; above it towers a vane. In the distance rise mountain ranges.*)

(*One corner of the office. On the wall are eye-catching quotations from Chairman Mao: "The standpoint of practice is the primary and basic standpoint in the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge." "The history of mankind is one of continuous development from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom." On the wall there is also a weather chart. Two telephones on the desk ring from time to time and Little Chin answers inquiries about the weather.*)

Chin (*eagerly*): Right... right. Fine sunny weather. No rain. (*The telephone rings again.*) Yes, this is the weather station... What's that? You want to take some youngsters up the mountains?... Oh, of course, today is May the Fourth, the Youth Festival. Go ahead. It isn't going to rain today... (*Earnestly*) Absolutely certain. Don't worry. (*Puts down the receiver and looks gaily through the window.*) What a perfect day! (*Puts up a chart, then starts reading a book.*)

(*Enter Han.*)

Han: Is it going to rain, Little Chin? This afternoon I'm off to town to buy beancurd.

Chin (*smiles*): Just look at the board.

Han: All right. (*Looks at the forecast.*) Ha, sunny weather, eh? But this time last year you let me in for a drenching...



Chin (*frowns*): Are you still harping on that? Just one wetting, yet a whole year later you can't forget it.

Han: Well, to be honest, I've noticed since then that you and Li-hua have been going all out to give accurate storm warnings.

Chin (*pleased*): So you've noticed that, eh?

Han: Yes. But the two of you don't go about it the same way.

Chin: Well, I think the world of Li-hua, but on this one point we don't see eye to eye. Just think, a weather station isn't a surveying team, so why should she keep running around with her kit-bag?

Han: She's studying conditions and summarizing experience.

Chin: Summarizing experience? (*Pats her books.*) Here's a treasure-house of experience. Look, this is *On the Origin of Storms* and this is *On Stormy Weather in Spring*. I've read them both.

Han: Two years ago when Li-hua first joined the army, she kept her nose in books all the time, just like you. But now, you see, she doesn't only read books, she goes round consulting people to find out the quirks of the weather hereabouts. I think that shows more sense.

Chin (*resents this implication*): What do you know about it?

Han: I joined up the same year she did, so I ought to know.

(*Laughs.*) At that time you were probably still a kid calling us "PLA uncles."

Chin: Airing your seniority, eh? Li-hua never acts like that. . . . Though she's been gone only a month, I really miss her.

Han: Didn't you say she's coming back tomorrow?

Chin: Yes. She wrote saying she'd be back as soon as she finished copying out some material in the county weather station. (*Remembers something.*) Oh yes, she asked after you. Wait a bit, while I fetch her letter. (*Goes inside.*)

(*Enter Li-hua.*)

Li-hua (*wipes her perspiring face. Cheerfully*): Home again! (*Looks at the weather forecast. Calls back*) Young Chi! Hurry up!

(*Chi enters.*)

Han (*runs out of the house*): Ah, Li-hua's back. And Chi too. You must have had a tiring time of it.

Li-hua (*laughs*): We haven't been gone long — why all this politeness?

Han: Little Chin was just talking about you. We weren't expecting you until tomorrow.

Li-hua: We only decided last night to come back earlier.

Han: Come on, give me your kit-bag. (*Tries to take it.*)

Chi (*stops him*): Don't! Let her take it off herself. (*To Li-hua*) You insisted on carrying it. Now we're back, it's time you put it down.

Li-hua: Shut up! (*She winces with pain in her left arm as she takes off the kit-bag and passes it to Han.*) Don't wait for me, Chi. I want to have a look in the office.

Han (*laughs*): Still the same old Li-hua: goes to the office the moment she gets back. Be quick about it though. Your meal will be ready any minute.

Li-hua: All right. Young Chi, the book I bought for Little Chin is in your bag; remember to bring it.

(*Chi assents and leaves with Han.*)

(*As soon as they have gone, Li-hua painfully exercises her left arm. Chin enters with a letter.*)

Chin: Oh? Where's Young Han? (*Reads the letter aloud, not noticing Li-hua's arrival.*) "... I've bought that book you wanted, *Storms in Mountain Regions...*" (*Chuckles with pleasure.*)

(*Li-hua tiptoes over and puts her right hand over Chin's eyes.*)

Chin (*feels the hand*): Who is it? Own up. Ha, I know.

(*Li-hua laughs.*)

Chin: Is it Li-hua?

Li-hua (*whips away her hand*): Little Chin!

Chin (*overjoyed*): At last you're back! You can't imagine how I've missed you. (*Notices something unusual.*) What's wrong with your other arm?

Li-hua: Nothing. It's all right. (*She moves her arm to show Chin.*)

Chin (*reassured, pours out some water*): I heard you were up in the mountains during a thunderstorm. You shouldn't take such risks. During that big storm the other day, I was afraid you'd bump into the God of Thunder.

Li-hua: Nothing of the sort. By that time I'd already gone to the county meteorological station.

Chin (*remembers something*): Oh, that book I wanted... did you bring it?

Li-hua: Sure. (*Opens her kit-bag.*) Here you are. (*Gives Chin a big handful of apricots.*)

Chin: Apricots? What a tease you are. You know what I want.

Li-hua: Don't worry. Young Chi's got it. He'll bring it over presently. I bought two copies, one for each of us.

Chin (*pleased*): Splendid! (*Wipes an apricot on her tunic and takes a bite.*) Ummm. Very sweet. Where did you get these?

Li-hua: From that orchard belonging to Uncle Li's brigade.

Chin: Which Uncle Li?

Li-hua: The "weather-man" in Little Li Village. Oh, and we've agreed, when the weather changes in future, to keep each other informed. Another thing... here's the historical data I copied at the county meteorological station. (*Takes it from her kit-bag.*) And here's the storm chart based on the special features of these

mountains, as well as more than two hundred weather rhymes Uncle Li collected for us...

Chin: Li-hua! (*With feeling*) Just look at you: burned by the sun and worn to a shadow. I don't want to be a wet blanket, but wind and rain are controlled by Old Man Heaven; what's the use of trapesing up mountains and through marshes to consult the Goddess of Earth?

Li-hua: But our mountain region is different from the plain. The course storms take depends to a great extent on the terrain. This is something I want to discuss with you...

Chin: Didn't you say you were coming back tomorrow?

Li-hua: I was longing to see you.

Chin: That's no answer, Li-hua. However fond of me you are, you wouldn't come back early on my account. Tell me the real reason.

Li-hua (*smiles*): I was afraid, if I didn't come back today, I'd be caught in a storm on the way. (*Watches Chin's reaction.*)

Chin (*looks up at the sun*): Really you are the limit! You talk about storms in your sleep at night; now in broad daylight you're still dreaming.

Li-hua: Little Chin, last night we discussed today's weather with the comrades in the county meteorological station. There are complex factors involved... (*A telephone rings. Li-hua takes up the receiver.*) Yes, this is the weather station... Hold on a minute. (*Passes the phone to Chin.*) It's for today's weather forecaster, Little Chin.

Chin (*busy drawing a chart*): Never mind. You take it.

Li-hua (*into the receiver*): All right, what is it?... Oh, it's the chief of staff. (*Chin stops drawing.*) What instructions do you have for us?... Very good. We'll do that. (*Puts down the phone.*) An urgent task, Little Chin.

Chin: Oh? What is it?

Li-hua: An order to forecast the weather here for the next four hours. They're flying a doctor up by helicopter to operate on someone.

Chin (*shocked*): A helicopter coming here? Who's the patient?

Li-hua (*tensely*): Head of the Little Li Village militia company, who's been working at the bridge site. He's in a bad way, it seems, and has to be operated on at once.

Chin (*anxious*): What's his trouble?

Li-hua (*shakes her head*): I don't know. The higher-ups say he must be saved at all costs. We're to give them an accurate weather forecast before twelve.

Chin: Before twelve? (*Looks at her watch.*) It's already ten past eleven.

Li-hua (*points at the map*): The aircraft will take off from this field. The doctor's on his way there now.

Chin (*rather tense*): This is a big thing, Li-hua. We mustn't bungle it. Let me have another good look at the chart. (*Turns to study the weather chart.*)

Li-hua (*looks at the chart. Gravely*): Seems a storm is gathering.

Chin (*misunderstanding*): Yes, every minute counts. We must race against time. (*Leafs through some charts.*) Judging by these charts, there'll be no cold air current moving this way in the next few hours. (*To Li-hua*) What do you think?

Li-hua (*deep in thought*): Yes. . . .

Chin: So I don't think there'll be any big change in the weather. It's sure to be sunny for the next four hours, that's absolutely certain. I'll report right away to the army command, Li-hua, that the weather's all right for flying.

Li-hua: No, Little Chin. . . .

Chin: What's wrong?

Li-hua (*gravely*): There may be a thunderstorm this afternoon.

Chin: A thunderstorm? (*Starts, then laughs.*) You must be joking.

Li-hua (*seriously*): Would I joke at a time like this?

Chin (*surprised*): Then where's your storm coming from? (*Looks at the chart, firmly*) I can guarantee there'll be no cold air current moving this way in the near future.

Li-hua: I agree, there's no cold air flowing southward; but under certain conditions there can be a thunderstorm even without any movement of cold air.

Chin (*incredulous*): What's come over you? This is spring-time. Every child knows that it only thunders in spring when warm air rises and cold air descends. Beancurd can't be made without lye, and there's no thunderstorm without cold air.

Li-hua: If we haven't got lye we can use gypsum instead; when there's no inflow of cold air, warm air can do the trick too. (*Points to the chart.*) Look, the air here near the ground is warm and humid. . . .

Chin (*confidently*): I know. And high humidity raises the temperature.

Li-hua: So, relatively speaking, the air above is cold and dry. Cold above, warm below — that spells storm. When a man's top-heavy, the least little shove — (*makes a gesture. Chin gives a start*) — will topple him over. So a sudden thunderstorm is quite on the cards.

Chin (*shakes her head emphatically*): Impossible! Not in spring. There's no record of such a thing in any of the books I've read. How can you jump to such a conclusion?

Li-hua: We went through all the historical data in the county meteorological station, and we found definite evidence of freakish storms like this. If they aren't recorded in books yet, we can write them up ourselves later.

Chin: I'm not such an expert!

Li-hua (*gently*): Remember this time last year when Young Han got drenched?

Chin: Of course I remember.

Li-hua: It was very like today. According to the rules we know, if the wind veers south this freakish kind of storm is bound to follow.

(*Both look at the wind-vane.*)

Chin (*brightens up*): It's from the north, a northerly wind. You have good eyes, Li-hua. Look, isn't that wind due north?

Li-hua (*consults her watch*): According to our calculations yesterday, the wind should start veering soon.

Chin: Veering? How come? Don't be so pig-headed, Li-hua. (*As she speaks, the vane suddenly shifts and turns to point due south.*)



Chin (*not looking at the vane*):
A south wind? Impossible. Not unless a miracle happens. . . . (*Catches sight of the vane.*) Oh, it really has changed.

Li-hua (*worried*): The storm may break sooner than we reckoned, Little Chin.

Chin (*unconvinced*): Even if the wind changes, so what? That's neither here nor there. Once bitten twice shy, that's your trouble. Predicting a storm on such a fine day — fantastic!

Li-hua (*earnestly*): But look, Little Chin, all the data I've brought back prove that there'll be a storm today. (*Produces her material.*)

Chin (*impatient*): All right, all right, Li-hua. So what do they prove, your map of the local terrain and

your two hundred weather rhymes? We have maps here too, published by the state, much better drawn than yours.

Li-hua: However well-drawn those big maps are, they can't tell you the course our local storms will take.

Chin: All right, I'll concede you that. I know your weather lore too:

Hens cluck at noon, rain will come soon;

If cocks crow, the rain will go.

But is there a single day on which hens don't cluck and cocks don't crow? It's just a pack of nonsense. If those sayings were

reliable, our army wouldn't need any weather stations. Poultry farms would do instead.

Li-hua: Those rhymes sum up the people's experience. If they're not wholly scientific we can improve on them, stripping off the husk to extract the kernel of truth.

Chin: I've no time to argue with you. This is an emergency. I must give them the weather forecast. (*Cranks up the phone.*)

Li-hua (*stops her*): Wait.

Chin: Now what? Won't you let me give the forecast? . . . Have you thought what a big responsibility you're taking?

Li-hua: Yes, I have.

Chin: See here, Comrade Li-hua, if we raise a false alarm and delay the doctor's arrival. . . .

Li-hua: But what if the plane runs into a storm and crashes? Fair weather or foul? It makes a world of difference. (*Seriously*) Little Chin, we must take a responsible attitude in our revolutionary work.

Chin (*annoyed*): What do you mean by that? Who's not taking a responsible attitude? You just happen to have two more years' experience in this work than I have. . . .

Li-hua: I've been at this two years longer, but I'm inexperienced too. We must all be extra cautious, because there are lives at stake. We've no right to endanger state property or to risk comrades' lives. (*Gently*) If you feel my attitude isn't good, you can criticize me later. But now. . . .

Chin (*turns away*): You're too cocksure.

(*There is a moment's silence.*)

Li-hua (*reflects anxiously then says firmly*): Let's ask the station master to call all the comrades together to make a fresh analysis of today's weather. What do you think, Little Chin?

Chin: Is that necessary? What is there to discuss? You're set on forecasting a storm. You're like an elder sister to me, I grant you that, but at a time like this I must stick to my principles — I can't compromise. (*Takes up the phone again.*)

Li-hua (*urgently*): Little Chin. . .

Chin (*flares up*): All right then. You can sign today's forecast.
I. . . (*Turns to go.*)

(*Chi enters and places a new book on the desk.*)

Chi: Where are you off to, Little Chin?

Chin: To find the station master. Something urgent.

Chi: The station master says today's weather is tricky. He's sent me to tell you to call a meeting to discuss it.

Chin: What? . . . No, I must report this business to him myself.

Chi: He's already left.

Chin: Left?

Chi: Yes, the chief of staff ordered him to go to the airfield to report on atmospheric conditions there. The station master says this is a tough battle; we must all co-ordinate well and report on new developments at once. Li-hua, as you're an old hand, he wants you to take more responsibility.

(*Chin remains silent.*)

Li-hua (*urgently*): Little Chin, let's mobilize our observer team and communications team to keep a sharp lookout and collect all relevant information. How about it?

Chin: . . . As you like. (*Hastily starts looking up books.*)

Chi: I'll go and tell the others. (*Turns to go.*)

Chin: Wait. . . Tell them to send up balloons to measure the wind velocity.

Chi: Right. (*Runs off.*)

Li-hua (*hastily cranks the telephone*): Long distance, long distance! I want the Chiangchen weather station. . . Right, put us through as fast as you can, the quicker the better. It's urgent.

Chin (*puzzled*): Why ask for the Chiangchen station?

Li-hua: We must be alert to any changes in the vicinity. The helicopter will have to fly over Chiangchen, so it's crucial for us to know conditions there. . .

Chin: It seems to me, what's crucial is to get the forecast from the provincial station. (*Looks at her watch.*) Ah, we've been so

busy talking, we almost forgot the broadcast. (*Turns on the radio and listens.*)

(The radio broadcasts: "Here is today's weather forecast from the provincial meteorological station. The whole province will have clear weather turning cloudy, with a one to two degree northwest wind. . .")

Chin (*elated*): See? Exactly the same as my forecast. A fine day with no rain. Just when we were on the verge of panicking. Thank goodness, the wireless has saved us.

(*Li-hua steps closer to the wireless and listens intently in silence.*)

Chin: Anyway, today is fine. However hard you listen, you can't make it rain. That's enough, Li-hua. (*Switches the radio off.*)

Li-hua (*turns it on again*): Just listen. What's that?

(*A music broadcast with static.*)

Chin (*impatient*): Is this a time to listen to music?

Li-hua: The storm's approaching.

Chin: What? Who says so?

Li-hua: The wireless.

Chin: For goodness' sake, there must be something wrong with your ears. The provincial station clearly announced fine weather, yet you insist on your storm.

Li-hua: No. Listen to that static. (*A loud crackling sounds from the wireless.*) That's a sign of atmospheric disturbances. There must be a storm somewhere near. The wireless can hear more distinctly than our ears.

Chin: Well, of course, a faulty old wireless like this has static.

(*Chi runs in.*)

Chi (*urgently*): Little Chin, Little Chin! Our operator just heard thunder in his earphones.

Chin (*taken aback*): Surely not! . . . Thunder in clear weather like this? I don't believe it. (*To herself*) . . . The provincial station said quite clearly it would be fine.

Li-hua: The provincial station's forecast is no doubt correct for the province as a whole; but up here in the mountains the weather is erratic. As the local people say:

Here it's raining, there it's bright;
Different wind beyond the height.

Mountain weather's fitful as a child's temper.

Chin (*thinks this over*): True. The weather may vary from place to place. A thunderstorm close by may give us a miss. How can you be sure it will affect us here?

Chi (*impatient*): We can't bank on luck. We must be dead certain.

Chin: Have you got the result of the balloon test, Young Chi?

Chi: I'll go and get it now. (*Exit.*)

(*Enter Han.*)

Han: Li-hua, Uncle Li's come to see you.

Li-hua: I'll be back right away, Little Chin. (*Exit.*)

Han: What's the weather going to do today, Little Chin? I must go and buy that beancurd.

Chin: For pity's sake, Comrade Han, don't bother us with your beancurd. (*Loud rumbling is heard.*)

Chin (*with a start*): Thunder? (*Looks through the window.*)

Han (*listening*): How can it be thunder? Blasting on the work site, most likely.

Chin (*sheepish*): It made me jump. I feel quite at sea.

Han: Well, if you're at sea, so am I. What did I tell you? Just book knowledge, not linked with practice, is no use.

Chin: All right, all right. Stop pestering. (*Pushes him off.*)

(*Enter Li-hua with Uncle Li.*)

Han: Well... (*He leaves, nearly knocking into Uncle Li on the way.*)

Chin (*embarrassed*): What brings you here, uncle?

Uncle: It's the southeasterly wind that has blown me here. Didn't Li-hua tell me to let you know of any change in the weather? That's why I've come.

Li-hua: Uncle, you think today's weather...

Uncle: Yes, it's working up to something. When I took the ox

up to the hills this morning, I saw warning signs. The sun was as big as a cart-wheel, and blood-red.

Chin: "Red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning," eh?

Uncle: That's right.

Chin (*bluntly*): I don't think it works that way, uncle.

Li-hua: Why not?

Chin: One morning when the sun rose big and red, I took a stool and sat down in the courtyard to wait. I waited till my back ached, but not a drop of rain fell.

Li-hua (*smiles*): How many times did you make that test?

Chin: How many times? Isn't it enough to be fooled once?

Li-hua: I was like that

too: once some method didn't work I lost faith in it. Later I realized that if we want to find out the laws governing anything we must keep it under constant observation. At Uncle Li's suggestion, we've made a "sunrise chart". (*Produces the chart.*) Look at those different shades of red: crimson, scarlet, orange and pink. Of course these are only appearances, but the deeper the red the more moisture there is in the air.

Uncle: That's it.



Red as blood, the skies will flood;
Lighter red, no rain ahead.

(*Eyes the chart appreciatively*) It takes scholars to draw like this,
turning our local weather-lore into a science.

(*Thick clouds cover the mountain summit.*)

Uncle (*shades his eyes*): Ah, Grey Ridge has put on its hood. We
mountain folk have a saying, lasses:

When Grey Ridge is hooded over,
Then's the time to run for cover.

How close it's grown, eh? The tree-tops aren't even stirring.

Li-hua: Yes, when a thunderstorm's brewing, the atmospheric
pressure sinks abruptly and it gets very sultry.

(*Chi comes in bringing fresh data.*)

Chi: Li-hua, Little Chin! According to our observations, the
atmospheric pressure is coming down fast.

Chin (*shocked*): That means a thunderstorm . . . really is coming.

Chi: Little Chin. (*Passes her a paper.*) Here are the results of the
balloon test.

(*Li-hua and Chin hastily look at the data. Chin utters an exclamation.*)

Li-hua: High atmospheric disturbance.

