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A Vicious Motive, Despicable Tricks

**—A Criticism of M. Antonioni's Anti-China
Film "China"**

"Renmin Ribao" Commentator

Since the day the five-star red flag was hoisted over Tien An Men Square and the birth of New China was proclaimed, different political forces in the world have assumed different attitudes towards the earth-shaking social changes in China and the tremendous achievements of her socialist construction. Hundreds of millions of revolutionary people and friends all over the world have voiced admiration and sympathy whereas a handful of reactionary forces are filled with great terror and deep hatred. This is what all great revolutions, whether in China or other lands, in ancient times or today, invariably meet. The anti-China film *China* by the Italian director M. Antonioni, which started showing in some Western countries last year, reflects the attitudes of the tiny handful of imperialists and social-imperialists in the present-day world who have an inveterate

hatred for New China. The appearance of this film is a serious anti-China event and a wild provocation against the Chinese people.

Antonioni came to China as our guest in the spring of 1972. With his camera, he visited Peking, Shanghai, Nanking, Soochow and Linhsien County. However, his purpose in making the visit was not to increase his understanding of China, still less promote the friendship between the people of China and Italy. Hostile towards the Chinese people, he used the opportunity of his visit for ulterior purposes; by underhand and utterly despicable means he hunted specifically for material that could be used to slander and attack China. His three-and-half-hour-long film does not at all reflect the new things, new spirit and new face of our great motherland, but puts together many viciously distorted scenes and shots to attack Chinese leaders, smear socialist New China, slander China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and insult the Chinese people. Any Chinese with a modicum of national pride cannot but be greatly angered on seeing this film. Tolerating such a film and permitting it to deceive people in various places would be tantamount to legitimization of reactionary propaganda that wilfully insults the Chinese people and capitulation to anti-China provocations by the international reactionaries. We will thoroughly expose and criticize this film's counter-revolutionary nature in reply to the challenge hurled at the Chinese people by the international reactionaries. This is a serious struggle on the ideological and political front that merits great attention.

1

In the narration, the film says that it does not "pretend to explain China but only wants to start to observe this great repertoire of faces, gestures and habits" in China. This is a downright fraud. Every scene in the "documentary" makes its own explanation. These are scurrilous political explanations which use reactionary artistry to slander and smear China; they are outright reckless political attacks on China, on communism and on the revolution.

It seems quite natural that Tien An Men Square is shown as the film begins. In fact, this is designed to serve the reactionary intention of the "documentary". The narrator says: "Peking is the political and revolutionary centre of China", "the People's Republic was proclaimed here", "and here passed the waves of Red Guards marching for the Cultural Revolution". Then, the film leads the spectators "away from the Square" to "observe" China, supposedly to see what the Chinese revolution has brought the Chinese people. A series of reactionary scenes follow, distorting New China beyond recognition. This structure and composition of the film is designed solely for the purpose of concentrating its attack on the revolution led by the Communist Party of China. And here lies the nub of this film — reviling the revolution, negating it and opposing it.

This reactionary film completely ignores and totally negates the tremendous achievements China has made on all fronts of socialist construction. It wants people to believe that today's socialist New China is almost the same as the semi-feudal, semi-colonial old China of the past.

Antonioni presents Shanghai as "an industrialized city", only to sling mud at China's socialist industry. Shutting his eyes to the large numbers of big modern enterprises there, the director concentrated on assembling unconnected scenes of poorly-equipped hand-operated enterprises. There are, in fact, shipyards that build 10,000-ton vessels by the Whangpoo River, and Chinese-made ocean-going ships that berth in Shanghai. However, under Antonioni's camera, all the freighters on the river are from abroad and China has only small junks. Taking an outright imperialist stand, the director asserts that Shanghai's industry "was not born today" and "as a city, Shanghai was literally invented by foreign capital in the last century". "The industries" built after Liberation, he declares, "are often little better than big handicraft canopies built in a hurry". He says that "the biggest oil refinery in the city is a poor factory practically built with discarded material". Isn't that a brazen boasting

of the “meritorious service” of imperialist aggression against China in the nineteenth century and an effort to belittle the great achievements of the Chinese people in developing industry by self-reliance? The director also used very despicable means to take shots that distort the working people. His vicious implication is that if Shanghai, China’s major industrial city, is like this, imagine other areas!