Chi: The storm may break any moment now.

Chin: But how could this happen? I just can't believe it.

Chi: The observers have spotted cumulo-nimbus clouds high over
our district.

Li-hua: In which direction?

Chi: Southeast.

(*They all turn to look in that direction.*)

Chin (*exclaiming*): There really is a cumulo-nimbus cloud! (*In
dismay*) According to the books, this type of cloud nearly always
precedes a storm.

Uncle: Cu-mu-lo nim-bus, did you say? Is that its official name?

Li-hua: Yes, it's what folk hereabouts call a "castle cloud".

Uncle: That's it.

When castle clouds are in the sky,
The ground beneath will not stay dry.

Chin (*impressed*): Why, uncle, you know it all! No wonder everyone
calls you the "weather-man".

Uncle (*chuckles*): This is nothing. You lasses understand all the
sciences of heaven and earth and can predict wind and rain.
'There's a lot I want to learn from you. But the storm is coming,
I mustn't stay here chatting. Our team's crops are still on the
threshing floor. I must go back to get them under cover. (*Exit.*)

Li-hua (*calls after him*): Uncle, thank you for coming!

Chin (*remembers something*): Li-hua, isn't the man they want to save
the militia company leader of Uncle Li's village?

Li-hua: Yes, what a pity we forgot to ask after him.

(*Chin surveys the blackboard in silence, then wipes off the word "fine"
and substitutes "stormy".*)

Chin (*in despair*): That's torn it. No aircraft can come now.

Li-hua (*after a moment's thought*): There's still a chance.

Chin: Really? You think it can come?

Li-hua: It may be possible. What we need to know is when the
storm hits Chiangchen.

Chin (*puzzled*): Why are you so interested in that place?

Chi: It's very simple. To enter the mountains through the gap in
the north, the aircraft must pass Chiangchen.

Li-hua: Right. If the storm is still some distance from Chiangchen
and that gap will be open for another hour, the pilot can still
make it.

Chin: If the gap will be open for another hour, the pilot can still
make it? (*Excited*) That's wonderful! I'll call up and find
out.

(*The telephone rings.*)

Chin (*takes up the receiver*): . . . What? You've got Chiangchen?
'Thank you. . . . Is that Chiangchen weather station? How's
your weather? . . . What? Say that again. . . . I see. . . . All right.

(Replaces the receiver despondently.) The storm has already reached Chiangchen.

(Silence.)

Li-hua (*gravely*): So the way's been cut by the storm. (*With suppressed anxiety she walks to the door and gazes silently into the distance.*)

Chin (*sadly*): Li-hua, we must report to the higher command that there's a storm today, and no aircraft can enter the mountains. (*Picks up the phone.*)

Li-hua (*stops her*): Wait....

Chin: Why? When I wanted to report clear weather, you stopped me. I was wrong then, and I mean to make a self-criticism later. Now I want to report a storm, but you stop me again. What do you expect me to do? Look at the time. Already eleven forty.

Li-hua (*with distress*): It's easy to report a storm, but what about that militia comrade? Just forecasting the weather isn't enough, we must put forward some proposal.... If the helicopter doesn't come, the operation can't be done. Even a short delay may be dangerous.

Chin (*anxious*): What can we do then?

Li-hua (*to herself*): ... We must save our class brother's life. A Communist should be able to steer clear of hidden reefs and shoals.

Chin (*to herself*): Steer clear of shoals.... Can we steer clear of the storm?

Li-hua (*struck by an idea*): What did you say, Little Chin? Ah... (*elatedly*) comrades, I've thought of a way.

Chin and Chi: What is it? Quick.

Li-Hua (*excitedly to Chin*): You gave me the idea just now.

Chin: I did? How? I haven't a clue.

Li-hua: Change the route for the flight to steer clear of the storm. Look.

(*They gather round the desk.*)

Li-hua (*takes a pen to represent the plane and makes it circle round. With*

excitement): When a storm enters a ravine, it's like a snaffled horse forced to head south and unable to cross the ridges. You know what the cowherds here sing:

Black Bull Mount's so steep and high,

One side's wet, the other dry.

Remember, Young Chi, what we've seen with our own eyes: Chiangchen and Jujube Village are on opposite sides of the same mountain, yet when it rains on one side the other is usually dry.

Chi (*catches on*): You mean, Li-hua, we should get the helicopter to make a detour east of Black Bull Mount over Jujube Village so as to enter our mountains from the south?

Li-hua: That's it.

Chi: But a detour would lengthen the flight. Is there time for that?

Li-hua: Let me just figure it out.

Chi: While you're doing that, I'll find out what the weather's like at Jujube Village. (*Cranks the phone.*) Long distance call. Put me through to Jujube Village, please.

(*Li-hua makes a calculation at the desk.*)

Chin (*reflects*): The storm's coming from the north. If the aircraft makes a detour to the south it'll enter the mountains in the teeth of the storm. (*Doubtfully*) That would mean a much longer flight. (*She pauses*)... No, Li-hua, this is too risky.

Li-hua: No, it'll be all right, Little Chin. Look, a helicopter travels at more than 150 kilometres an hour, a storm at less than forty. I've figured it out. In this race, the helicopter's bound to get in first.

Chin: How can you be sure that there'll be no rain on the other side of the mountain? What scientific basis have you?

Li-hua: Look at this. (*Turns quickly to a page in a book and shows it to Chin.*) Here it is.

Chin (*reads aloud*): "A storm's passage through mountains is characterized by keeping to the valleys and hugging the ridges." But the book doesn't say there'll be no rain on the other side.

Chi (*his call put through*): Jujube Village? Please tell me, do you have



any rain just now?...
What's the weather like?
Ah... good. (*Puts down
the receiver.*) No rain.

Chin: This still isn't good
enough. It's too much
of a gamble. What if the
storm crosses the ridge
and hits Jujube Village?

Li-hua (*approvingly*): That's a
good point to raise. But
according to what we
have learned:

Clouds from the west
won't cross the height,
Till your tenth pipe
you light.

Chin: What "tenth pipe"?

Li-hua: It means that, judging
by experience, it takes the
time needed to smoke ten
pipes of tobacco before a
thunderstorm can reach
the other side of the
mountain.

Chin: There you go, quoting
jingles again. But what book guarantees this? As you said
yourself just now, if the helicopter runs into a storm, it will
mean a big loss for the revolution. We must be responsible.

Li-hua: True. And being responsible means that we must com-
bine caution with boldness and drive in our revolutionary work.
Time's running out, Little Chin. We must urge the station master
at once to be prepared for all emergencies and change the flight
route. (*Reaches for the phone.*)

Chin (*stops her*): No, I can't let you take this risk.

Chi: What's eating you? (*Sighs.*)

Li-hua (*takes her hand off the phone. Gravely*): Winning time means
victory, Little Chin. We must report to the station master at
once.

(*The phone rings.*)

Chi (*picks up the receiver*): ... Hullo. Yes, station master. We were
just going to report to you. Li-hua proposes changing the flight
route to bypass the thunderstorm... What? You had the same
idea?... Fine. (*Elatedly to the girls*) The station master entirely
agrees. (*Chin is surprised.*) Li-hua, he wants to speak to you.

Li-hua (*takes the phone*): Yes... Don't worry. We shall take all
necessary precautions... Yes, we'll report our forecast immedi-
ately. (*Puts down the receiver. Cranks the phone again.*) Operator,
give me the chief of staff... Chief of staff? Here's the weather
report. This afternoon there will be a thunderstorm, so we
suggest changing the flight route. Before two o'clock... (*With
emphasis*) Yes, before two o'clock the helicopter should make a
detour round Black Bull Mount and enter the mountain region on
our south side... Don't worry. Provided the helicopter gets
here before two, we guarantee it safe flying... Right. (*Puts
down the receiver.*) The chief of staff wants us to keep a close watch
on the weather. (*To Chi*) Get the Poplar Commune and Jade
Stream Commune weather posts to help us track the storm.
Quick! Watch out for any sudden changes in its course.

Chi: Right. (*Cranks the phone.*) Jade Stream Commune, please
help us watch for changes in the weather... (*Listens and jots down
notes.*)

(*Chin slowly sits down, wiping her perspiring forehead.*)

Li-hua (*passes her a handkerchief and sits down beside her. Earnestly*):
What else do you think we should do, Little Chin? What other
steps should we take?

Chin: Li-hua, you're eager for the helicopter to come and save the
patient... I'm as anxious as you are. But you're taking too big
a risk...

(Han wheels in his bicycle.)

Li-hua: Where are you off to, Young Han?

Han: I'm going to town to buy beancurd and vermicelli.

Li-hua: It's going to rain very soon. You'd better wait.

Han *(pauses)*: Really?

Chin *(annoyed)*: Just look at the board.

Han: I already have. *(Turns to the board.)* Oh, you've changed it. Well, Little Chin, I've not too much faith in your board. *(Looks at the sky.)* As far as I can see, it's not going to rain. *(Starts to go.)*

Chi *(calls to him)*: Don't go. What if it really rains?

Han: Then... *(With bravado)* I'll take another shower. *(Laughs and hurries off.)*

Li-hua *(snatches her raincoat from the wall and runs after him)*: Wait, take this raincoat.

(Uncle Li hurries in.)

Uncle: Little Chin, Young Chi, the villagers want to know when the helicopter will be coming. I've just heard that our patient's in a bad way.

Chi: Is he your militia company leader, uncle?

Uncle: Yes. One of our very best youngsters. The villagers say that the higher-ups are sending a helicopter. But I wonder whether the rain will stop it from coming?

Chi: It'll come all right, uncle.

Chin: I'm worried stiff. All those rhymes about Black Bull Mount being wet on one side and dry on the other— how can we put our faith in such childish jingles?

Chi: They're not childish jingles. You know how much time Li-hua has spent, Little Chin, finding out the quirks of these storms in our region. Every night she consults reference books and looks up records, and in the day-time she climbs hills and wades streams to make investigations. To find out whether the mountain's really dry on one side when it rains on the other, four days ago she and I climbed to the top in a downpour. We could hardly keep our eyes open for the rain pelting down, and claps of

thunder kept bursting over our heads. Suddenly there was a blinding flash, and crash!...

Chin *(shocked)*: A thunderbolt?

Chi: Lightning struck an old tree and it toppled down on Li-hua. ...

Chin and Uncle *(worried)*: Did she get hurt?

Chi: Her left arm. ... *(Pauses, then continues with feeling)* She said I wasn't to let anyone know. *(Unable to contain himself)* The doctor told her to go straight to hospital, but she refused. She said to me: "Young Chi, revolutionaries mustn't count the cost. Don't you breathe a word about this. Unless we take risks, we won't get results. Climbing Black Bull Mount will help us harness the Thunder God."

Uncle *(moved)*: What a fine lass. ...

Chin: Seems I didn't understand her.

Chi: But she understands you. She says you're bright and hard-working, only you haven't completely learned your lesson from last year's failure. Last night after talking over the weather with the county comrades, she was afraid that today's thunderstorm, being something freakish not written up in books, might be hard for you to forecast as you lack experience. So she stayed up all night to finish copying out data and came back ahead of schedule. And as soon as she arrived, without stopping to rest she discussed the weather with you. But you... *(Sighs.)* Her arm's still badly swollen.

Chin *(moved)*: I didn't realize. ...

(Enter Li-hua.)

Chin *(torn between admiration and shame, steps forward to stroke Li-hua's left arm)*: Li-hua, I ... understand now.

Li-hua: So Young Chi's been telling tales, eh? There are lots of things I've been wanting to talk over with you, Little Chin.

Chin *(in a low voice)*: You've taught me by your example.

(On the horizon clouds are gathering. A wind springs up. They all look worried. Li-hua watches the sky alertly. Chin approaches her.)

Chin *(tense)*: Oh, Li-hua, look over there. ... *(Points at the distance.)*

Uncle: Can you see the helicopter? (*Looks out.*)

Chin: I see the storm. Look how fast the clouds are heading this way.

Li-hua: Steady on, Little Chin. This is only the head of the storm; the main force is behind.

(*Chin sits down. Distant rumbling of thunder.*)

Chin (*leaps up*): They're in danger! What can we do, Li-hua?

Li-hua (*calmly looks at her watch*): The helicopter will definitely get here before the storm. (*After a pause she turns to ask Chi*) What's the weather on the flight route?

Chi: Fine and sunny.

(*Li-hua gazes southeast. They wait with bated breath. The ticking of the clock can be heard.*)

(*The thunder comes closer. Chin looks frantic.*)

Chin (*unable to contain herself*): This is the end! They're done for! The storm will be here any minute now. Li-hua, let's tell the pilot to stop outside the mountains.

Li-hua (*listens*): Quiet. Listen...

Chin: Listen to what?... (*Her eyes widen and she gapes.*) Ah... here it comes!

(*Soon the sound of the helicopter is heard. Shouts of joy go up: "The helicopter's come!" They stand on tiptoe, wild with excitement. The helicopter lands.*)

Chi: Uncle, the helicopter's landed.

Uncle: Thank you, comrades, thank you! (*Dashes off.*)

(*Suddenly the clouds lower and the sky turns dark. There follows a crash of thunder.*)

(*The telephone rings. Chi takes the call.*)

Chi (*excitedly*): Our station master says the doctor has arrived safely. He'll be operating right away.

All: Splendid!

Chi: He says the high command has commended us. He wants us to guard against pride and rashness, to continue to make progress.

(*Beset by mixed feelings, Chin hangs her head in shame.*)

Li-hua (*fondly*): Little Chin.

Chin (*looks up with tears in her eyes*): Li-hua!...

Li-hua (*wipes her tears*): Look at you! It's raining hard enough outside; don't add to the moisture. Stop that. (*Picks up the new book.*) Have you seen this?

Chin (*sobs, pushing the book away*): I don't want it.

Li-hua: Go on, take it.

Weren't you longing for this book? (*Earnestly*)

We must study theory seriously, Little Chin, just as we must do our best to learn from weather-wise peasants. But the thing to keep in mind is: practice comes first. This is the Marxist-Leninist line regarding knowledge. Only by taking part in practice can we link theory with the actual situation. That's the only way for us to do our job well and make accurate weather forecasts for the revolution.

Chin (*accepts the book. Nods*): Li-hua, at last I understand why Chairman Mao says that true knowledge comes from practice and the masses are the true heroes.

(*Another crash of thunder. Han hurries in, soaked through, with his*



*bicycle, having covered the bucket on the carrier with Li-hua's raincoat.
He sneezes.)*

Chi: Well, Young Han, beancurd soup again?

Han (*laughs*): Li-hua and Little Chin were right after all. I ran into the storm on my way back. (*Looks at the board, impressed.*) So all your hard work hasn't gone for nothing, Li-hua. You've finally taken the measure of Old Man Heaven.

Li-hua: We can't say that yet, Young Han. This year's work is just the beginning. The weather is always changing, so we shall never finish learning about it.

Chin: When are you going out on your next investigation trip, Li-hua?

Li-hua: Why?

Chin: I... (*Raises her head.*) Next time I want to go with you.

Li-hua (*pleased*): Little Chin... (*They hug each other.*)

Han (*moved*): Li-hua and Little Chin, from the bottom of my heart I wish you still greater success!

(Curtain. The end)

Illustrated by Chen Yu-bsien



Jan Yi-ping

Settlers on the Barren Steppe

Sandstorms race through the steppe
Like herds of stampeding horses;
Winds shriek and howl
Whipping up great billows of sand.

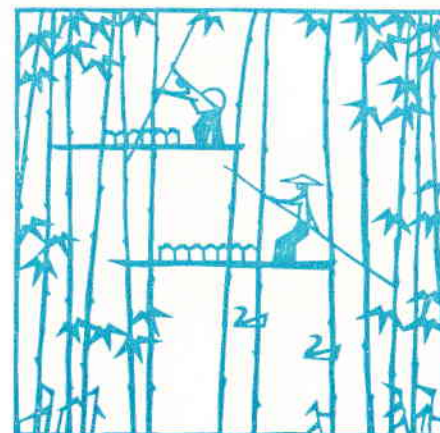
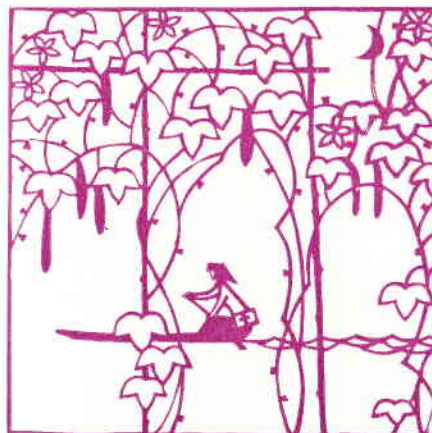
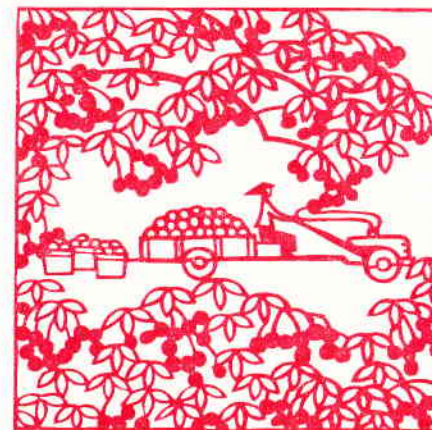
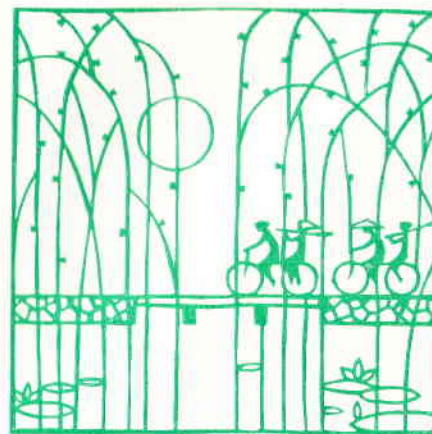
No wind however strong can drown our laughter;
No sand however deep can halt our steps,
As bearing a thousand shovels and a banner
We come to settle in this barren steppe.

Sand dunes serve us as walls,
White clouds as roofs;
Smoke from our fires
Awakens the slumbering wasteland,
Our songs spur the flowering
Of the desert jujube.

Our tents may be old and small
But they encompass:
All the wind and dust of the steppe,
The whole future of our socialist motherland,
Railways over the hills and soaring water-towers....

Tomorrow a train from Peking will pass this steppe
Unfolding a new picture:
Flocks of frisking sheep, dynamos,
Green forest belts, acres of rolling crops....

Fired by resolve too deep for words
We gulp down tea gritty with sand
Then, singing, march off to work,
Trampling the wind and sand beneath our feet.



River Scenes (monochrome scissor-cut)
by Lin Tsai-hua ►

Chi Hsueh

The New Post

He has left the boundless plain,
Taken leave of his well-loved village,
Exchanged the waving wheat for ocean waves,
Laid down his hoe and taken up a gun.

This new recruit come to the island,
Will he miss home?

The sea's tossing waves remind him
Of wheat rippling in the breeze;
The fishing boats under full sail
Of heavily loaded carts at harvest time.

The new recruit come to the island
Feels at home.

The old fishing-folk are as kind to him as parents,
The young fishermen are sturdy as his brothers,
The girls singing as they work
Are like his sisters singing in the fields.

The new recruit come to the island
Has found a second home.

Soon he is used
To breathing the fresh salty air,
To hearing the sough of the tide;
Out of sight of the brine he feels parched,
Away from the splash of waves he cannot sleep sound.

The new recruit to the island
Has fallen in love with this, his second home.

By the spring he grows greens and lentils,
Covering rock with soil he plants paddy seedlings;
The pine sapling at the door of his sentry post
Has brought a breath of spring to this rugged reef.

The new recruit takes up the double task
Of guarding and building up his island home.

With all his heart
He strengthens the defence works
And camouflages dugouts,
Patrols the rocky shore,
Stands sentinel in wind and driving rain.

Our country's coast stands firm against attack;
The men defending this island
Defend our homes.

The Road

Our commune has built a new road
Like a fine silk girdle,
Wide and smooth
With willows planted on either side.

Before Liberation
Few feet trod this way;
Rough the going then
On a narrow twisting track.

One deep mid-winter
When the north wind howled
I left the village by this path
To beg,
Barefoot, bare-headed,
Clutching a broken gourd.

My mother saw me on my way
With tears.
"Beware of dogs, son,
And men more vicious than wolves..."
The rest of her warning
Was carried off by the wind.

Now passers-by through this road,
Trucks and tractors roar over it,
Clear water gurgles in the ditch beside it,
Its whole length resounds with singing.

This spring when the willows turned green
The Party secretary saw me off
To the road where stood an army officer
With a truck to pick up new soldiers.

On the way my mother urged me:
"Do your best, son,
Be loyal to the Party; never forget
The hell that we once went through..."
She couldn't go on for tears,
Tears of grief and joy.
Then the secretary gave me
His parting advice:
"Remember what our peasants expect of you:
Go and follow Chairman Mao.
Keep to the Chairman's glorious road,
The road of revolution."

Sketches

Liu Chien-hsiang

Twinkling Stars

As a child I loved summer nights. Leaning against my grandmother's knees, I tried to count the twinkling stars that dotted the whole sky. While driving away mosquitoes with a big rush-leaf fan, grandmother told me, "When you've counted for forty-nine nights, you'll be able to climb up the sky and bring back the stars for lamps." After that I counted for forty-nine nights, then another forty-nine, more times than I can remember; but although many years went by, my family still had to use a dim kerosene lamp.

One day on my return from a brigade meeting I started rolling up my bedding. My grandmother came over and asked, "What are you looking so pleased about, Second Pillar? Going somewhere to learn from other people's advanced experience?"

"No, grandma. Tomorrow we're going to pluck stars from the sky!"

She looked at me in bewilderment. So I explained: Our brigade had organized a shock team to build a small hydro-electric station

at the foot of Horse-head Mount before the lunar New Year. Before long we'd be using electric power for irrigation and processing work, and our mountain village which for generations had burned oil lamps would have electric lights as bright as stars.

Overjoyed by this news she asked me, "Will Little Hsing be going with you?"

"Yes. So will Little Yueh, Little Yun and Little Hsia. A girls' team has been formed."

"*Aiya!*" exclaimed grandmother. "Are the girls up to it?"

I understood her concern. Little Yeh, a newly-trained doctor, could give some medical treatment on the site; but how could Little Hsing and the other girls do the same work as men? However, there was no holding them back, especially Little Hsing.

Little Hsing was full of mischief. Once she visited our family when we were both studying in middle school, and behind my grandmother's back she stuffed the stove so full of firewood that the rice in the pan was burned. After graduation she came back to the countryside to be a commune member while I joined the army. Last year, being demobilized, I came home to my village and was surprised to find how much she had grown.

When the shock team was first formed, she was left out. But she insisted on joining, and roped in some other girls too. No one could dissuade her. I tried to explain, "The work there's going to be tough. You girls couldn't take it. . . ." She cut in to pin labels on me accusing me of "denying the role of women, half the labour force" and "sabotaging the policy on equality for women". . . . All right. Since she was so stubborn, let her go. The work would show those girls up soon enough.

We set off first thing the next morning. It was a fine early winter day. The road and stream nearby and the mountains in the distance were all bathed in golden sunlight. Shouldering our tools and bedding-rolls, our shock team marched full speed to Horse-head Mount about seven miles away.

Horse-head Mount is actually something of a misnomer. Rising steep and sheer above the surrounding hills, it looks more like a sword than a horse's head. From half-way up the mountain a

waterfall thundering down has hollowed out a deep pool in the valley below. Its water, seething and eddying, rushes through a ravine to mingle with the Chingtzu River.

As soon as the girls had put down their things they began chattering away like machine-guns. Dr. Yeh, fresh from the city, fished out a handkerchief to mop her face as she gazed into the distance. "We'll soon harness this rushing torrent," she declared. "We'll make it serve the people."

"Are you tired, Dr. Yeh?" asked Grandad Lao-pa, a carpenter, with concern.

"Tired? No, grandad," she answered.

"Yes, we are!" cut in Little Hsing bluntly. "It's not true to say we're not tired. But being tired doesn't get us down."

The other girls burst out laughing, as if she had said what was in the minds of them all.

We put up some sheds beside the Chingtzu River and started on the power station in soaring spirits. The valley was awakened from its age-old slumber by the clang of our sledge-hammers.

I regretted not having refused to let Little Hsing come, for within a few days she and I had hot words several times.

The first time was because she demanded that her girls' team should take part in boring holes for dynamite charges. I simply couldn't allow this. Working on the cliff face with a rope tied round his waist made even a man ache all over. How could the girls stand it? But unable to hold them back, I gave in at last.

I took the initiative the second time. When I heard that two of them could blast only one hole between them each day, I seized on this as a pretext to transfer them to a lighter job. I was afraid they would wear themselves out, especially those girls with less stamina. "At the rate you're going, when will the station be finished?" I demanded.

"Don't try to shift us, that's all! From now on we'll fulfil the same quota as you. If we're behind, we'll make it up later on."

What could I say to that? Little Hsing really was hard to handle. "Don't bite off more than you can chew," I warned. "Just do the best you can."



She brushed this aside with a wave of her hand, as if to say, "Time will show."

When we knocked off I noticed that Little Hsing kept her gloves on. So did Little Yueh, Little Yun and the other girls. Assuming that they had blistered their hands, I thought "Serve them right!" then paid no more attention.

They really kept their word and went all out. I could hardly believe my own eyes, but in a few days they had caught up with the men. One of the boys fell behind Little Hsing. Grandad Lao-pa warned us, "Watch out, lads. Put on a spurt, or you'll lag behind the lasses."

I didn't say anything but in secret redoubled my efforts. To be outstripped by Little Hsing just didn't bear thinking of.

One day soon after work was over and the river was glinting crimson in the sunset, I saw Little Hsing on the bank washing some clothes.

"Are you practising acrobatics?" I asked when I found that she was rubbing the clothes with her elbows instead of her hands.

At sight of me she stood up and put her dripping hands into her pockets.

The girls washing clothes with her all burst out chuckling. I was mystified until later on Dr. Yeh let me into their secret.

"You may as well know," she told me, "that Little Hsing and the other girls have blistered their hands very badly."

"Really?"

"They came out in blood blisters several days ago, but didn't come for treatment until this morning, for fear I would let out their secret. She told me time and again not to tell anyone."

I felt my head buzzing.

I broke into a run along the bank, through the boiling and seething work site, not stopping for breath until I reached Eagle-beak Rock. Above, on the summit, Little Hsing, Little Yueh, Little Yun and Little Hsia were wielding hammers to make dynamite holes. I called Little Hsing down.

"What instructions have you for me, comrade team leader?" she asked jokingly.

I fixed my gaze on her gloved hands and she understood at once what was the matter. With a glance around she whispered, "Please don't. . ."

I was not going to make any concessions this time.

"You must rest for a few days," I insisted, cutting her short. "You must set an example for your team. It's no use arguing."

Later on I spotted her at the head of a line of girls carrying earth. It goes without saying, I flared up.

"Comrade team leader," she explained calmly. "This work requires only shoulders and legs, not hands."

That silenced me.

Nothing raises people's spirits as much as a hard job well done. On the day when the hydraulic turbine and generator were to be installed, all of us were quite beside ourselves with joy. Early that morning when I was picking out some tough fellows for the job, Little Hsing led her girls' team into the engine room, and there was no driving them out. Since we were eager to get the machines installed and start generating electricity, there was no time to spare for arguing, so we allowed them to join in.

Work went with such a swing that half way through the morning the breakfast sent us was still lying there untouched. I could not but issue an ultimatum: Those who didn't eat would not be allowed to work. Then they picked up their bowls, all but Little Hsing who stayed crouching beside the hydraulic turbine tightening its screws.

"I'd rather wait till noon and have a combined breakfast and lunch," she announced.

"That's a crazy notion. Come on and eat," Grandad Lao-pa urged her.

She intended to argue but had to give in when I threatened to take her spanner.

"There ought to be some kind of medicine to keep people from getting hungry," she remarked naively while eating.

I paid no attention to this. As I was putting the generator in place, I heard peals of laughter behind me. Turning round, I saw

that Little Hsing had absent-mindedly thrust her chopsticks into a tin of grease. "Look at you!" teased Grandad Lao-pa. "Even when you're eating, your mind is on your work."

"I've had enough." Putting down her bowl she took up her spanner and went back to work.

This was the most critical part of the whole project, and we worked as if our lives depended on it. For me as team leader this was the toughest time too. No one would stop working when the time came to knock off, not even though I shouted myself hoarse. I was forced to issue strict orders which aroused much dissatisfaction.

"If we knock off a few minutes late, he accuses us of disobeying orders," they grumbled. "But what about him? He's always the last to down tools. . . ." The sharpest criticism came from Little Hsing.

One afternoon after the whistle to end the day's work had sounded, I went over to Little Hsing who had lost a good deal of weight the last few days.

"Here, lend me a hand!" She gave me a hoe, indicating that I should mix mortar.

"It's past six. Didn't you hear the whistle?" I stood where I was.

"Of course I heard it. I'm not deaf. . . . Let's put in another half hour before it gets dark."

"Time to knock off. That's. . ."

". . . an order." She finished the sentence for me.

I explained as patiently as I could that it was late and time to rest. At the rate we were going, we could be quite certain of generating electricity before the lunar New Year, without working overtime.

"Don't forget that our power station isn't the only one in our country, Comrade Second Pillar!" she retorted.

As a result of her defiance, all the others paid even less attention to my orders. They started staying on the job until dark.

Trust Old Man Heaven to pick that time when every moment counted to deluge us with rain for three days and three nights. We used the time to sum up our experience, and decided to speed up to compensate for this delay as soon as the rain stopped.

One day when we sat chatting in a shed, we heard an ominous creaking.

That was a danger signal. The four corner-posts of the shed were beginning to totter in the rain-soaked soil. The whole shed might collapse at any moment.

"All out, quick!" I shouted, dashing to prop up the post behind me. Ignoring my orders, the others remained inside too. Some of them fetched logs to buttress the walls, some roped the joints more securely. A new question suddenly flashed into my mind.

"Hurry up, some of you, and have a look at the engine room!"

Soon their rapid footsteps were drowned in the pelting rain. Meanwhile I was propping up the post, conscious that the pressure on my shoulder was increasing. I noticed then that Little Hsing was holding up the opposite post. And turning my head I found that Little Yueh and Little Yun were supporting the two others. Between the four of us, we managed to save the shed.

The rain kept pouring down in sheets. The engine room was very much on my mind. But soon those who had gone there came back with the reassuring news that it was undamaged by the storm.

We all set to work at once to repair the shed. The rain lessened gradually and gave over at last. A wind sprang up, and then the sun which had hidden itself for days appeared from behind the white clouds, its bright golden rays lighting up our smiling faces. All the comrades were raring to go, to plunge into a new battle.

So, in the end, Old Man Heaven was defeated and the hydro-electric station completed on schedule.

As chance would have it, the day we installed electric lights was the lunar New Year's Eve. In our jubilation we could not help shouting from the bottom of our hearts:

"Long live Chairman Mao! A long, long life to him!"

That day we worked harder than ever and our voices were louder than usual. Little Hsing, Little Yueh, Little Yun, Little Hsia and all the other girls seemed even happier than the rest and their laughter could be heard on all sides. At the foot of Horse-head Mount, singing and the beating of drums and gongs made a cheerful din which set the whole sky ringing.

Grandad Lao-pa suggested making a final check-up of the electric lines in each village and household. The old-timer always made a thorough job of whatever he did. We agreed and set off with our tools. The moment we reached the road behind the engine room, we heard the sound of laughter.

"Smart work!" Grandad Lao-pa raised his head and looked at the top of a high-voltage transmission pole. "So you lasses have stolen a march on us."

By way of answer, Little Hsing made a face.

She and some other girls had climbed the poles and, silhouetted against the clear blue sky, were carefully checking the high-voltage cable.

I could find no reason to criticize them and simply said: "Remember! Safety first."

"All right. That's the way a team leader should talk."

The girls' laughter floated up above Horse-head Mount.

It was dark when we finished our check-up. I called in at home for a meal before going back to the station. Grandmother was overjoyed to see me again. Before I had time to put down my kit-bag she asked:

"Have Little Hsing and the other girls come back?"

"No, they haven't," I answered.

She was annoyed. "Why not let them come home for New Year? What sort of team leader are you?"

"They don't care whether it's New Year or not. They're too busy plucking down the stars from the sky." Then I told her all about the girls' exploits at the work site.

She smacked her lips and smiled. "Nowadays, girls are smart. They climb mountains, drill holes for dynamite, install machines and swarm up high-voltage transmission poles. . . . *Aiya — ya . . .* there's no holding them back! . . ." All of a sudden, wide-eyed, she stopped short in surprise.

Like a flash of lightning on a stormy night, the electric bulb had made the room as bright as in broad daylight.

"The electric light's come on! The electric light is on!" I cried, jumping for joy like a child.

Her eyes on the dazzling bulb, grandmother clapped her hands and exclaimed, "Why, it's brighter than any star!" She blew out the kerosene lamp used for generations in our mountain village, and her wrinkled face relaxed in a beaming smile.

I rushed straight back to Horse-head Mount. The black curtain of night was studded with twinkling lights, and it was hard to distinguish between the stars in the sky and the electric lights on earth below.

Illustrated by Liu Jen-ching



Weaving a Net (painted scissor-cut)
by Yang Yung-hsiung ▶

Nets

At the start of the fishing season, I paid a visit to a fishing commune consisting of about ten villages scattered along the rugged Shantung coast. The scenery was magnificent, but what interested me most was the fishing nets of all sizes and materials — sunning on poles, on the branches of trees, over rocks and on the sands. Some were even spread on fences, over chimneys and on cottage window-sills. Nets galore, nets everywhere: this is a distinctive feature of the fishing villages in Pohai Bay.

While enjoying the scene, I caught my foot in a nylon net spread on the shore and invisible against the sand since it happened to be exactly the same colour. My clumsy efforts to extricate my feet only enmeshed me more tightly.

I heard a roar of laughter.

Then I noticed that this part of the beach was where nets were woven and mended. In fact, the whole place was given over to nets: nylon nets white as snow and light as drifting clouds, plastic nets of all the colours of the rainbow....

"Here, comrade! Come this way," shouted a middle-aged, sturdy, woman who was busy sunning nets. With a twinkle in her eye she added, "You must watch your step here or you'll be caught in the nets just like a fish."

More laughter rang out.

When I reached her she urged me to have a rest and offered me what looked like a stool but was really a fish bone about ten inches in diameter. Judging by its size, it must have come from a fish weighing several tons.

"What kind of fish has such big bones?" I asked her.

"A sea tiger."

All the fishermen hereabouts call the shark a "sea tiger", because it is the same menace to other fish as the tiger is to smaller animals.

"How did you catch it?" I queried.

"We netted it." Her heavy eyebrows twitched. "It charged straight into our 'Great Wall' under the water."

"To catch a shark your nets must be very strong, ch?"

"Strong enough to hold the biggest, fiercest sea tiger." She pointed at the bone I was sitting on. "They may be the lords of the sea, but once in our nets they're done for." She chuckled with a quiet confidence, as if nothing in heaven or on earth could daunt her.

"Report!" A girl in her teens came running up, a cartridge-belt around her waist and a rifle over her shoulder. Apart from being a little taller, she was the image of the woman talking to me.

"Oh Daisy! You gave me a turn," scolded the woman fondly.

"Ma, it's time we fell in," the girl explained.

Her mother nodded. "All right, go ahead."

The girl started off, then ran back to ask, "The others want to watch some shooting at moving targets. Have you time today?..."

The woman cut her short and waved her away saying, "You go first." Then she turned to me. "Look at our girls. They really love their uniforms but not silks and satins."

A whistle sounded. The young women mending the nets quickly put down their shuttles and picked up the rifles they had stacked near by.



"You've certainly done a good job of combining production with preparedness for war," I commented approvingly.

"We've only done as Chairman Mao teaches us," she answered.

"We weave nets to catch fish and practise shooting to hunt foxes and wolves. Those are two things we can't do without — nets and rifles."

A troop of women had lined up smartly on the beach.

"Are they all militia women?" I asked.

"Every one of us here is in the militia!"

"Every one of you?" I echoed, glancing dubiously at the older women who were sitting there mending nets with their bamboo shuttles. Guessing what was in my mind, the woman whispered, "Yes, the old folk too. They often take the lead or act as advisers. During the anti-Japanese war they were well-known guerrilla fighters."

"I see." I nodded.

"If any enemies come, we'll catch them in our nets," she said forcefully. "Liu Shao-chi and his lot blethered: 'Conditions have changed. We don't need such a large militia.' Implied that the militia is no use, see? But running down the militia means running down people's war. Of course we're not going to listen to talk like that."

The whistle sounded again. Daisy was standing on a rock signalling with flags to a sampan far out at sea. Her mother told me that it was the target plotter's boat.

"But where are the targets?" I asked her.

She laughed. "Can't you see those boards painted with ugly heads?"

By straining my eyes I spotted a row of black dots bobbing up and down on the water.

There was a crackle of rifle-fire. The militia women, lying flat on the sands, were shooting over a pile of nets at the moving targets. Daisy's mother walked down the row looking through each girl's sights in turn and correcting her aim. Successive shots set sharp echoes flying across the water.

The target plotter on the boat signalled each hit with a flag to those on the shore.

I was thoroughly impressed by their marksmanship. How hard they must have practised to hit those moving targets so far away.

Suddenly Daisy's mother pushed a sampan into the sea and jumped on to it. When the little craft was four yards from the shore, her daughter thrust a punting pole into the water and vaulted aboard, as swift and light as a swallow touching down. The sampan streaked off like an arrow from a bow, sending foam flying up on each side.

Then the target boat released three balloons. The mother handed her oar to Daisy and took aim. Ping, ping, ping, the three balloons burst. Another three went up. Daisy aimed and fired, but downed two only. The one she had missed flew up like a frightened bird. "Where d'you think you're going?" cried Daisy. Ping! The third balloon crumpled and fell.

The seashore was still. Even the billows seemed subdued. I was too amazed by the mother and daughter's marksmanship to utter a word. If not for seeing this with my own eyes, I would never have believed that women could be such crack shots.

They rowed back and at once were surrounded by the other militia women, calling out congratulations and begging Daisy's mother to teach them her technique.

Looking at them keenly she asked, "What were those things floating in the air and on the water?"

"Targets," some girls replied.

"Not targets but enemies," she corrected them. "That's what Daisy's grandmother taught me when I was learning to shoot. She told me to keep class hatred in my mind whenever I took up a rifle. If not, the bullet wouldn't fly true." Handing the rifle to her daughter she continued, "To master any skill you need not only political consciousness but careful study and practice. With only three shots our granny killed three enemies. This was because she combined the class hatred in her heart with painstaking practice. She used to tell me that to be a crack shot calls for practice, constant practice."

The younger women listened attentively. It was clear from their expressions how much loving care the elder generation of revolutionaries had lavished on them, and what fine fruit this had borne. Seldom had I seen keener or more competent youngsters.

After saying goodbye to them I set off for the commune office along the soft level beach. The midday sun was gilding the sea with glinting gold so that it seemed an endless, enormous mirror in which the drifting clouds, gulls and sky were reflected. At times a fish would jump, leaving ripples on the surface of the water.

It was afternoon when I reached the commune office. Old Tang, the branch Party secretary, asked me where I had been. I started

telling him what I had seen. "Oh, so you've watched Cliff Brigade's moving target practice," he cut in. "I heard the firing."

"I've never seen such fine marksmanship," I admitted. "It was marvellous!"

Tang smiled. "You haven't yet met the old woman we call Sea Gull. Her marksmanship is really 'marvellous'."