Antonioni distorts the image of Linhsien County which he presents as “China’s first socialist mountain,” his aim being to sling mud at China’s socialist countryside. The Red Flag Canal here, known in China and abroad, is shown casually in passing and the film presents neither the magnificence of this “man-made river” nor the prosperity in the county following the transformation of its mountains and rivers. Instead, there is a boring succession of shots of fragmented plots, lonely old people, exhausted draught animals and dilapidated houses. . . . With great pains he tries to evoke “the poverty of the peasants” in Linhsien County, describing a mountain village as an “abandoned desolate place” and slandering the village school there. Antonioni says maliciously that “it would be naive if we think we have discovered a rural ‘paradise’” in present-day China. Is this not an insidious trick slandering the Chinese countryside, more than twenty years after Liberation, as a hell on earth?

The film vilifies China’s socialist construction in a variety of ways, from municipal construction to the people’s life, from culture and education to physical culture and sports, from medicine and health to family planning, sparing not even the kindergartens.

In total disregard of the tremendous changes that have taken place in China’s cities, the film plays up Peking as “still an antiquated city” with “very simple and poor” housing and “disappointing urbanization”. It describes Soochow as showing “little difference from what it was at the time of its distant origin”; while the changes in Shanghai are given as no more than the old houses in the concessions built by “Western economic empire” having been turned into “public offices today”.

The film resorts to all manner of trickery to deny the fact that the life of the Chinese people has markedly improved. It says that “the inhabitants of Peking look poor, but not miserable”. The director seems to have shown leniency by saying that the Chinese people are not miserable. But his real intention is to mock at their “poverty”. Did he not work hard in cities and countryside to catch shots to describe people as “poorly dressed” and “doing hard labour”, in order to spread the false impression that one could meet “poor people” everywhere in China? He did all this in the manner of an imperialist overlord!

Antonioni describes post-Liberation China as pitch-dark, and tries to show that nothing is in good order and everything is wrong. His purpose is to make the audience draw the reactionary conclusion that China should not have made revolution. He attacks the people’s communes, saying that they have gone through “disappointment”. He spreads the lie that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has “thrown the system of production into confusion”, and that it has spared “few” of the cultural relics left over from the past. He even goes so far as to make use of a shot of people doing the traditional *taichichuan* (shadow boxing) and lies that “the new leaders” of China want to “abolish” such “ancient tradition”. In a word, in the eyes of this reactionary Antonioni, China’s socialist system is no good, China’s revolution is a mess, and the only way out is to go back and restore the old order. This shows the true counter-revolutionary features of Antonioni who poses as a “Leftist”.

2

In the film, Antonioni misrepresents the Chinese people and their mental outlook to an intolerable extent in order to malign the Chinese revolution and attack China’s socialist system. He tries to create the false impression that the Chinese revolution has neither changed the status of the Chinese people nor emancipated their minds, and that the Chinese people do not have enthusiasm for their socialist system.

The whole world knows that tremendous changes have taken place in the mental outlook of the liberated Chinese people. **“Do the Chinese working people still retain any of their past slavish features? None at all; they have become the masters.”** In our country, **“never before have the masses of the people been so inspired, so militant and so daring as at present.”** However, Antonioni describes the Chinese people as a mass of human beings who are stupid and ignorant and isolated from the world, and who knit their brows in despair, are listless, pay no attention to hygiene, love to eat and drink and enjoy themselves, and muddle along without any aim. In order to defame the Chinese people, he racked his brains to present in a grotesque way various expressions of people sitting in tea houses and restaurants, pulling carts and strolling in the streets. He even did not stop at an old woman with bound feet. Moreover, he disgustfully filmed people blowing their noses and going to the toilet. In Linsien County, he went uninvited into a mountain village and directed his camera at the villagers. When the villagers objected, he slandered them by alleging that they were “frightened” and “often petrified and motionless”. With “European pride”, Antonioni deliberately sullies the Chinese people. This is a great insult to the Chinese people who have stood up!

More spiteful is Antonioni's use of devious speech and insinuations to suggest to the audience that the Chinese people are hard pressed and have no ease of mind and are dissatisfied with their life. In the scene of the tea house in Shanghai's Chenghuangmiao, he inserts an ill-intentioned narration: “It is a strange atmosphere”, “thinking of the past, but loyal to the present”. He uses the phrase “loyal to the present” in a negative sense. Actually he is implying that the Chinese people are forced to support the new society but do not do so sincerely or honestly. Does not Antonioni again and again suggest the Chinese people are not free? He openly ridicules the workers' discussions as “repetitive and monotonous” and “not a true discussion”. He slanders Chinese children, who sing “polit-

ical” songs praising Chairman Mao and the Communist Party, as doing something incompatible with their innocence and attractiveness, and so not doing it of their own will. He smears the people as being “prudent and reserved” so that “their sentiments and pain are almost invisible”. To him, the Chinese people are not satisfied with their life and have tremendous “pain” but dare not express it. What nonsense! In our socialist country of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the people are the masters, the political situation is lively and vivid, the masses enjoy real democracy and have boundless ease of mind. Antonioni's attempts to crawl through cracks and fan up dissatisfaction among the Chinese people towards New China and the socialist system are futile. Those who do feel “pain” are the handful of reactionaries who vainly attempt to restore the dictatorship of the landlords and comprador capitalists in China. Saying the Chinese people “think of the past” is even more slanderous. Who are “thinking of the past”? The Chinese people deeply hate the “past” when demons and monsters swept in a swirling dance for hundreds of years. It is only the imperialists and their agents in China who constantly yearn for their lost “paradise” and dream day and night of turning China back to a semi-feudal and semi-colonial state. But the wheel of history cannot be turned back. Anyone who attempts to do so is bound to be crushed by the wheel of history!

3

The techniques used by Antonioni in making the film are also extremely reactionary and despicable.

With regard to what scenes to select or discard and how to handle them, he took few or none at all of the good, new and progressive scenes, or took some of them as a gesture at the time he was shooting but finally cut them out. On the other hand, he grabbed inferior, old and backward scenes and took as many and as detailed shots of them as possible. Not a single new lathe, a tractor, a decent looking school, a construction site seething with activity, or a scene

of rich harvest . . . is seen in the film. But he took full shots and close-ups of what he considered as useful for slandering China and the Chinese people and did not think them tediously long. In photographing the Yangtse River Bridge at Nanking, the camera was intentionally turned on this magnificent modern bridge from very bad angles in order to make it appear crooked and tottering. A shot of trousers hanging on a line to dry below the bridge is inserted as a mockery of the scene. The film gives a still more disgusting presentation of Tien An Men Square. It does not show the panorama of this grand, magnificent square but takes shots of the Tien An Men Gate, which the Chinese people ardently love, in such a way as to strip it of all grandeur. On the other hand, a lot of film is used to photograph crowds in the square; there are sometimes long-shots, sometimes close-ups, sometimes from the front and sometimes from behind, at one moment throngs of heads and at another legs and feet moving helter-skelter. These shots are intended to make Tien An Men Square look like a boisterous market-place. Is this not aimed at defaming our great motherland?

In so far as editing is concerned, the film seems to be a jumble of desultory shots pieced together at random, but in fact all are arranged for a vicious purpose. For instance, the director presents the clay sculptures shown in the exhibition hall at the Underground Palace in the Ming Tombs depicting how the working people were oppressed and how they fought in resistance during the Ming Dynasty, accompanied by narrations about the peasants' suffering at that time. This is followed first by a shot of a group of young students with shovels going to the fields to work, and then by a scene in the Sino-Albanian Friendship People's Commune in which a woman commune member is wiping the sweat off her brow, all intended to show that "life in the fields means daily hard labour" and to assert that China's countryside is no "paradise". The director obviously uses these scenes to suggest that the condition of Chinese peasants today is little better than it was in feudal society several hundred years ago.