"Where does she live? Far from here?" I was eager to meet her.

"Well, she's the deputy Party secretary of Cliff Brigade, so she was here this morning with other committee members for our regular study of Marx and Engels' works." Noticing that I was listening carefully, he went on, "Everyone in this region knows Sea Gull. Her real name is Lei Ying. During the anti-Japanese war, when we organized guerrilla units here, she and her husband Ta-meng, a fisherman, did liaison work for us. One evening when they were taking a message by sea, the enemy sent a launch to capture them. Ta-meng fought to the end with his gun and hand-grenades. When he fell the enemy closed in, thinking Lei Ying easy game. 'She's an Eighth Router, catch her alive...,' they barked. Determined to take her revenge she snatched up the gun her husband had let fall and, pulling on the oar with one hand, took aim with the other. Three shots rang out. Three Japanese aggressors, a commander among them, were killed. Since then she's been called Sea Gull instead of Lei Ying. She has an only son, a captain in our navy. Her daughter-in-law Blossom is the instructor of the Cliff Brigade militia and Daisy, her grand-daughter, is its company commander."

Eager to meet such a legendary figure, I left the commune office to return to Cliff Brigade. Far away a number of boats were moored abreast near the beach. Some of them had hoisted sail. On the shore the fully-armed militia women were carrying cables and nets aboard. Nets like dragons were coiled on the bows. I was anxious to meet Blossom and to know whether Sea Gull would be going out with the boats or not. But where was she? At this moment I heard the sound of familiar laughter. Looking around I saw Blossom on one boat. She was putting up the sails as she called out to a woman on another boat alongside. Beside the nets stood Daisy and a shorter girl, both with rifles slung over their shoulders. In the stern sat a

grey-haired woman holding the tiller, her face serene, her deep-set eyes staring ahead. I asked a woman mending a net who she was. The answer was just what I had expected: "Sea Gull". One hand on the tiller, the other on her hip, she reminded me of her exploit during the war.

When our younger generation has older revolutionaries of this calibre to lead them, we can be sure they will carry forward our cause.

As the boats put out to sea, the women's songs were wafted over the water:

All foes who come
By land or sea or air
Will drown in the great sea
Of people's war....

This song reflects the iron will of hundreds of millions of people and their deep love for our socialist motherland. Their determination and passionate devotion are a huge net that no wind or waves can destroy; it will safeguard our great country through every storm.

Illustrated by Huang Chia-yu



Chung Teh-hua

Willows by the Lake

Youngsters fresh from school
Troop to the lake brave with banners
And on Ten-*li* Dyke
Plant willows...

Three years of rain and dew,
Of warm spring breezes,
And the saplings have become
Tall, sturdy trees.

Above, the boundless sky;
At their feet the good rich earth;
Their verdant branches shade the lake,
Their subtle fragrance floats across the water.

The lads and lasses who have made their home here
Best understand the willows' character;
The willows with their roots deep in the soil
Best symbolize these dedicated youngsters.

In wind and rain, hand in hand,
Shoulder to shoulder,
Braving thunderbolts they withstand
The fiercest storm.

Guards of the dyke
Manning the long embankment,
Here they have struck root and flowered,
Turning this wasteland into an oasis.

Now as fresh catkins sway above the water
New recruits to the lake are come.
Look! On the dyke with banners red as flame
The willow planters welcome their new comrades.

Sheh Chih-ti

We're Commune Seedlings

Now willows are in tender leaf,
Small birds are twittering,
The new experimental plot
Is redolent of spring.

Ten pairs of muddy feet,
Ten lines of splashes,
Ten crates of paddy shoots,
Ten fine young lasses.

Like village girls they're dressed, but like
The folk in town they speak;
Asked where they live, their answer is:
"Our home's on Red Cloud Peak!"

A cottage with a bamboo fence
Below the peak I spy,
With pots of seedlings in the yard
And corn-cobs hung to dry.

"New peasants, eh? Ten phoenixes
Have settled here!" I cry.
"Not us. We're commune seedlings,"
The phoenixes reply.



Ku Wen

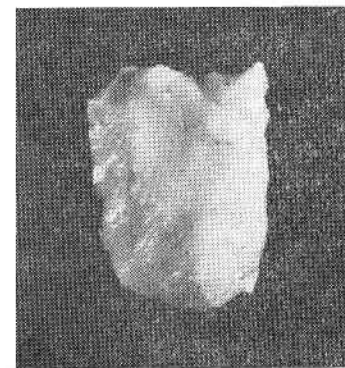
Exhibition of Archaeological Finds of the People's Republic of China

This year an exhibition of archaeological finds in China organized by the People's Government is to be held in London. The precious historical relics exhibited form a small fraction only of the finds unearthed in different parts of the country since the establishment of New China in 1949. The main exhibits number 385, with another 119 auxiliary exhibits. Starting from skull fossils of Lantien Man dating back more than six hundred thousand years, down to 14th-century relics of Khanbalik excavated in Peking, they give us a bird's-eye view of the historical and cultural development of ancient China.

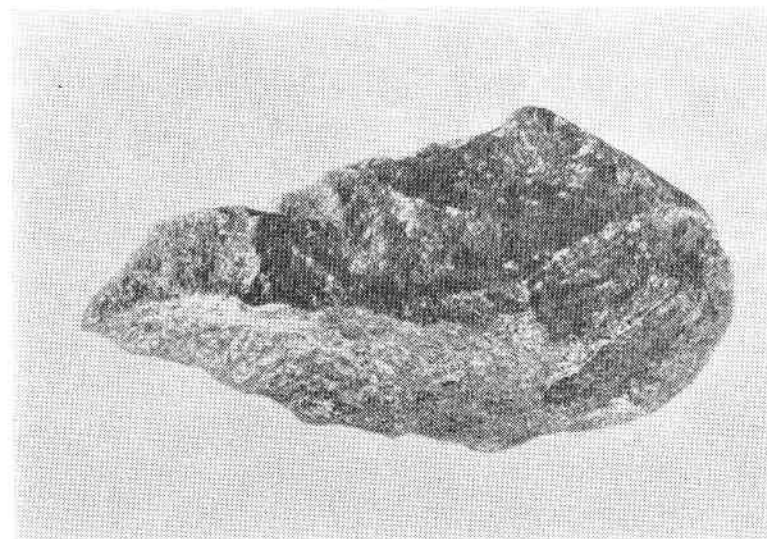
Lantien Man and Peking Man

The fossilized skull and jaw-bone of Lantien Man, dating from about 600,000 years ago, together with some very primitive stone tools,

Primitive tool made of quartz 2.8 cm. long, found in Lantien, Shensi



were found in Lantien County, Shensi Province in 1963 and 1964. The discovery of these Lantien Man fossils extends the range of the known species of early man, supplying valuable data for the study of the origin of *homo sapiens*. In the caves of Choukoutien on the outskirts of Peking, inhabited some 500,000 years ago by Peking Man, in 1966 two more fragments of fossilized skull-bone were discovered together with stone implements and the ashes of fires used



Primitive tool made of quartz 17.5 cm. long, found in Lantien, Shensi



Excavation of the site of the primitive village at Panpo near Sian, Shensi

to cook food, as well as some animal fossils. These finds show that as early as half a million years ago the ancestors of the Chinese people had started making and using rough stone implements, lived collectively by hunting and gathering foodstuff, and used fire.

Remains of a Primitive Village at Panpo near Sian

Between 1954 and 1957, five excavations were carried out on the site of an early village at Panpo near the city of Sian in Shensi Province. This primitive village is about six thousand years old. An area of roughly ten thousand square metres was explored, and the sites of 46 huts arranged in an orderly formation were cleared. More than two hundred graves were found, and nearly ten thousand relics including tools and utensils of stone, bone and pottery.

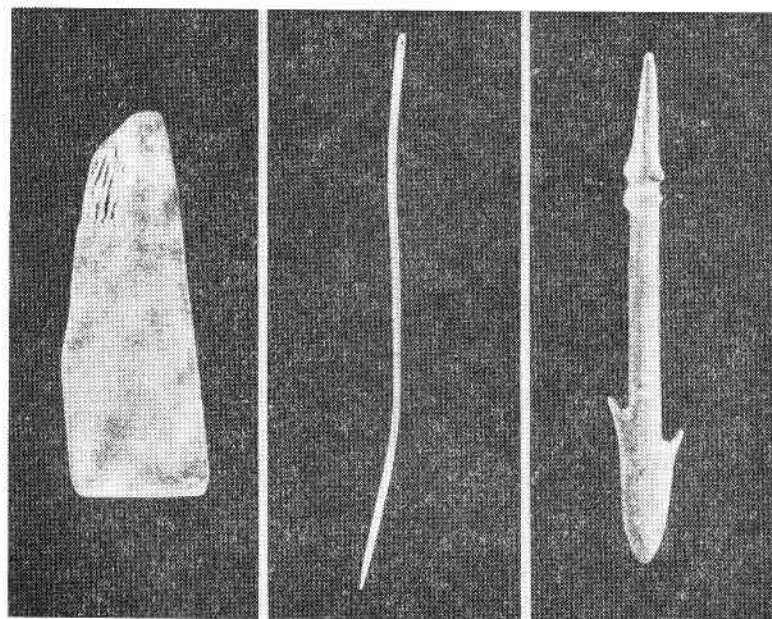
From the model of the Panpo ruins we can see that this village consisted of three sections: the inhabited area, the pottery yard and the common graveyard. The big hut in the middle of the inhabited area was probably a communal hut for the primitive tribe, and had

around it a cluster of smaller huts. A large ditch five metres deep and six metres wide surrounded this inhabited area, no doubt as a form of defence against wild beasts.

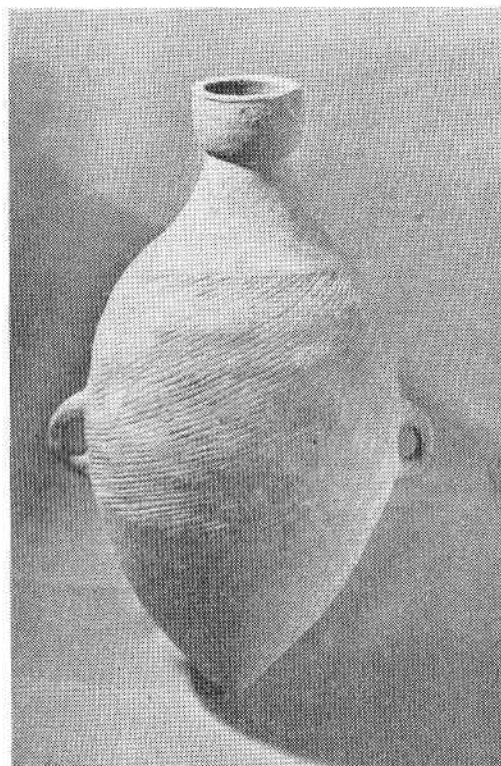
The stone axe, chisel and adze and the bone spade, harpoon and arrowhead in the exhibition are well polished and well made, showing that the people living there six thousand years ago engaged in farming, fishing and hunting and lived a settled life. Some of the earthenware has the imprints of mats and cloth on the base; and these marks together with the bone needle and stone whorl testify to the existence at that time of weaving and needlework.

Most of the utensils for daily use unearthed at this site are made of pottery. Typical specimens in the exhibition are pottery bowls, jars, bottles, basins and a bottle with two ears and a pointed base. The moulding was generally done by hand, the shaping of the rim on a potter's wheel. Many pieces have painted designs, thus

Bone spade, bone needle and bone harpoon found in Panpo, Shensi



they not only served a useful purpose but are beautiful specimens of handicraft art. The lively, stylized designs of fish, cloth and deer on the pottery basins are clearly artistic creations based on a long experience of fishing and hunting. Some painted pottery objects have inscribed on them more than twenty different ideographs, simply and neatly executed; and there may be a close connection between these signs and the start of an early written language in China.



Bottle with pointed base found in Panpo, Shensi China.

Relics from Two Shang Capitals

In 1950 in Chengchow, Honan Province the ruins of a Shang Dynasty capital of the 14th and 13th century B.C. were discovered. Investigations and excavations have been carried out for more than ten years, and now the outline of the city is clear. The circumference of the city was about seven kilometres. A section of the rammed-earth city wall over three hundred metres long, nine metres high and some ten metres wide is still standing in the northeast corner of the city. From the sketch map of the Shang ruins we can see the



Ox-bone with inscription found in Anyang, Honan

residential area, the bronze foundry, pottery kiln and bone implement workshops, as well as the common graveyard. The exhibition displays important relics — bronze, pottery, bone and jade — recovered from these ruins and graves, including some particularly fine bronze vessels. The analysis of a bronze drinking vessel reveals that the art of making bronze from copper and tin had already been mastered. One noteworthy object is a proto-porcelain large-mouthed wine vessel which has a *kaolin* clay base giving it a texture something like

modern porcelain, and a yellow-green glaze produced by firing at a high temperature. This vessel, which closely resembles the Yueh ware of southeast China, provides important data for the study of the development of Chinese ceramics.

The ruins of a later Shang capital of the 13th-11th century B.C. were discovered in 1899 in Anyang County, Honan Province. After Liberation, many more relics were recovered from this site. In this exhibition are two unusually large oracle bones: one 37 cm. long inscribed with 25 characters, the other 40.5 cm. long inscribed with 18 characters. These were excavated in December 1972. Ten out of 21 of the oracle bones found here record how the Shang slave

owners sacrificed animals to their ancestors. These inscriptions, the earliest discovered so far in China, have great historical value.

In 1950 in Wukuan Village, Honan Province, the skeletons of 79 sacrificed slaves were found in a large Shang tomb. Though this tomb had been robbed, in it were still more than one hundred valuable cultural relics including bronze vessels, jade and bone objects and a large stone chime with a tiger design which is the earliest percussion instrument yet discovered in China. South of this grave were 27 pits in orderly formation containing the skeletons of 207 slaves, all of whom had been decapitated and then piled together as a sacrifice. This affords significant evidence of the cruelty of the slave system.

Shang Bronzes

The Shang Dynasty (c. 1600-1100 B.C.) is the period in Chinese history when the bronze culture originated and flourished. A wealth of beautifully made bronze vessels has been discovered not only in the Yellow River Valley but also in regions further south such as the Huai River Valley and the Yangtse Valley, in the provinces of Anhwei, Hupeh and Hunan.

In Funan County, Anhwei, eight Shang bronze vessels found in 1957 include a wine vessel with a dragon-and-tiger design, another with a *tao-tieh* (fabulous monster) design and also libation cups. The vessel with the dragon-and-tiger design is magnificently conceived and executed. It has three rampant dragons with embossed horned heads on the upper portion and, below, the embossed heads of ravaging tigers, their fangs bared. The *tao-tieh* vessel is tall and bizarre in shape, covered with a crude, spirited design and decorated on the sides with three animal heads.

Shang bronzes have also been found in the counties of Changning and Ninghsiang in Hunan. The rectangular vessel with human-mask designs has a beautiful patina. On a base of cloud-and-lightning designs are four human masks in relief. The faces with their solemn expression are very lifelike, broad with wide mouths and prominent cheekbones. Remarkably enough, the masks on the two

main sides and the two smaller sides of the vessel are identical in design and expression, only differing in size.

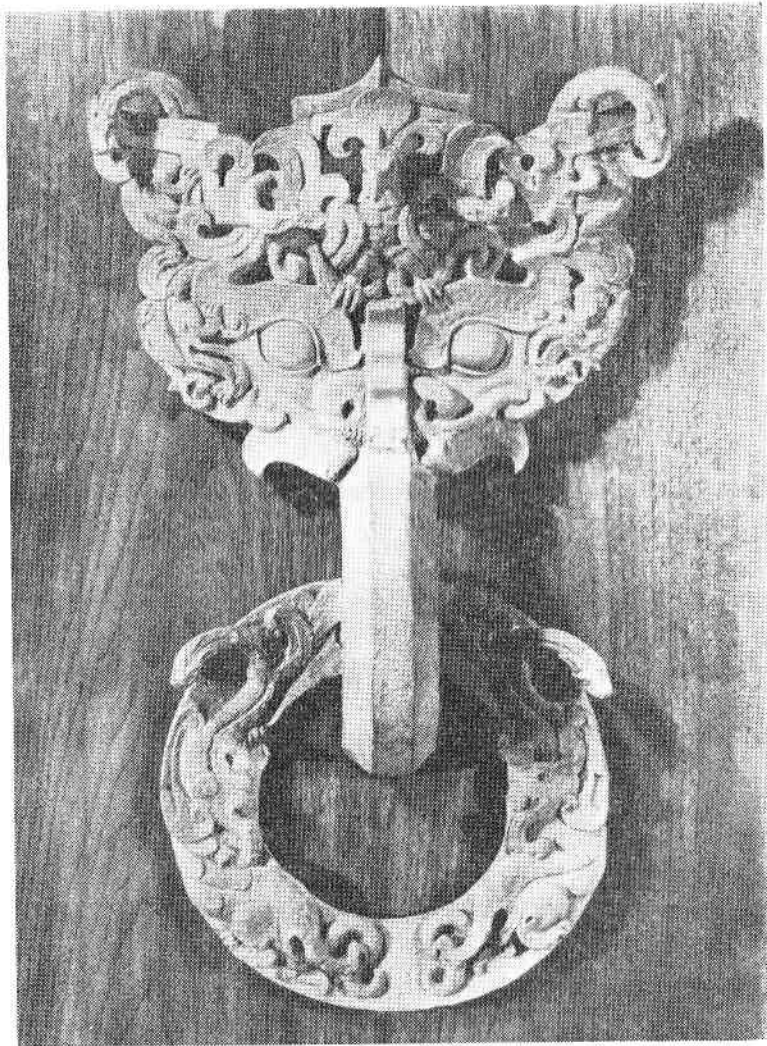
A square wine vessel with animal-mask designs is also exquisitely made. On a base of thunder designs are imposed motifs of monsters, dragons and leaves; the four upper sections show monsters with an animal head and the body of a bird, and between each two of these is another animal head with large ears and a protruding mouth.

These splendid bronze vessels show the superb skill and craftsmanship of the Shang slaves, and prove eloquently that it was the slaves who made history. They also reveal the high level of expertise achieved in manufacturing bronze in central China as early as the 12th century B.C.

Iron Moulds of the Warring States Period and the Second Capital of Yen

The Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) marked the beginning of the feudal age in China. During this period new relationships of production hastened the development of productive forces as the widespread use of iron supplied artisans with new and more effective tools. This brought about a rapid advance in the handicraft industry.

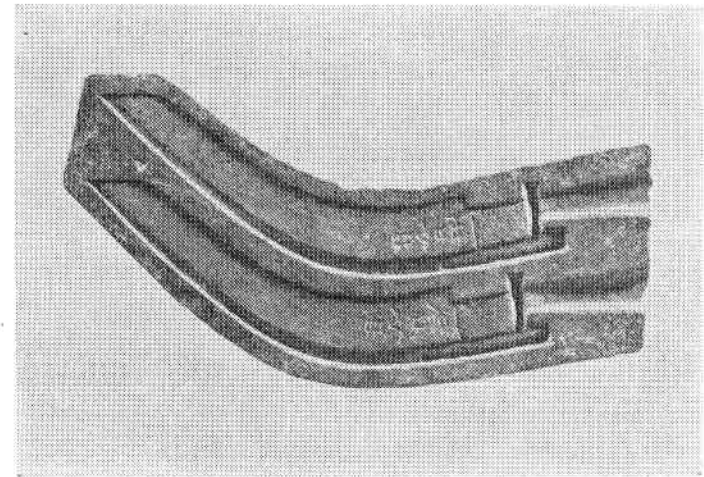
In 1953 whole sets of iron moulds of the Warring States Period were found in Hsinglung County, Hopei Province. There are 40 sets of moulds, 87 pieces in all, for casting hoes, sickles, axes, chisels and iron parts for chariots. In this exhibition we can see the moulds for casting a pair of iron sickles and an iron axe. On the mould for sickles is the inscription "Right Granary", the name of the office in charge of agriculture in the Kingdom of Yen at that time, indicating that these moulds were made by government-owned handicraft workshops. Scientific analysis has revealed that these iron moulds were cast at a high temperature. Their use facilitated the manufacture of large quantities of iron implements of all sorts, making an important contribution to the art of metallurgy and constituting a landmark in the development of the Chinese iron industry.