The use of light and colour in the film is likewise with malicious intent. It is shot mainly in a grey, dim light and chilling tones. The Whangpoo River appears as if enveloped in smog. Streets in Peking are painted in a dreary colour. Mountain villages in Linhsien County are hidden in dark shadows. All in all, there are many scenes which give the audience a forlorn, gloomy, melancholy and sombre impression. More venomous is the musical accompaniment. The director did not shoot a single scene of China's model revolutionary theatrical works, but unscrupulously ridiculed arias from these theatrical works. The aria "raise your head, expand your chest" sung by Chiang Shui-ying in the *Song of the Dragon River* is used in the film to accompany the scene of a swine shaking its head. This was pure concoction because in fact no such music was being played when the scene was shot, the organization concerned has pointed out. This is a deliberate slander against China's model revolutionary theatrical works and an attack on China's revolution in art and literature. It is venom carried to the extreme!

That Antonioni is hostile to the Chinese people can also be proved by the way he shot his scenes in China. He openly boasts in the film's narration of how he took sneak shots of many scenes in the film like a spy. He brags about how he "filmed a Chinese warship in the Whangpoo secretly by evading the restriction" and how he kept the "cine-camera hidden" to catch "the daily reality" in Peking's Wangfuching Street unexpectedly. He complains that "it was difficult to move with a cine-camera" in Chienmen Street. Difficult for whom? It is difficult for a thief. He even asked people to fake a fist-fight scene at the Sino-Albania Friendship People's Commune in Peking so that he could shoot the scene to slander the Chinese people. On another occasion he asked people to change their clothes to suit his purpose, otherwise he would not photograph them. His trickery in taking sneak shots, forcibly taking shots against people's wishes and fabricating scenes is in itself grave contempt and disrespect towards the Chinese people.

The appearance of this anti-China film on the international screen is certainly not an accidental, isolated occurrence. It has an international background.

Our situation at home and abroad has kept improving in recent years. Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in foreign affairs has achieved new and bigger victories. China's international prestige is growing daily. The schemes of imperialism and social-imperialism to isolate and subvert China have gone bankrupt. But our enemies will not accept their defeat in China. Attacks on the Chinese revolution and throwing mud at socialist New China are ways used by them to prepare public opinion for a counter-revolutionary comeback and to turn China once again into a colony and semi-colony.

It is clear to all that the Soviet revisionist renegade clique is the spearhead and chief boss behind the scenes in international anti-China activities. From Khrushchov to Brezhnev, they all exert themselves to the utmost to smear and assail the Chinese people. They said that the Chinese people were so poor that they drank watery soup out of a common pot and had no trousers to wear; that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution had brought "new destruction" to China's productive forces; that the Chinese people were "worn out" and in "severe trials", "living in barracks", etc. But all these slanders only serve to expose the ugly features of the Soviet revisionist renegades. They gain nothing from it. The Soviet revisionists' anti-China lies have a poor market in the world today. It is precisely in these circumstances that Antonioni's reactionary film, disguised as "objective" and "truthful", is released to deceive people. And, copying a page from the Soviet revisionist slanders and attacks, it attempts to play a role that cannot be played by the Soviet revisionists' anti-China propaganda. In fact, Antonioni has only parroted the bankrupt anti-China propaganda of the Soviet revisionists.

After this anti-China film came out, the American Broadcasting

Company (ABC) bought it for a quarter of a million dollars and put it on show in the United States. And some persons in America chimed in, describing this reactionary film as "fascinating". So it seems the spectre of John Foster Dulles still clings to a bunch of American imperialists, and Antonioni's anti-China film also serves the needs of these reactionaries.

Although he is an Italian, Antonioni in no way represents the millions of Italians who are friendly towards the Chinese people. The Italian people do not approve of hostility towards China. By making this anti-China film, Antonioni has obviously gone completely against the wishes of the Italian and Chinese peoples to strengthen their friendly relations.

The Chinese people consistently strive to develop friendly contacts and mutual understanding with the people of other countries. In our contacts with others, we never force people to accept our point of view. We have repeatedly pointed out that China is still a developing socialist country. Although we have made tremendous achievements in the socialist revolution and construction, we do not try to hide the fact that our country still has shortcomings in its advance; there are still backward and reactionary things, and it is necessary to continue the revolution. Chairman Mao frequently reminds us that we must oppose big-power chauvinism. We welcome criticism of our work by friends from other lands. However, we will thoroughly expose anyone who passes himself off as a "friend" but actually engages in shameless anti-China activities to win the approval of imperialism and social-imperialism which are extremely hostile to China, so that he cannot bluff and deceive the people. Only by doing so will it be of benefit to mutual understanding and friendly contacts among the people of different countries.

This anti-China film by Antonioni reminds us to continue being sober-minded and never forget there are always forces hostile to the Chinese people in the world and sharp and complicated struggle continues, although the international and domestic situation is ex-

cellent. This reality is independent of man's will. Of course, there is nothing terrifying about attacks on China. All the doughty anti-China warriors, whether important people or otherwise, will only lift a rock to drop it on their own feet, no matter what weapon or method they use. The Chinese people will steadfastly and courageously advance along the socialist road. As our great leader Chairman Mao said long ago: "Let the domestic and foreign reactionaries tremble before us! Let them say that we are no good at this and no good at that—We, the Chinese people, will steadily reach our goal by our indomitable efforts."

(January 30)

Reportage

Hu Chin

The People of Tachai

We publish below the second instalment of *The People of Tachai*. The first three chapters of this story in our last issue described how the Tachai villagers led by Comrade Chen Yung-kuei resolutely took the socialist road, first setting up mutual-aid teams, then a co-operative, and battling bravely to transform their land.

Here we introduce the second and final instalment of the story.

—The Editors

Storms Breed Sturdy Pines

1

In 1958 a people's commune was set up in Tachai.

In the ten years from 1953 to 1962, the people of Tachai transformed the 4,700 plots scattered over their seven gullies, eight ridges and single slope into more than 2,900 neat terraced fields. They built retaining walls in their seven big gullies and dozen or so smaller ones, and carried earth to make new fields there. Without machinery or irrigation, having nothing but bare hands and loyalty to the

Party, they built up plot after plot of "man-made fields" with enriched "spongy" soil. The old barren Tachai was changed out of recognition.

On August 2, 1963, the sun was a ball of fire in the clear sky. Wearing a straw hat and shouldering a hoe, Party committee member and brigade leader Chia Cheng-jang inspected the terraced fields on Tiger-head Hill. He bent down in a stand of millet to check up on the hoeing and weeding, then went over to a field of maize to make sure that the fertilizer was evenly spread and the soil had been well loosened. He experienced a deep satisfaction as his eyes swept over the sturdy green crops on the slope. But the smile left his face at sight of the maize on the ridges, its leaves beginning to shrivel in the scorching sun. Midsummer, when the cobs begin to form, is the time when rain is most needed. But for thirty days and more not a drop had fallen. This was really worrying.

After supper that evening, a pipe clamped between his teeth, Cheng-jang went out to the big willow to cool off. But it was sultry and stifling. Not a leaf stirred. Before he had smoked one pipe, lightning pierced the sky in the northeast. Muffled thunder rumbled. Then a gust of furious wind drove pitch-black clouds over to Tiger-head Hill. Rain's coming, thought Cheng-jang. He started home. As he reached the door of his cave-house, thunder crashed overhead and big raindrops lashed down. Good rain! Timely rain! How it rejoiced his heart!

The next day the rain continued. A little too much now, thought Cheng-jang, but it won't matter if it stops right away. On the third day, however, they had a regular downpour. He began to feel desperate. If this went on it could be calamitous. Besides, Chen Yung-kuei was away at a conference of people's deputies in the county town and during his absence Cheng-jang was in charge. This was a heavy responsibility. Snatching up his straw hat and a spade he went to the end of the village. From there he looked south. One of the embankments in Back Valley had collapsed and water was rushing through it like a yellow dragon, turning the "man-made fields" back into a gully. Crops and soil alike were being carried away. Disaster had struck. Cheng-jang's heart constricted. Then a crash sounded

from the west end of the village. Confound it! A cave-house must have collapsed. Hurrying over he found that the cave was an old deserted one. Still, this served as a warning. He must lose no time in inspecting the villagers' houses and averting this new danger. Shouldering his spade, he rushed back to the village.