Bronze knocker ornamented with interlaced hydras and phoenixes, the front bearing an animal motif from Yih sien, Hopei

Owing to the social and economic developments of that period and the frequent wars of annexation among contending states, cities sprang up all over China as local political, economic, military and

cultural centres. Since Liberation many sites of ancient cities of this period have been investigated and excavated. One of these is the Second Capital of the Kingdom of Yen which was situated in Yih sien County in Hopei. Unearthed here were tools, daily utensils, large quantities of weapons and coins as well as building materials such as semi-cylindrical tiles and nails, bricks, pillar bases, water-pipes and enclosures for wells. This exhibition shows a cylindrical tile with cicada design 54.5 cm. in length; a semi-cylindrical tile fragment 33.6 cm. long with an animal-mask design; and two water-pipes with a tiger-head design, the pipes themselves being 55.6 cm. long and the end section 61.7 cm. long. Another striking object is a bronze knocker ornamented with interlaced hydras and phoenixes. The front bearing the animal motif is 45.5 cm. long and the diameter of the ring is 29 cm. This huge knocker no doubt adorned some palace gate. When we compare it with the bronze knocker on the massive front gate of the Peking Palace Museum, which has a ring only about 20 cm. across, we gain some idea of the size of the old gate and the splendour of the Yen palace.



Iron mould for casting sickles found in Hsinglung, Hopei

Han Relics from the Tomb of Prince Liu Sheng and Other Sites

During the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 24) the Chinese feudal system became consolidated and further developed. To strengthen their control over the people the Han rulers assigned different regions to various princes, and one of these principalities was Chungshan in present-day Hopei Province. It had 14 counties under its jurisdiction and a population of about half a million. Its chief city was at present-day Tingsien.

Since the establishment of the People's Republic, many excavations have been carried out here and large quantities of cultural relics found. Most of the utensils excavated are beautifully made with magnificent designs, showing a very high level of craftsmanship. Some are of a kind never seen before.

In this exhibition are a bronze wine vessel with gold and silver inlay of hieroglyphic designs; a bronze water vessel inscribed "Belonging to the Treasury of the Prince of Chungshan"; a bronze lamp in the form of a sheep; a bronze lamp with a shade; a censer in the shape of a mountain supported by a human figure mounted on a beast; bronze leopards inlaid with gold; bronze chariot appurtenances inlaid with gold and silver; gold and silver needles; jade discs; and the jade shroud linked with gold wire of Prince Liu Sheng's wife.

The suit of jade worn by the dead was intended to preserve the remains. The wire used could be of gold, silver or copper, gold wire being reserved for the imperial house. Excavated in Mancheng County in 1968, the jade shrouds of Prince Liu Sheng and his wife* were probably gifts from the emperor. They were made of thin plates of jade which had small holes in the four corners through which the gold wire was threaded. The shroud exhibited is 1.72 metres long and comprises 2,160 pieces of jade and about 700 grammes of gold. When discovered, some of the wires and plates of jade had broken and the corpse had turned to dust.

Many varieties of bronze lamp were found in the tomb of this Prince of Chungshan. That in the form of a serving-maid from the

*See *Chinese Literature* No. 11, 1971.



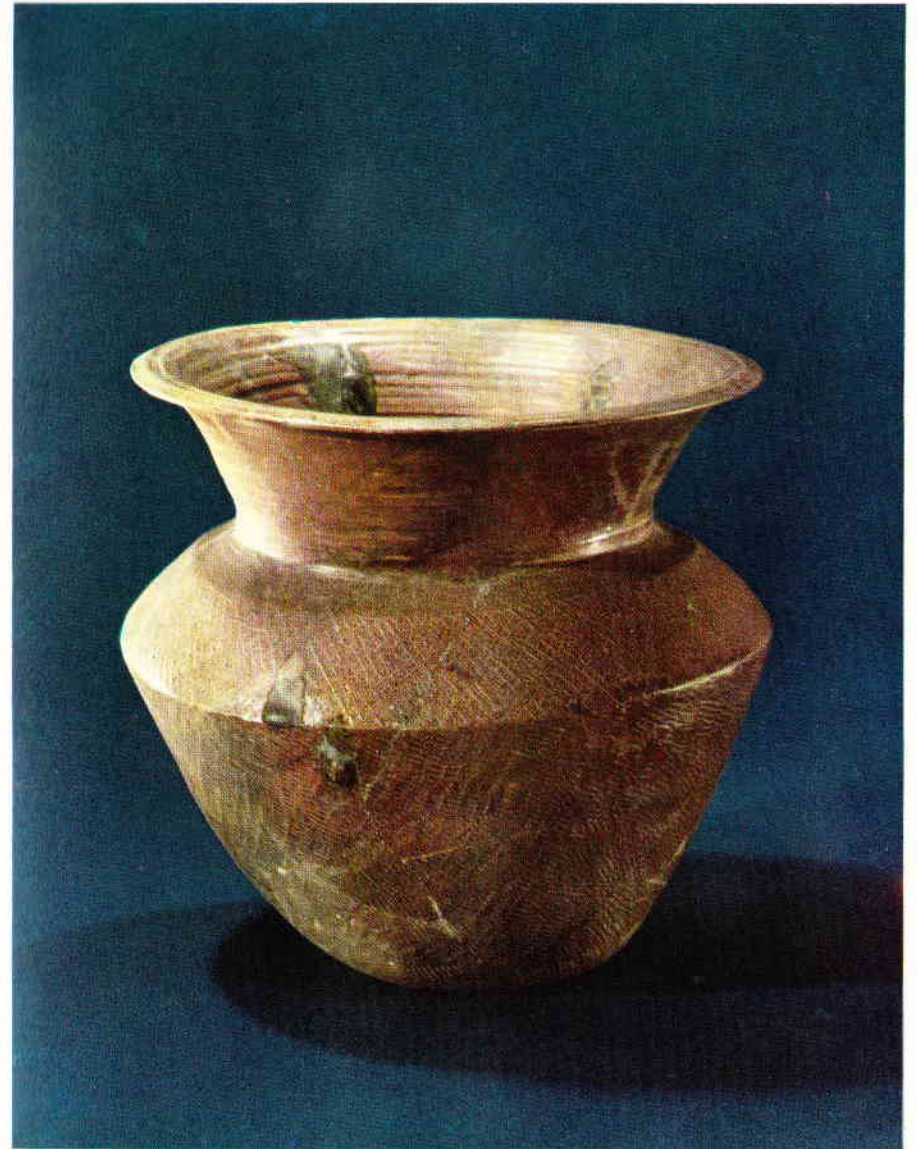
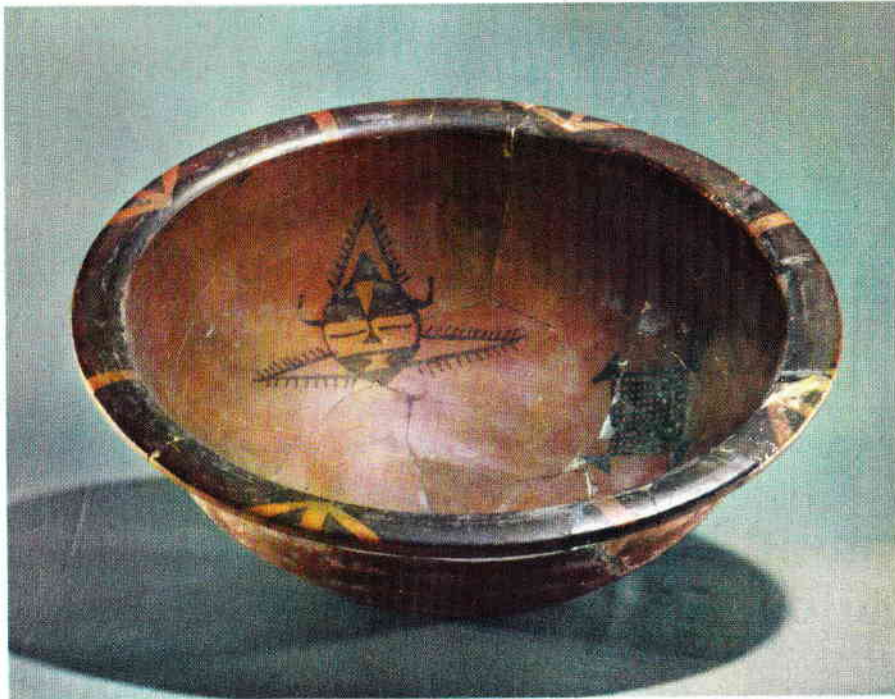
Three-coloured women figurines of the Tang Dynasty, unearthed near Sian, Shensi

Archaeological Finds

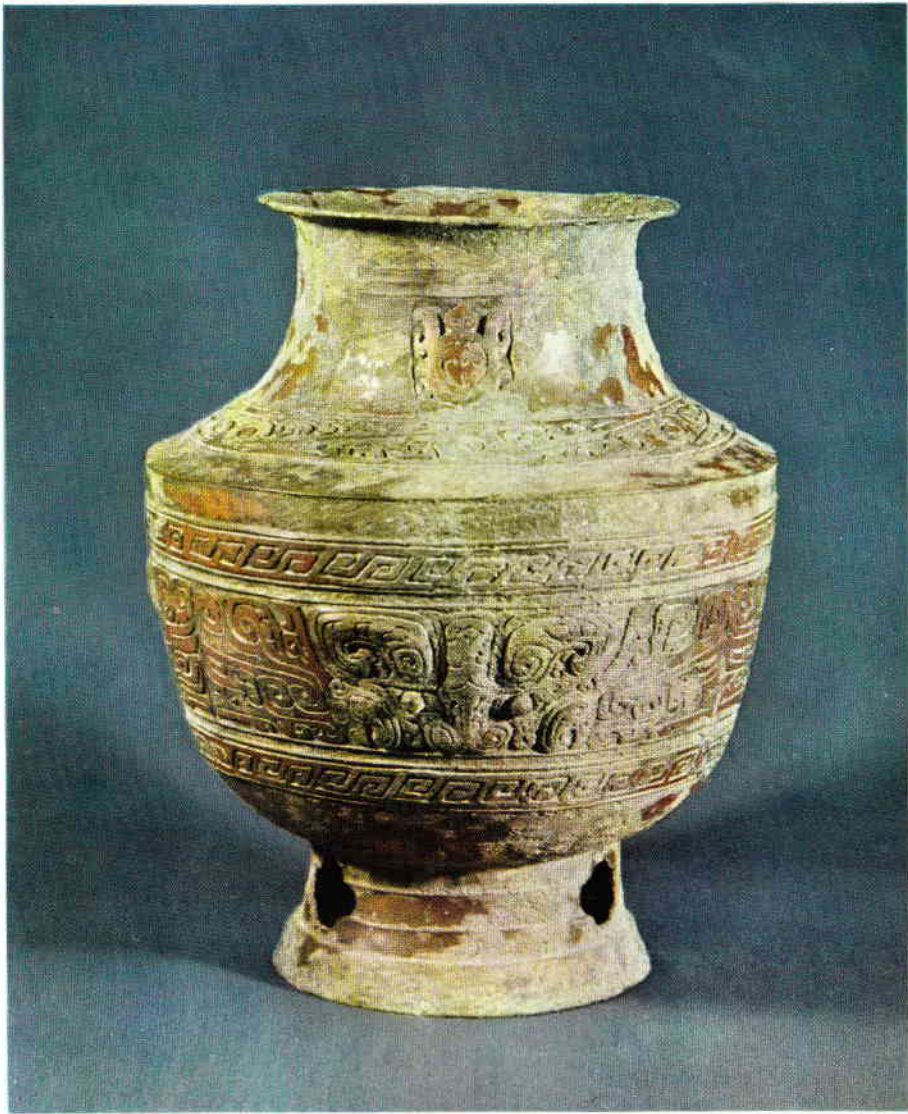


Burnt animal bone and burnt stone from Choukoutien near Peking

Painted pottery basin with design from Panpo near Sian, Shensi



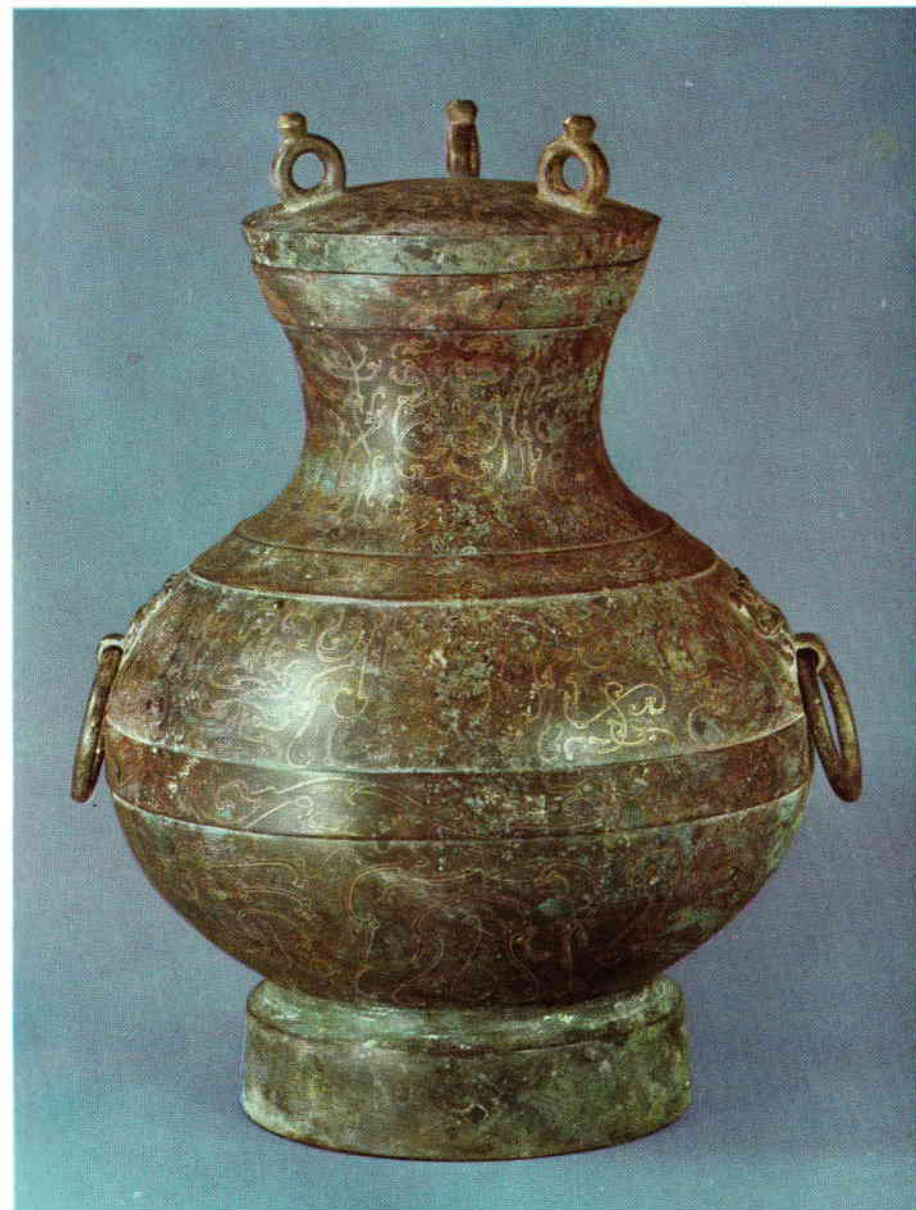
Proto-porcelain wine vessel of the Shang Dynasty, from Chengchow, Honan



Bronze wine vessel with animal-mask designs of the Shang Dynasty,
found in Funan, Anhwei



Bronze wine vessel with animal mask designs
of the Shang Dynasty, found in Chengchow,
Honan



Rectangular bronze vessel with human-mask designs of the Shang Dynasty from Ninghsiang, Hunan

Bronze vessel with gold and silver inlaid hieroglyphic designs of the Western Han Dynasty found in Mancheng, Hopei



◀ Bronze chariot ornament inlaid with gold and silver of the Western Han Dynasty from Tinghsien, Hopei

Miniature bronze chariot with a ▲ horse 40 cm. high of the Eastern Han Dynasty from Wuwei, Kansu



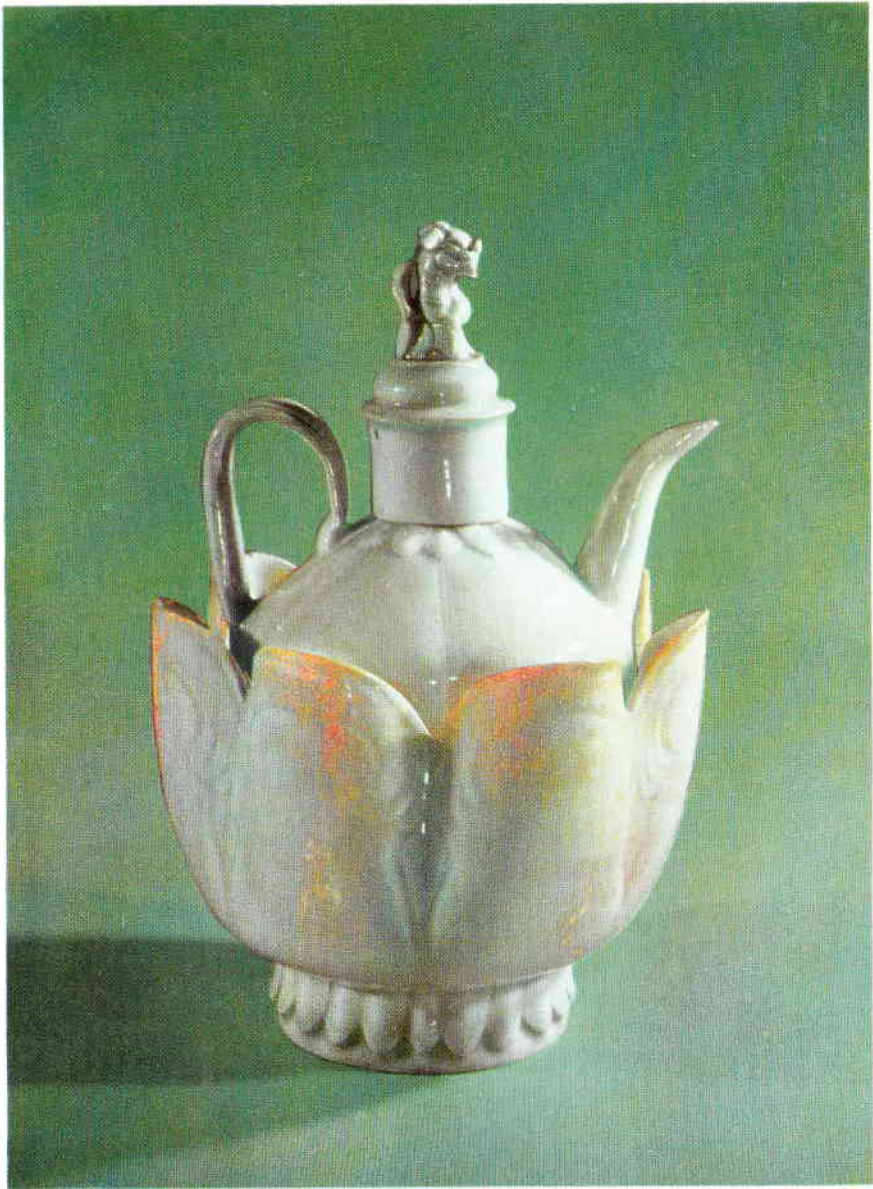
Reproduction of a fresco from the tomb of Princess Yung-tai of the Tang Dynasty from Chienhsien, Shensi