He went from house to house. A few caves were leaking and Chia Yung-pao's ceiling had cracked. Something must be done right away. Up came a barefoot man with an umbrella. It was Chia Chin-tsai, also making the rounds of the village.

"I've been to several families," said Old Chia. "Some of their houses are leaking. Now that Yung-kuei's away it's up to us to make sure that no accidents happen. Let's call a meeting of the Party branch committee and move those families out immediately."

"Just what I was thinking." Before Cheng-jang could say more he was summoned to the telephone in the brigade office.

It was Chen Yung-kuei calling from the county town. For three days his uneasiness had been increasing as the rain poured steadily down. What was happening in Tachai? Could the cave houses withstand such a deluge? Had any people been injured? Had any crops been washed away? So, in a break between meetings, he anxiously put through this call.

When he heard the situation he urged Cheng-jang to organize a rescue team to protect lives and property, and to take special care of the families of revolutionary martyrs and soldiers as well as the old folk living on their own.

Chia Chin-tsai, Chia Lai-heng, young Liang and Sung Li-ying had come to the office too and were standing around the telephone.

"Don't you worry, Yung-kuei," said Cheng-jang. "We're calling a Party committee meeting right away to work out ways to fight flood and safeguard our people's lives and property."

Replacing the receiver he discovered all the committee members before him. He felt a new access of strength. "What a deluge!" he exclaimed, glancing outside. "We must be prepared for the worst. Some of our caves are already leaking and cracking. Yung-kuei wants us to organize a flood prevention and rescue team. We Communists

must stand up to this test. We must be ready to give our lives to keep our people and brigade property safe."

Then and there they organized a rescue team, with the militia as its nucleus, to move the commune members to safety. And Cheng-jang announced that from now on the cadres would take it in turns to patrol the village at night.

While Chia Lai-heng and young Liang rounded up the militia, Chia Chin-tsai and Sung Li-ying cleaned up the club ready to receive evacuees. And Cheng-jang hurried over to Chia Yung-pao's house to move his family first.

As darkness descended the rain poured steadily down. The able-bodied men and women of the rescue team rushed in and out of the club carrying children, old people, sacks of grain and bedding. Cheng-jang, passing the big willow tree, saw Chia Lai-heng, splattered with mud, floundering towards the club with an old woman on his back. This was Grandma Chia, who lived on her own. The entrance to her cave had collapsed while she was inside; earth and stone had started falling from the ceiling. When Chia Lai-heng discovered her danger, he had climbed in through the window and carried the old woman out.

By the time Cheng-jang reached Chia Yung-pao's home, the crack in the ceiling had widened and muddy water was gushing down from it. The whole roof would soon give way. Yet the entire family, seven in all, were huddled together on the *kang*, stupefied, while Yung-pao just stared woodenly at the ceiling.

"Your house is collapsing, man!" cried Cheng-jang. "You must move out."

Yung-pao smiled at him wryly. "It's all right. All these years I've lived here, man and boy, it's never collapsed. Don't worry."

"Don't worry? Can't you see that crack in the roof? Quick, take the children out first."

"*Ail* Who wants to leave his old home, Cheng-jang? What about my pots and pans?"

"The roof will be about your ears any minute. Is this a time to think of pots and pans? Out you go, all of you. Hurry!"

As Cheng-jang stooped to pick up a child he was summoned again to the phone. Before hurrying back he told one of the rescue team to get Yung-pao to evacuate at once.

It was another call from Chen Yung-kuei.

"Things look bad, Yung-kuei," Cheng-jang told him. "Some of the caves are collapsing."

"Anybody hurt?"

"No. We got them out in time."

"Get everyone to a safe place. Have you seen to the families of martyrs and soldiers and the old folk living on their own?"

"Yes. Our rescue team patrols twenty-four hours a day. There's one thing, though. . . ."

"What's that?"

"Yung-pao's cave may fall in any time, but he refuses to budge. . . . I was thinking of ordering him to move, Yung-kuei. . . ."

"We're responsible for our people's safety, Cheng-jang," cut in Chen Yung-kuei urgently. "You can drag them out if need be. Another thing, livestock and grain. . . ."

The telephone suddenly went dead, the line wrecked by the storm.

Cheng-jang hung up and dashed back to Yung-pao's house. By now clods of mud were dropping from the ceiling yet Yung-pao stubbornly refused to leave. "My wife's lying in," he said. "We can't impose on other people. Suppose you take the children away while I stay here with her. . . ."

"Don't talk such nonsense, man!" Cheng-jang exploded. "Get moving! Go to the club for the time being."

He picked up a child and thrust it into the rescue man's arms, then threw a quilt over Yung-pao's wife and heaved her on to his back. As he set off for the club, some more of the rescue team arrived to help the family evacuate. Soon after they got them out of the door — wham! — the roof of the cave fell in.

At the club, Yung-pao grasped Cheng-jang's hands. "We owe our lives to you!" he cried, tears in his eyes. "If not for you, Cheng-jang, my whole family would have been buried alive."

"It's Chairman Mao you should be thanking. With his wise leadership we can win through all disasters."

Now they heard shouting from the cattle shed. Cheng-jang's heart missed a beat. He plunged out into the pouring rain followed by Yung-pao and others.

In the cattle shed, the stockman and a commune member were struggling to prop up the broken beam with a pole. The back wall of the shed was bulging under the pressure of loess washed down from the slope. All their livestock, several dozen head, were in danger.

"Out of my way!" shouted Cheng-jang. He shoved the stockman aside and strained his muscles to hold the pole in place. Moved by his fearlessness, Yung-pao ran over to help.

Young Liang burst in at this moment. "Get the livestock out, quick!" he yelled. He swiftly set about untying them. But alarmed by the storm and the water which lay two feet deep outside, the cattle crammed together inside the door. Nothing could make them budge. In desperation Liang hit on a plan. He picked up a foal and dashed out. The mare, whinnying, splashed after him into the water. One by one the horses and mules followed suit. Then Cheng-jang pushed Yung-pao out and leapt out himself a split second before the wall gave way and crashed down.

Villagers were running towards the storehouse. Cheng-jang dashed after them. Passing his home on the way, he heard someone call: "Cheng-jang, your cave's collapsing too!" He felt a pang but ran straight on—rescuing public property came first.

Commune members, headed by Chia Lai-heng and young Liang, were moving the grain to safety. By the light of his torch Cheng-jang saw that the bulk of their 30,000 catties of grain had already been transferred. This lightened the load on his mind. He urged the villagers to rest in the club until they were needed again.

Someone reminded him now that he should go home to see to his own wife and children. But the door of his cave was gaping open. The place was deserted. He found his family in the club, taken there by Chia Chin-tsai and Sung Li-ying. His comrades' concern for them warmed the brigade leader's heart.

It rained again the following day, the fifth day of incessant rain since

the second of August. All the villagers living in cave-houses had been moved to the club, which was crammed. But at least everyone was safe.

That afternoon irresponsible talk began to circulate again in Tachai.

"Ten years' work washed out by rain. Tachai's red banner is done for."

"No land to till, nowhere to live: the only way out is to leave the village."

In no time this ill wind found its way to the club and to the ears of Cheng-jang. Some villagers disheartened by the flood lost faith in the commune after hearing such talk. Upset as he was, Cheng-jang started to analyse the ideas current in the brigade. And just at this juncture young Chao the accountant reported that two commune members had asked to draw their money deposited with him because they wanted to join relatives elsewhere and find a living outside. Pacing under the big willow tree, deep in thought, Cheng-jang did not notice the rain soaking through his clothes. He reflected: Now that our collective's hard hit, some people want to draw their savings and leave Tachai. If everyone did this, that would finish up the collective economy and the people's commune. This must be the doing of scoundrels out to sabotage socialism. Can't let class enemies have their way.

He told Chao, "Do your best to talk them out of going. We must stick together. In hard times we need unity more than ever. Ask them to wait till our Party committee's met to discuss the matter."