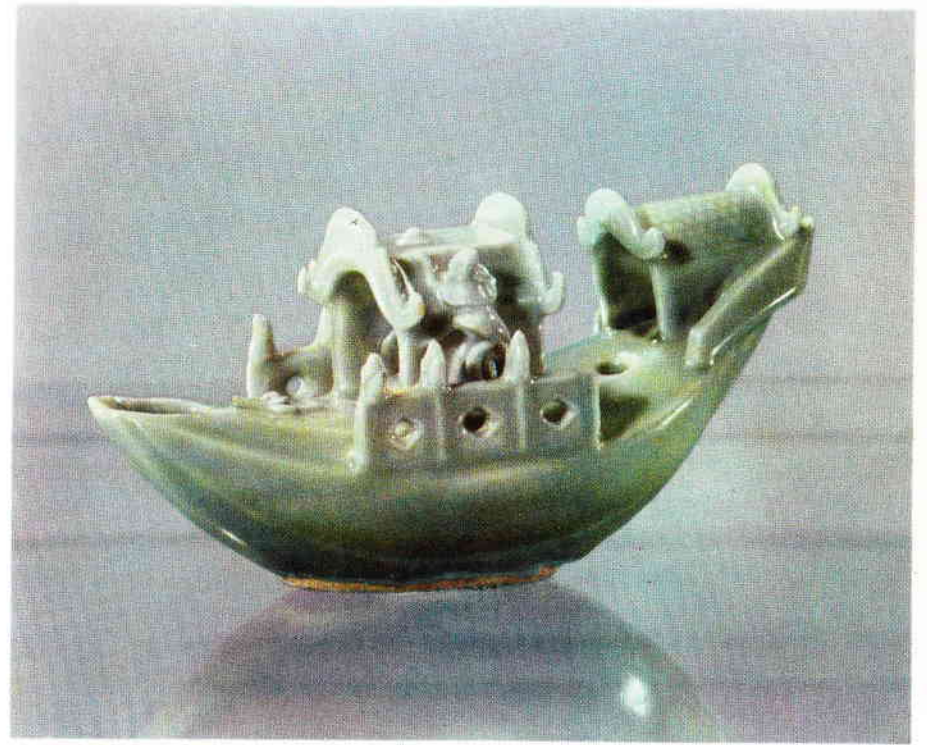
Yellow glazed pottery horse and three-coloured pottery horse of the Tang Dynasty found in the tomb of Princess Yung-tai in Chienhsien, Shensi



Brocade with double-bird design of the Tang Dynasty found in Turfan, Sinkiang



Celadon wine-pot with bowl of the Sung Dynasty from Susung, Anhwei



Lungchuan jug in the form of a boat of the Sung Dynasty from Lungchuan, Chekiang



Blue and white porcelain jar with floral design of the Yuan Dynasty found in Peking

empress dowager's palace is particularly striking. Another lamp with a revolving shade and bowl for oil can be adjusted to throw light from different angles, and can be taken apart; the fumes go through a chimney back into the lamp itself. Yet another lamp in the form of a sheep kneeling has a movable back which can be raised to serve as the bowl.

The bronze censer in the shape of a mountain found in the tomb of the princess is supported by a human figure mounted on a crouching beast which is showing its fangs. The rider, his breast bared, is looking up with a smile at the censer which he is holding up with his right hand. The lower part of the censer has dragon and tiger, bird and camel designs; the upper part represents a mountain with undulating peaks where there are chariots, hunters and running beasts.

The gold and silver needles found in the tomb were used for acupuncture and are very similar to those in use today.

The art of gilding bronze objects and inlaying them with gold and silver first appeared during the Warring States Period and was further developed in the Han Dynasty. In the former principality of Chungshan many bronzes gilded or inlaid with gold and silver have been found. Among these is a bronze wine vessel inlaid with gold and silver and decorated with a gilded dragon design which retains its pristine lustre although buried underground for two thousand years. Another bronze wine vessel inlaid with gold and silver in a finely executed hieroglyphic design has an inscription of 29 characters, reflecting the wanton luxury of the owner and his craving for long life. These hieroglyphic characters make a sophisticated ornamentation rarely seen in old bronze vessels.

In a grave belonging to a member of the Prince of Chungshan's family in Tinghsien, Hopci, some beautiful bronze chariot appurtenances inlaid with gold and silver have been found. On display is a bronze ornament fixed to the chariot awning. Cylindrical in shape, it measures 26.5 by 3.5 cm. and is inlaid with gold and silver hunting scenes vividly depicted with consummate skill. The round and lozenge-shaped turquoise stones inset add to its magnificence. This cylinder is cast in the form of a bamboo with four knots,

with scenes depicted between them. The first section shows three foreigners riding an elephant amid designs of dragons, deer, horses, bears and birds. The second section shows a mounted hunter who is turning round on his galloping steed to aim an arrow at a tiger charging towards him. The tense expression of the hunter and the anger of the roaring tiger are forcefully represented, and the scene is set off by the sheep, deer, tigers and owls grouped around it. The third section shows birds flying and beasts running and fighting in a forest; in the lower central part is a two-humped camel ridden by a foreign-looking man with a prominent nose and deep-set eyes. The fourth is a forest scene with a peacock spreading its tail in the midst of bears, tigers, cranes and other birds. A similar bronze ornament has been found in another Western Han tomb in Yangkao County, Shansi, but the workmanship of that is inferior to this. The elephant and peacock figures are noteworthy, for these creatures could not be found in the Yellow River Valley and must have been sent from south China or abroad to be kept in the imperial forest. It seems likely, therefore, that this bronze ornament was made by craftsmen working for the imperial court.

Bronze Horses and Miniature Chariots Found in Kansu

This exhibition also displays some bronze horses, chariots and figures found in an Eastern Han tomb of the second century A.D. One of the bronze horses has three hooves in the air and one hind-leg resting on a flying bird.* It is galloping so fast with upraised head that its mane is streaming out behind in the wind. This is a masterpiece of ancient art. The sturdy steed with powerful muscles, long legs and a short head is one of the fine Ferghana horses of Central Asia which were much sought after in the Han Dynasty.

This bronze horse was found in an Eastern Han (A.D. 25-220) tomb in Wuwei County, Kansu Province in October 1969, together with some 220 objects including bronze figurines, pottery, iron im-

*See *Chinese Literature* No. 3, 1973.

plements and gold and jade ornaments. More than twenty thousand coins were also unearthed here. Among the most significant bronzes is a set of human figures and bronze chariots and horses. There are 39 horses drawing chariots or carrying riders and hunters; 14 carriages with awnings drawn by horses and bullocks carrying guards armed with hatchets; 17 armed horsemen bearing spears and halberds; and 28 other figures of men and women slaves.

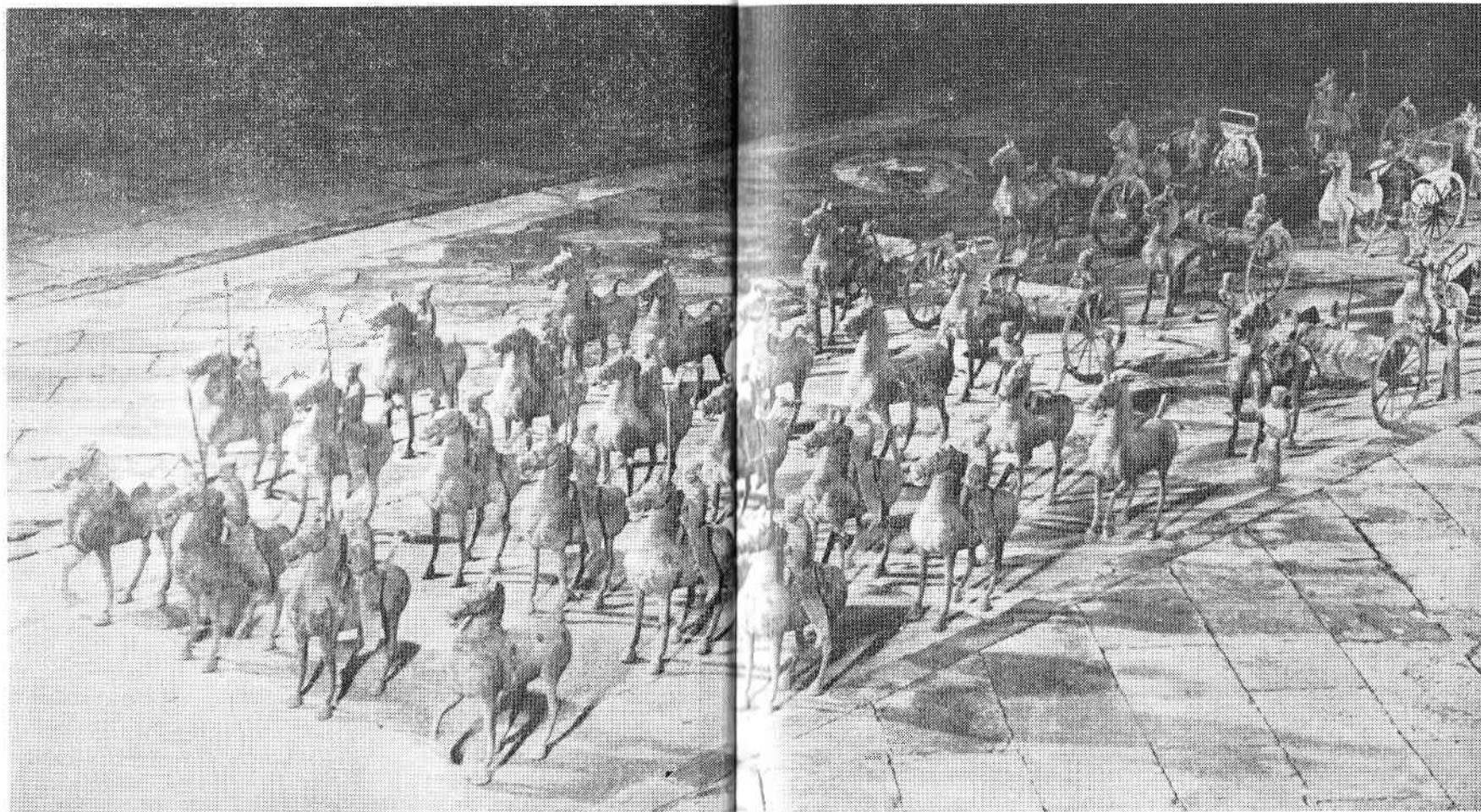
These bronze horses, chariots and slaves were arranged in the form of a procession in the tomb. Riders with spears led the way, followed by men in a chariot carrying hatchets which symbolized authority, then a carriage of attending officers, riders carrying halberds, a carriage of guards, then the dead lord's main carriage distinguished by a larger awning than those of the rest; behind this were more halberdiers, the saddled horse belonging to the dead man, more horses for his attendants, the bronze horse with three hooves in the air and the fourth resting on a flying bird, a carriage for ladies with a slave leading the horse, some women attendants and, bringing up the rear, carts drawn by bullocks loaded with food and clothing.

Hitherto we had only seen such processions painted or shown in relief; this is the first scene of this kind we have found represented with actual figures.

Towards the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, big landowners who possessed a large labour force became local despots lording it over their own districts. The impressive procession scenes depicted in tombs faithfully mirror this aspect of that period of history.

Stone Sculpture from a Northern Wei Tomb and Sui Dynasty White Porcelain Figure

Among the exhibits of stone sculpture are two pedestals, one with a dragon-and-tiger design in relief, the other depicting musicians. These were found in 1966 in the tomb of Ssuma Chin-lung, a nobleman of the Northern Wei Period who was buried in the year 484 in Tatung, Shansi Province. These pedestals supported a lacquer screen. The relief work is meticulous and lifelike. The plump



Miniature bronze carriages and figurines found in Wuwei, Kansu

boy musician is smiling, and the folds of his clothes are effectively represented in bas-relief, the whole effect being highly realistic. The style of work and choice of subject — boy musician, dragons, sacred mountains, lotus and honeysuckle — are very similar to those seen in the Yunkang Caves.

The Sui-dynasty tomb of a man named Chang Sheng buried in

Anyang County, Honan in A.D. 594 yielded a white porcelain figurine with black designs. The base is white, with the eyebrows, eyes, ornaments of the dress and sword sheath painted black with iron oxide. A white porcelain figurine of this size — 71 cm. high — has never been seen before. It reflects a new stage of development in porcelain manufacture in north China.

Ancient Textiles Discovered Along the Silk Road

China was the country where silk was first spun and used as a textile. During the Han and Tang Dynasties large quantities of silk materials were sent through northwest China to Central Asia and the West, where they were in great demand. Thus China came to be known as the "silk country" (Seres), and ancient historians called the route to the West the Silk Road.

Since the establishment of New China, especially during the cultural revolution, many silk fabrics dating from the Han and Tang Dynasties have been discovered at the eastern terminus of the Silk Road. The ancient textiles shown in this exhibition were unearthed in Turfan, Minfeng and Yutien in Sinkiang.

A pair of Han-dynasty brocade mittens dating from the second century A.D. were discovered in Minfeng. Woven in five colours, crimson, white, blue, brown and orange, they carry the characters "long life and prosperous descendants". The weaving of this brocade, comprising 75 twills, was an intricate process. A yellow damask of the same period has a lozenge pattern on a plain base; its texture is thick and heavy.

There are also specimens of ancient woollen fabrics with realistic patterns created by minority peoples as well as traditional designs used in north China. A blue woollen fabric found in Yutien dating from the fifth or sixth century has a pattern dyed by the batik method—the earliest known example of a woollen material dyed with this technique.

A sixth-century piece of brocade with a tree pattern in five colours, blue, crimson, green, orange and white, was unearthed in Turfan. The fine symmetry of the pattern and the lightness of the texture mark a further development in silk textiles during that period.

Excavations in Turfan have brought to light many specimens of Tang silk textiles such as the brocade with a flower-and-bird design, the brocade with a double-bird design, another woven with a scene of a drinking party, and yellow gauze with a printed double-bird pattern. These rare specimens date from the seventh or eighth century when the art of silk weaving flourished. They have not

only traditional Chinese patterns but also motifs copied from regions further west; thus this advance in the Chinese silk industry illustrates the development of trade and cultural exchange between China and countries to her west.

The Tang Capital Changan and Hanyuan Hall

The Tang Dynasty was the most splendid period in Chinese feudal history. Its capital Changan, the political, economic and cultural centre of China at that time, was one of the largest cities in the whole world.

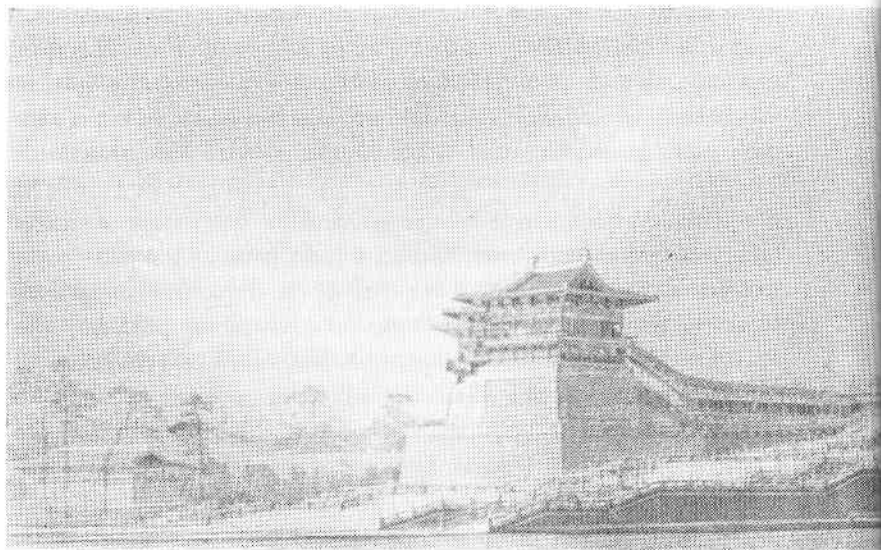
After the establishment of New China, a comprehensive survey was made of this ancient city, and the large-scale excavations carried out have given us a clearer idea of the location, size and design of this Tang capital. In A.D. 662 Emperor Kao-tsung began to rebuild and enlarge the Taming Palace in the northeast of the city. This palace measures three *li* from east to west, five *li* from north to south; it had 21 gates, 24 halls, 4 pavilions, 4 ministries and 10 courtyards. The symmetrical layout of the main hall, Hanyuan Hall, is a good example of Tang palace architecture. This magnificent structure with double eaves was built on a tamped-earth foundation 16.5 metres high. The front consisting of four rows of eleven chambers measured 59.2 by 16 metres. Huge wooden pillars with a span of 9.8 metres between them were erected on stone bases. On the roof were green glazed tiles, and on the soaring corners were ornaments. The hall was flanked by phoenix pavilions linked to it by corridors; it was enclosed by marble balustrades, and the front steps 98 metres long were paved with brick bearing a lotus pattern; the path in the middle was reserved for the sedan-chair of the emperor when he went to court, while the side-paths were for the use of officials. The drawing of Hanyuan Hall in this exhibition, based on archaeological excavations and historical records of Tang architecture, gives a clear picture of this imposing building as it was more than thirteen hundred years ago.

In October 1970, at Hochiatsun near Sian, two vats of treasures buried by a Tang nobleman were discovered. Among the relics,

which numbered more than a thousand, were 270 finely made gold and silver objects, the gold weighing 298 and the silver 3,700 Tang ounces. There were also ten jade buckles. These relics must have cost nearly forty million cash at that time, equivalent to one whole year's grain tax for 150,000 peasants; and this is not counting the cost of labour or the cost of the precious jewels and medicines contained in the vessels. The fact that a single nobleman could amass such wealth gives us some idea of the cruel exploitation of the people by the rulers of that period.

Changan was an important centre of cultural exchange and international trade in the Tang Dynasty. Many merchants from Central Asia, Persia, Arabia and other parts came there overland or by sea, and a great number of foreigners opened shops in this city and settled down in China. Chinese caravans carried silk textiles, porcelain and other goods to the West along the Silk Road, while students and monks from Korea and Japan also came to Changan to study. The post-Liberation finds near Sian of Byzantine gold coins,

Drawing of Hanyuan Hall in Sian, Shensi

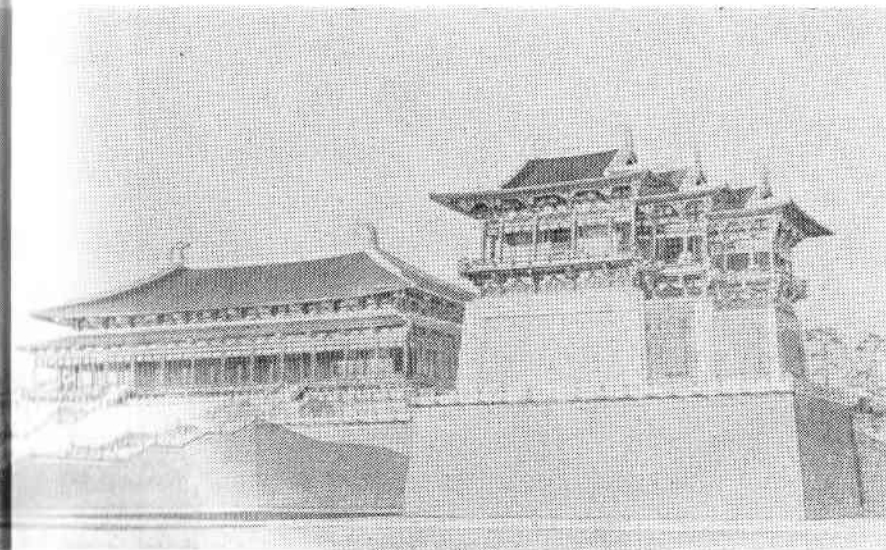


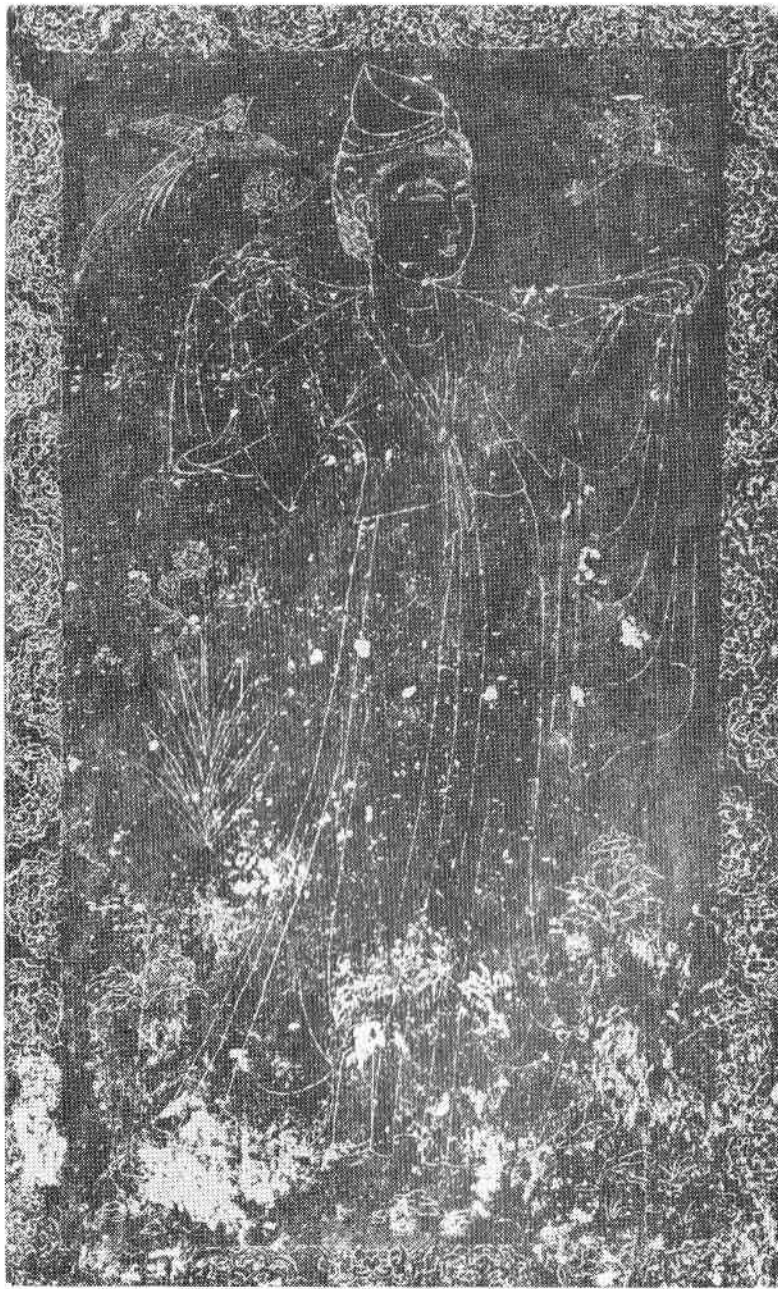
Sassanian silver coins, Japanese silver coins and other foreign money testify to extensive contacts with other peoples at that time.

Frescoes and Other Relics from Tang Tombs

In recent years many precious relics have been excavated from Tang tombs in the vicinity of Changan. This exhibition displays some of those from the tombs of Princess Yung-tai, Prince Yi-teh and Prince Chang-huai.

Princess Yung-tai, a grand-daughter of Emperor Kao-tsung, died in A.D. 701 at the age of seventeen and was buried with her consort near the sepulchre of Emperor Kao-tsung and Empress Wu Tse-tien. The approach to her tomb is flanked by huge stone lions, stone warriors and stone pillars. A passage leads to the front chamber of the tomb, which is linked by another passage with the back chamber. At the west side of the latter is a coffin made of 34 slabs of stone, its top shaped like a palace, its sides carved with 33





Stone rubbing of coffin in Princess Yung-tai's tomb found in Chienhsien, Shensi

scenes in bas-relief representing doors, windows, birds, beasts and attendants. Two rubbings of these reliefs in the exhibition show one lady holding a bird with a long tail while another plays with the bird, and a lady holding a shawl. These scenes are well carved and lifelike.

The ceilings and walls of the passages and chambers are painted with frescoes of human figures, including warriors and attendants. Two paintings of female attendants are exhibited. Rather plump, with dark eyebrows and small mouths, elaborate coiffures and low necklines, these women hold themselves with dignity. Most are dressed in long silk gowns with narrow sleeves, have shawls over their shoulders and carry fans, cups or food-boxes; but some are women officials in masculine costume with round collars and sandals. These paintings show the life of luxury led by the Tang ruling class.

Some trinkets and other precious objects belonging to the princess were buried in the tomb and, although the tomb had been robbed, more than one thousand relics made of gold, copper, iron, tin, jade and three-coloured pottery were found. The coloured pottery figures are very fine, with yellow, green and white glaze made with mineral dyes, showing lifelike slave-girls, horses, horsemen and hunting scenes. The large three-coloured horse discovered in the tomb of Prince Yi-teh, son of Emperor Chung-tsung, is outstanding. It is 80 cm. high and 82.5 cm. long. Green glaze on the saddle represents silk trappings; the mane of the horse is trimmed and its tail tied in a knot. There is also a three-coloured woman figurine which is very fine.

Green Yueh Porcelain of the Five Dynasties

In 1969 in Linan County, Chekiang Province a large brick tomb dating from the Five Dynasties Period (A.D. 907-960) was found. It had a front, a back and two side chambers, in which were discovered bronze mirrors, gilded silver spittoons, silver boxes, vases and dishes and various green vessels of Yueh ware. In the exhibition

are a porcelain vase with a cloud design, a bowl, a two-eared jar with a lid, and a two-eared vessel—all of Yueh ware. The glaze and texture are extremely fine. The vase 50.7 cm. high has brown cloud designs, both its size and colouring being rare in Yueh ware. Similar porcelains were found in 1965 in the tomb of a prince of that period near Hangchow, suggesting that all this ware was made in the same kiln for royal use.

Sung Porcelain, Terra-cotta Figurines and Brick-carving

The Sung Dynasty (A.D. 960-1279) is an important period in the history of Chinese ceramics. The exhibition shows various centres of porcelain manufacture including Lungchuan in Chekiang, Chingtehchen in Kiangsi, Tingchow and Tzuchow in Hopei and Yaochow in Shensi, with examples of their celebrated wares. One 13th-century tripod of Yao ware modelled on a bronze tripod of ancient times has monster designs on the feet and gargoyle and cloud designs on its belly. A 10th-century porcelain conch of Ting ware is a rare Buddhist musical instrument. There is also an 11th-century celadon wine-pot with a bowl for warming wine from Chingtehchen. The lid of the pot bears the design of a beast, the bowl is in the form of a lotus flower; both are well-made and well preserved. Another fine example of Lungchuan ware is a 12th-century jug used for pouring water on inkstones in the form of a boat with an awning. A man is standing on the deck with his hands on the awning, while two men inside are sitting and talking. This celadon ware is like finely carved green jade.

Both in quantity and quality Sung porcelain surpassed that of previous dynasties, and kilns spread all over China. Apart from some Ting ware from the imperial kiln, most of the Sung porcelain in this exhibition comes from private kilns, showing that the manufacture of porcelain in the Sung Dynasty was widespread and each district had its own distinctive ware.

China had stage shows in very early times, but drama as an independent art form appeared only in the later Northern Sung period



Terra-cotta figures of actors found in Chiaotso, Honan

in the 11th century. Sculptured bricks with scenes from drama in relief have been discovered in Sung tombs in the province of Honan. In the 12th-century drama developed further. Terra-cotta figures of actors and a brick-carving of a stage performance discovered in a 13th-century tomb of the Kin Tartar Period in Houma County, Shansi, show that drama was popular in the countryside.

The Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) saw important advances in Chinese drama, when professional script-writers wrote many famous works. This exhibition presents a fresco from Kuangsheng Monastery in Hungtung County, Shansi, with a vivid depiction of a scene from a Yuan drama. The performance was given in April 1324, the first year of the Taiting Era, and one of the performers was a famous actress called Chung-tu-hsiu. There are eleven actors and actresses on the stage, as well as various stage properties, musical instruments and scenery. Many of the theatres built at that time in the countryside are still to be found in the southern and central part of Shansi Province.

Excavation of the Site of the Yuan Capital

The capital of the Yuan Dynasty, Khanbalik, was built in 1267 and its fame spread to other parts of the world. The city of Peking was built on its ruins in the Ming and Ching Dynasties. Since Liberation, excavations carried out on the site of Khanbalik reveal that the city was well designed, with symmetrical streets. Marco Polo who was in China at that time praised the layout of this Yuan capital. Many streets and alleys of present-day Peking follow the course of those of Khanbalik.

During the cultural revolution, many architectural remains and pottery and porcelain were discovered on the site of Khanbalik. In this exhibition are a blue and white wine-vessel, a basin of Chun ware, a celadon brush stand, an openwork pottery incense-burner 36 cm. high with three-colour glaze, and a large blue and white covered porcelain jar 66 cm. high with a floral design. Although the blue colouring is somewhat dim, the composition is pleasing, and fine workmanship is shown in the seventeen rows of flowers painted on the jar and twelve lines in relief. A celadon statuette of the goddess Kuanyin, 66 cm. high, with a superb glaze, is an excellent example of celadon ware.

The exhibition ends with a huge photograph of China's Great Wall stretching for thousands of miles; for this magnificent ancient monument has come to symbolize the Chinese nation, implying that the Chinese people with their long history have now started a new chapter led by their great leader Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF CHINESE DYNASTIES

PRIMITIVE SOCIETY	c. 600,000—2100 B.C.
SLAVE SOCIETY	c. 2100—475 B.C.
Hsia	c. 2100—1600 B.C.
Shang	c. 1600—1100 B.C.
Western Chou	c. 1100—770 B.C.
Spring and Autumn Period	770—475 B.C.
FEUDAL SOCIETY	475 B.C.—A.D. 1840
Warring States Period	475—221 B.C.
Chin	221—207 B.C.
Western Han	206 B.C.—A.D. 24
Eastern Han	A.D. 25—220
Three Kingdoms Period	A.D. 220—265
Western Tsin	A.D. 265—316
Eastern Tsin	A.D. 317—420
Northern and Southern Dynasties	A.D. 420—589
Sui	A.D. 581—618
Tang	A.D. 618—907
Five Dynasties Period	A.D. 907—960
Sung	A.D. 960—1279
Khitans Tartar Period	A.D. 916—1125
Kin Tartar Period	A.D. 1115—1234
Yuan	A.D. 1271—1368
Ming	A.D. 1368—1644
Ching (till 20th year of Tao-kuang)	A.D. 1644—1840

How I Came to Write “Storm Warning”

Last year I wrote a one-act play *Storm Warning*. This was my first attempt at creative writing. Since the play's publication and stage production, I have received a great deal of encouragement from my comrades. And though the play is nothing outstanding, the writing of it taught me several lessons.

After leaving high school in 1969, I joined the People's Liberation Army and was assigned to a small weather station which was just being set up in a remote mountain region. The joys and cares of a meteorologist in the PLA are closely bound up with the changes in the sky. I can recall dramatic examples of this. One day we forecast clear weather and went laughing and singing to the mountains to cut firewood; but on the way Old Man Heaven threw a tantrum, a high wind sprang up and the rain started pelting down so that in a few minutes we were like drowned rats. The peasants in the mountains exclaimed with concern: “Why come up here in such weather, you silly lasses? Why didn't you consult your weather station?” Little did they know that we girls soaked to the skin

were the weather forecasters. However, failures and mistakes of this kind only spurred us on to tackle storms better. Three years ago we came from different parts of China to the foot of these rugged mountains and with our own hands levelled the slopes, built hostels with tiled roofs and set up a small rough-and-ready weather station. Since then we have worked hard to learn the science of meteorology, have consulted local peasants and collected historical data on local conditions. We are determined to use Chairman Mao's teachings on philosophy to control the weather.

Our work and study in these three years have left me with many pleasant memories which keep coming back to my mind. Once when I was in charge of the day's forecast and the sun was shining outside, my eighteen-year-old colleague Chubby boldly predicted: “There's going to be rain tonight.” Other comrades who didn't believe her teased: “So you want to bring about a miracle again.” Instead of answering, she took a stool out to the yard and sat down to stare at the sky. She waited and waited until the stars came out and seemed to be winking at her. . . . Then a cloud appeared at the horizon. She waited breathlessly for the cloud to spread . . . but the wind blew it away. Even then she didn't give up, just gazed stubbornly southeast . . . until at last a drop of rain fell lightly on her nose. Everybody in the yard burst out laughing and cheering. You never heard such a din.

Frankly, I had no idea at first of writing a play. All I wanted was to be a good weather forecaster, to give accurate forecasts. But as time went by it occurred to me that my comrades deserved writing up. They were so keen, so devoted to their work; and while they kept their feet firmly on the ground, they had high revolutionary ideals. When outsiders passed our gate and stared curiously at the big balloons we had sent up, I felt an even stronger urge to write about our job. I wanted to tell the world some of the stirring stories about my fine comrades in this observation station, where life seemed so quiet yet was so fraught with excitement. I also wanted to share with them the conclusion I had reached after long reflection that practice must come first and that only by linking theory with

practice can we subdue the elements. This is the theme I finally chose for my short play.

This theme only took shape in my mind after an actual storm warning.

All those engaged in meteorological work know that it is difficult to make accurate forecasts of spring thunderstorms. This difficulty is greatest in the mountains when conditions are poor and equipment inadequate. So we set up a small group to make a special study of thunderstorms. I also collected a pile of books and materials and studied them hard in the hope of predicting storms successfully. On May 23 one year, I was in charge of the forecast. It was singularly sultry for that time of the year. In the morning the sun had come up big, round and bright red. Judging by our charts and materials a storm might well be brewing. However, the humidity in the air was not up to the requisite standard, according to the books. So I thought there would be no thunder. The day passed quietly. Towards evening the clouds in the sky had disappeared too. I was on the point of forecasting clear weather when my group leader stopped me. "Wait," he said. "I reckon the thunder will start at midnight." Well, this was like a bomb-shell! The group leader cited two reasons. First, a series of tests had shown that thunderstorms in this locality were possible without the degree of humidity quoted in the books; secondly, the humidity in our station was slowly increasing. He told me: "Look, now the clouds are moving north, which means that higher up a south wind is blowing. The south wind brings moisture from the sea; so by midnight, when the temperature drops, there will be enough humidity in the atmosphere for a storm." Although not convinced, I could not sleep. I went to bed but soon got up again to urge the sentry on duty: "If you see any signs of a storm, call me at once." As I was finally dropping off to sleep, I heard the sound of quick footsteps outside my window. Someone called: "Quick, Kao Hung! Lightning!" And, springing up, I heard the crash of thunder.

This incident made me draw a comparison between the group leader and myself. A bookworm can never become a good weather forecaster. That crash of thunder had sounded a warning to me.

Since I had neglected to study the special meteorological features of this mountain region, drawing all my knowledge from books, I deserved to be punished by Nature. Fair enough. This shock also gave me an additional incentive to write about our team. For the storm had swept away some of my mistaken thinking, enabling me to visualize the theme and plot of my play more clearly. I felt the urge to tell others the lesson I had learned: Theory divorced from practice can cause serious damage.

From this short play's conception to its finalization, both its script and production owed much to the unstinted help and advice given me by my commanders and fellow workers. So this is not simply the work of one individual; it reflects collective wisdom and experience.

When some comrades first heard that I meant to write this play, they joked: "Don't make the chief character like yourself, tossing and turning all night in bed because you failed to give a correct storm warning. She must be able to steal a march on storms and triumph over them." This advice helped me to round out my plot, and gave me the title "Storm Warning".

When our higher command read the first draft of the script, they pointed out that the heroine still left much to be desired. Because I had restricted myself too much to depicting real events and real people, I had not raised her image to a high enough plane. Chairman Mao tells us: "**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.**" Then I studied the experience of writing model revolutionary operas, and tried harder to make my chief character a real heroine, a first-rate weather forecaster. She must be a model in linking theory with practice, as experienced as our group leader, as devoted to study as Chubby, as painstaking as Little Liu, as bold as Old Chang. She must incorporate the strong points of them all, yet not be entirely like any of them. After thinking this over for some time, I visualized this character more clearly. By degrees she seemed so close and familiar to me that I

held imaginary conversations with her and felt I had only to stretch out my hand to touch her.

This attempt at creative writing convinced me that we must, as Chairman Mao has said, **“for a long period of time unreservedly and whole-heartedly go among the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, go into the heat of the struggle, go to the only source, the broadest and richest source.”** This is the sole way to study society and study the masses, to know and understand the advanced people and advanced ideas among them, to know and understand all sorts of characters in real life. Only so can we write socialist works which will be welcomed by the people.



Foshan Scissor-Cuts

Scissor-cuts are pasted on windows, door lintels and ornamental lanterns or used as designs for embroidery, architecture and furniture. This is a Chinese folk art which has enriched and brought colour into daily life.

This art, so close to the life of the labouring people in China, has a history of more than a thousand years and is popular throughout the country. Whatever their place of origin, all scissor-cuts are characterized by simplicity of design and a strong decorative quality. However, owing to different local conditions and tastes as well as to the use of different tools and techniques, each district has its own choice of themes and modes of expression. In general, scissor-cuts from north China are sturdy and vigorous compared with the greater precision and delicacy of those from the south. But the scissor-cuts of Foshan in Kwangtung Province combine certain features of both schools in their artistic style. They can be divided into three types according to the technique and materials used: appliqué scissor-cuts, monochrome scissor-cuts and painted scissor-cuts. Thus



Young Botanists by Lin Tsai-hua

the style of this Foshan art ranges from colourful flamboyance to vigorous precision and sprightly elegance.

Appliqué scissor-cuts made with copper foil are a speciality of Foshan. The copper foil produced here is as thin as tissue paper and dazzlingly bright. *Fishing Season in the South Sea* by Yang Yung-hsiung uses the artistic effect of the copper foil to convey the exuberance of a new socialist fishing harbour. A blue satin foundation which represents the sea contrasts strongly with the bright crimson scissor-cut clouds, while glittering copper foil makes the contrast even more vivid. Black scissor-cut lines add emphasis to the main copper-foil designs. The result is a thoroughly lively scene of bustle and animation as fishing boats loaded with big piles of fish put back into the harbour.

Some appliqué scissor-cuts use a paper instead of a copper-foil foundation, and although this lacks the glitter of the copper it has a special beauty of its own. One example of this is *Friendship* by Kuo Shou-jen. This scissor-cut has a green paper foundation overlaid with graceful willows by white marble balustrades, where friends from different continents are enjoying the beauty of the scene. In the clear water of the lake sport lovely goldfish made of copper foil, adding a note of splendour to the green base. The reflections in the water are made by folding the paper in the middle before cutting out the designs, so that top and bottom are symmetrical. This method of cutting out double designs is a time-honoured technique.

The combination of paper with copper foil in appliqué scissor-cuts is a recent development in Foshan. *Fishing Season in the South Sea* uses copper foil for the most part, but has paper appliqué work too. In *Friendship* most of the designs applied are in paper, but copper foil is used for minor details. The former work is spirited and moving; the latter conveys a sense of leisured tranquillity. Both works have succeeded in using traditional styles and local characteristics to conjure up vivid pictures of our new socialist period.

The special features of monochrome scissor-cuts are classical conciseness and simple elegance. Whereas the previous type relies on the application of coloured paper to create images, this type relies mainly on skill in cutting. A successful recent example of monochrome scissor-cuts is *Young Botanists* by Lin Tsai-hua. The artist has made effective use of a square sheet of paper to present a beautiful and striking portrayal of two schoolgirls studying agricultural science.

Either scissors or knives may be used to make scissor-cuts, the effect of each being different. Cut-outs made by scissors are more fluid and graceful, those made by engraver's knives more spirited. The Foshan scissor-cut artists employ specially-made engraver's knives which they wield like painting brushes to produce a variety of lines. These knives are of different sizes. For the straight lines in bamboo tables and chairs, laboratory instruments, bamboo hats and so forth, a large knife is employed. A smaller one is used for facial features, hands and feet, patterns on clothes, corn-cobs seeds



Hunting by Lin Tsai-hua

or other details. The cut-outs may be thick or fine. An example of fine cut-outs is Lin Tsai-hua's *River Scenes*; of thick cut-outs, Chen Yung-tsai's *PLA Girl and Fisher Woman*. These are just two illustrations of the variety in the cutting technique.

The special media used in the scissor-cut art give rise to distinctive handling of composition, the creation of images, the use of lines and the treatment of light and shade. This makes the finished work both harmonious and decorative. A good illustration is Lin Tsai-hua's monochrome scissor-cut *Hunting* which reflects real life in the distinctive scissor-cut style. In this we see an old man and his grandson of the Yao nationality, one kneeling and the other sprawling in a forest among various birds and beasts, all shown on the same plane without any perspective. The artist has used artistic

exaggeration to create a work full of humour. The wild boar has fallen over backwards, its four legs in the air, after being shot, while deer, wolves, foxes, hedgehogs, eagles and monkeys are all flying helter-skelter. This scissor-cut conjures up for us the enchanting life of hunters in a southern forest.

The third type of Foshan scissor-cut is unique in that it combines the art of painting with scissor-cutting. The copper foil or paper is cut into various designs, then painted with vivid colours. A striking specimen of such work is Yang Yung-hsiung's *Weaving a Net*. Delicate cut-outs depict the fishing net, the rippling waves and the contours of human figures, while the facial features and parts of the surroundings are painted to enhance the beauty of the scene. This skilful co-ordination of painting and scissor-cut techniques results in a powerful effect.

The scissor-cuts of Foshan are a fine example of China's rich folk art. Under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line on art, much exciting new work is being produced in this field.

Liu Ching-tang

After Seeing the Revolutionary Korean Opera "The Flower Girl"

It was with great joy that we welcomed the Pyongyang Mansudae Art Troupe from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The visit to China of our comrades-in-arms brought us the profound friendship of the Korean people; and their performance of *The Flower Girl*, an opera with a revolutionary content and distinctive national features, enabled us to see for ourselves the fine achievements of Korean drama.

The heroic Korean people have a long history and a splendid culture. The art workers of Korea, following the instructions of their great leader President Kim Il Sung, have carried on and further developed the fine traditions of their national art, and by going deep among the masses and real life have created many outstanding works which educate the people with their glorious revolutionary tradition

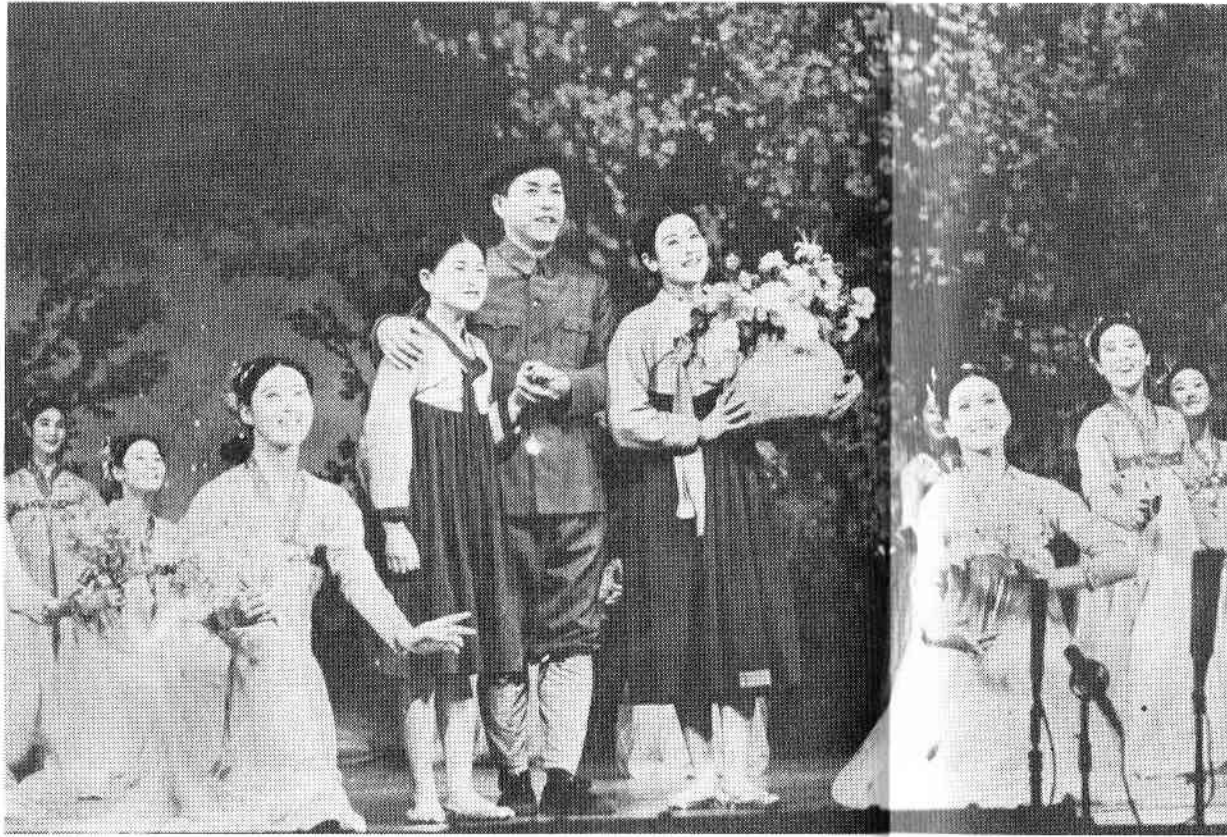
The writer is a well-known ballet dancer.

and communist spirit. The Pyongyang Mansudae Art Troupe has attained a very high artistic level, and has made notable contributions to the development of revolutionary Korean art under the guidance of the thought of President Kim Il Sung.

The background to the opera *The Flower Girl* is Korea in the twenties and early thirties of this century, a time when foreign aggressors were riding roughshod over this beautiful land, and the labouring masses were suffering from national and class oppression. The story of the flower girl Ggot Bun and her family reflects the Korean people's revolutionary struggle for national independence and liberation, giving praise to their militant spirit in the fight against oppression and exploitation.

Ggot Bun in the opera epitomizes the Korean working people, for her family's sufferings are typical. In those days when the toilers were dominated by the reactionary ruling class, countless labouring people were cruelly exploited, down-trodden and humiliated by the landlords, just as in the girl's case: countless labouring people had





their families broken up and their dear ones killed. However, where there is oppression there must be revolt. The heroic Korean people, under the leadership of Comrade Kim Il Sung, waged a persistent and courageous struggle to win complete liberation, in order that "Flowers should bloom over this thousand miles of lovely land". In the words of a song in the opera:

How many tears of blood have we shed?
 Rise up, all who are trodden underfoot!
 We must fight to save ourselves;
 Rise up, join the army and make revolution!

These words express the revolutionary spirit of the Korean people.

At the end of the opera, when the landlord is overthrown, their homes are liberated and azaleas bloom all over the plain, the liberated people of Korea dance and sing to celebrate their victory.

The warm sun sheds light over the land,
 Everywhere bloom the red blossoms of revolution;
 Seeds are scattered over our magnificent land,
 Everywhere bloom the red blossoms of revolution.

Then Ggot Bun with her brother and younger sister takes the revolutionary path, advancing towards the morning sun to carry the revolution through to the end.

This opera embodies the instruction of the Korean people's great leader President Kim Il Sung that "Only by using the history of the struggle of our people and their revolutionary tradition to educate the people, can we raise their feeling of national pride, can we stir the wide masses to take part in revolutionary struggle"; this is why it could inspire and educate the revolutionary people so well.

The Flower Girl moves us not only because of its revolutionary content; for its beautiful national art form makes a profound impression on us too. The whole opera is well constructed, with a well developed plot. The songs, music, dances and scenery are in the fine tradition of Korean folk art but also incorporate original features. The fresh, flowing melodies have a strong national flavour. The choral singing is harmonious, aptly evoking the feelings of the characters. The orchestral accompaniment with its lively rhythms and rich variety is a joy to listen to. The Korean dances are superbly



executed. The carefully designed scenery produces a three-dimensional effect which adds to the beauty of the opera.

These Korean comrades' performance impressed us with their fine working style. The artists made strict demands on themselves throughout, throwing themselves whole-heartedly into their roles and doing their best to interpret them faithfully.

The towering Paekdusan Mountains and the Yalu River link our two countries together. China and Korea are close neighbours whose destinies are interwoven. The great leader of the Chinese people Chairman Mao has told us: **"The Chinese and Korean comrades should unite like brothers, go through thick and thin together, share weal and woe and fight to the end to defeat the common enemy."**

On the basis of the principles of Marxism-Leninism, the great friendship and solidarity sealed by blood in our long, arduous struggle are becoming more and more consolidated and developing further. The friendly visit of the Pyongyang Mansudae Art Troupe to China will certainly make a further contribution to enhancing the revolutionary friendship and solidarity between our two peoples and our art workers.

On the Threshold of Victory

In early June this year, an exhibition of photographs and art works of the Palestinian revolution opened in Peking. The nearly sixty paintings by the well-known Palestinian artist Ismail Abdel Qader Shammout and his wife Tamam Shammout made a profound impression on all who visited this exhibition. These two artists have vividly depicted the sufferings of the Palestinian people since they were driven out of their own country by the Zionists in 1948 and their confidence in the victory of the Palestinian revolution. These oil paintings are outstanding works of art as well as weapons against the enemy.

The oil painting *We Shall Return* by Ismail Shammout shows us an old man forced to leave his home with his grandson, gazing back resolutely at his motherland. We seem to hear the child asking "Where shall we go?" and the grandfather's firm answer: "We shall fight and we shall win. We must return to our country and rebuild our homes." This work depicts the sufferings and hatred of the Palestinian people, as well as their determination to fight to the bitter end.



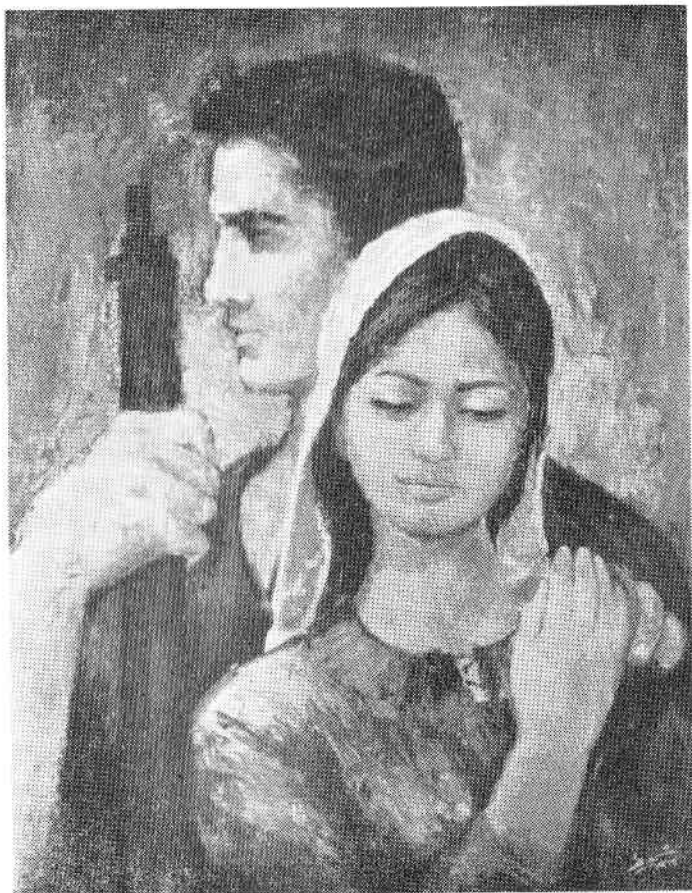
We Shall Return by Ismail Shammout

The Road by the same artist shows a group of courageous Palestinian fighters. Their blazing eyes and tightly gripped guns convey their eagerness for battle, their thirst for revenge. This painting serves as an apt answer to the question raised in *We Shall Return*. The way to return is by taking the path of armed struggle. Despite limitations of space, this canvas calls to mind all the tens of thousands

of Palestinian fighters who are advancing along this road towards victory.

Never Forget by Tamam Shammout depicts an indomitable Palestinian woman. Although she has lost her husband and her home, from her steady, thoughtful gaze we sense that the burning anger in her heart has been transformed into strength to fight and win.

Ismail Shammout has said: "An artist is a fighter; his art is his



A Young Couple at the Frontier by Ismail Shammout

weapon." From the oil paintings displayed, we can see that he and his wife live up to this principle in their creative work.

Not only are Palestinian artists using their art as weapons in their fight — even Palestinian children are taking this path. The exhibition showed several dozen children's paintings denouncing enemy atrocities, praising the heroic struggle of the Palestinian guerrilla fighters and that of the people of other Arab countries, and depicting the past and future of their fair land. These naive, ingenuous paintings show that a revolutionary fire has been kindled in the young hearts of these children.

Many of the wood-carvings, costumes and other traditional handicrafts in the exhibition were painstakingly made by the children of Palestinian martyrs. In these charming handicrafts made of coarse cloth, olive wood and shells, they embody their love for life and reveal the creative talent of the Palestinian people.

From the historical data supplied by the exhibition we can see that the enemies of the Palestinians and the peoples of other Arab countries will try new tricks and plots in an attempt to sabotage the Arab people's struggle; however, the people of Palestine and the other Arab countries are uniting more closely and becoming more vigilant, and they will fight on until victory. This exhibition of photographs and paintings has shown us the aspirations of the Palestinian people and brought home to us that they are on the threshold of victory.

New Literary and Art Books Published in Peking

A number of new literary and art books were published recently in Peking. Among them are the second part of the novel *The Seething Mountains*, the first part of which appeared six years ago, depicting the reconstruction of a mine during the early period of our People's Republic; *Song of Pearls*, a collection of reportage reflecting the rapid development of our present agricultural production; *Blue Sea*, an anthology of poems about life in the PLA; *New Songs of Wasteland Reclaimed*, another anthology of poems describing how our soldiers bring wasteland back into cultivation; *Flying Fighters on the Lake*, a book of revolutionary stories by the peasant poet Li Yung-hung; *Red Rain* and *Red Tasselled Spears on the Battlefield*, two novels about children; and *Daughter of the Sea*, a collection of short stories.

The new art albums include *Reproductions of Art Works* edited by a selection section of the Cultural Group under the State Council. This book contains reproductions of 96 works of modern art — paintings in the traditional style, oil-paintings, woodcuts, New-Year pictures, serial pictures and posters — most of which were chosen from the National Fine Arts Exhibition held in Peking last year. But some good works done in the past thirty years are also included.

Paintings by Luta Workers, *Paintings by Hubsien Peasants* and nearly twenty serial-picture books have also been published.

The first volume of *New Songs from the Battlefield* edited by the revolutionary song section of the Cultural Group under the State Council was published last year, and now the second volume is on sale. It comprises 101 songs, all of them new compositions.

New Development in Mongolian Music and Dance in China

The Mongolian national minority in China is very fond of music and dancing. In recent years, the standard of their dancing and horse-head-fiddle music has been raised, and these art forms have been further popularized.

Since Liberation, under the care of the Chinese Communist Party and the People's Government, on the basis of their rich heritage of traditional art, the literary and art workers of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region have created many new musical compositions and dances depicting life today in the grassland. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, they further improved on their beautiful and wholesome folk dances by amalgamating certain movements and introducing innovations and refinements. Their new dances vividly portray the happy life of the Mongolian people. In the early days after Liberation there were only three kinds of shoulder movements in their traditional dances, but now there are ten, all expressing the herdsmen's inner feelings. Similarly, the ten movements in equestrian dancing before the cultural revolution have now increased to eighteen. These, combined with the movements of shoulders, hands and arms, convey a graphic picture of the stirring life of mounted herdsmen.

In the past, the bowing technique of the horse-head fiddle was relatively simple, but now variations have been introduced, while the music is rendered more evocative by occasional plucking and strumming. And whereas the range of this fiddle was formerly limited, having no definite scale, it now has been extended to cover three octaves. Improvements have also been made in the fingering technique and the manufacture of the fiddle.

These developments have brought fresh life and colour to the Inner Mongolian grassland. As a result of living among the herdsmen,

the folk artists and propaganda teams have produced popular new items such as the dances *Militia-women in the Grassland* and *Happy Milkmaids* and the horse-head-fiddle music *New Song of the Grassland* and *The Grassland Is Linked with Peking*. These eulogize Chairman Mao and the Party and sing of the new people, new deeds and new morality on the grassland. They are a reflection of the growing prosperity of Inner Mongolia since the cultural revolution.

“Language Reform” a Column in the *Kuang Ming Daily*

“Language Reform”, a column begun in March 1954 in the *Kuang Ming Daily* and published fortnightly until its suspension after 254 issues, began coming out again on May 10th this year. The purpose of this column is to propagate the policies concerning the reform of the Chinese language, to study and discuss means of simplifying the Chinese written language, the popularization of “standard Chinese” and the teaching and application of the phonetic alphabet, and to exchange experience in the use of the phonetic alphabet by workers, peasants, soldiers and language reform workers in various parts of the country.

In its first issue, the column laid stress on the policies involved, summed up the achievements won in this field during the past twenty years or so and pointed out future tasks. It also introduced Chairman Mao’s instructions on language reform. In 1951 Chairman Mao pointed out that the Chinese written language must be reformed and should move in the direction of adopting a phonetic alphabet, the common direction of languages throughout the world. While this called for much preparatory work, Chinese characters must be simplified to facilitate their immediate use. In 1958 Chairman Mao urged all cadres to learn standard Chinese. In accordance with these directives, 2,264 characters have been simplified and more than 1,100 duplicate and complex characters withdrawn from use in the past twenty years. The use of simplified Chinese characters makes teaching in primary schools much easier, facilitates the elimination of illiteracy and makes writing easier for adults. The popularization of standard Chinese in various trades and professions all over the

country and its widespread use in schools have done much to promote economic and cultural exchange between different parts of China and to strengthen the unity among the people. The drafting and popularization of the Scheme for the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet have helped to raise the standard of Chinese teaching in our schools and have provided the necessary conditions for a basic reform of the Chinese language.

It was pointed out in the column that the task for language reform in the future is to continue the simplification of the Chinese characters and the popularization of standard Chinese which has evolved from a dialect originally spoken in north China and is now based on the Peking pronunciation and grammatical structure of modern vernacular Chinese. The phonetic alphabet should continue to be popularized with stress laid primarily on teaching it in the elementary schools. The re-appearance of this column, “Language Reform”, will further promote our work in this field.

Fossil Skeletons of an Extinct Species of Elephant Found

Two well-preserved fossil skeletons of an extinct species of elephant have been unearthed recently in Huaiyuan County, Anhwei Province in east China. They are the first specimens of this kind yet discovered.

This elephant, *paleoxopon namadicus*, was larger than the modern elephant, reaching a height of some four metres. Palaeontologists estimate that this species of elephant lived about 300,000 years ago, in the quaternary period. It bears certain similarities to the primitive African elephant, having a flatter cranium than the Asiatic elephant or mammoth. The surface of the molars bears lozenge-shaped rings where the enamel was worn down by chewing.

The past study of such elephant fossils was fragmentary, being confined to a few teeth. These newly found skeletons will enable palaeontologists and geologists to gain a fuller and better understanding of the characteristics of this extinct elephant, and the geographical and climatic conditions of the ancient Huai River Valley. Thus these finds provide important material for further research.

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PLA Girl and Fisher-woman (monochrome scissor-cut) by Chen Yung-tsai



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