The accountant hurried off and Cheng-jang, this new problem weighing on his mind, strode back to the brigade office.

That was another sleepless night for Cheng-jang. Sitting on the threshold of the crowded club, he thought over the events of the past few days: natural disaster, enemy sabotage, a loss of faith on the part of some individuals in the commune's ability to weather this storm... The next battle was going to be a tough one. Yung-kuei had been away for seven whole days. When would the conference be over?

After six whole days and nights of rain the downpour finally stopped on the eighth of August. And that same day Chen Yung-kuei started home to tell the people of Tachai the decision reached at the conference of people's deputies on making good the damage caused by the flood. Between the county town and Tachai lay the River Sunghsi. Ordinarily the dry river-bed, strewn with boulders, served as a thoroughfare. But now mountain freshets had filled the channel to its brim and it measured several hundred feet across. Waves whipped up by the wind rolled turbulently. Each time Chen Yung-kuei tried to wade across the swift current drove him back. Burning with impatience by the rushing river he suddenly remembered that higher up, by Kaochialing Brigade, there were four sand-banks in the river-bed which slowed up the current during the rainy season. He could perhaps get across there. When he reached the place, however, he found the channel here inundated too, with all the sand-banks submerged by tossing waves. Anxious as he was to get back to Tachai, he rolled up his trouser-legs and waded in, trying to recollect the shallow places. He must ford the river at all costs. Before he reached mid-stream the water came up to his neck. He would be out of his depth if he went any further. What should he do? They're waiting for me at Tachai to join in their fight against the flood, he thought. Our people are looking to me to help solve their problems. I can't let this river stop me. He pressed forward.

Suddenly someone caught hold of him from behind. Turning his head Chen Yung-kuei saw a complete stranger.

"Are you Chen Yung-kuei of Tachai?" asked the young man.

"That's right. Who are you?"

"I'm from Kaochialing." The other pointed at the nearby village. "I once listened to a report you gave, that's how I knew you. The water's deep here and swift. You mustn't attempt to cross."

"But, comrade, Tachai's been flooded. Come what may, I must get across."

The young man was very stirred. He thought: Chen Yung-kuei's a fine cadre schooled by Chairman Mao. I must see that he gets

across safely. Catching hold of the older man's tunic he said, "Wait a bit while I fetch some people to help you across." He swam back to the bank and raced to his village. In less time than it takes to smoke a pipe he returned with some other youngsters. Plunging into the water, they helped Chen Yung-kuei across.

As he continued on his way Chen Yung-kuei saw that the soil had been swept from the fields, some hills had shifted, and roads had been washed out or blocked in places by landslides. The old familiar paths had vanished. Everywhere was mud a foot deep, sucking him down at each step. All gone to rack and ruin! he thought. How are our people making out? What's become of our livestock, fields and cave-houses? What's the class enemy up to? Though confident that Cheng-jang and the other members of the Party committee could handle the situation, he was desperately eager to be back after more than a week's absence from Tachai.

As soon as the rain stopped, Cheng-jang, Lai-heng and young Liang made a tour of inspection. The whole village was flooded with rust-coloured water. More than a hundred cave-houses and seventy cottages — four-fifths of the village's housing — had collapsed. From the north end of the village they looked towards Iphedra Gully, one of the seven big gullies. The reservoir above it was breached, its southern embankment smashed; and the fields which had been the best in Tachai were washed out. More than ever, they longed for Chen Yung-kuei's return.

At a bend in the road a man came into sight. A white towel on his head, he was dressed in black and his trouser-legs were rolled up above his knees. Cheng-jang let out a joyful shout: "Old Chen is back!"

The three of them rushed forward to grasp his hands, exclaiming: "You've come at last, Yung-kuei!"

Chen Yung-kuei felt as if he had been parted from his comrades-in-arms for several years instead of just a few days. There was so much he wanted to talk over with them that for the moment he was at a loss for words. Grasping their hands he looked at each one intently. Streaked with mud from head to foot they were haggard, their eyes bloodshot from lack of sleep. "You've had a hard time of it, comrades!" he said with deep feeling.

Cheng-jiang was a man of iron, but a lump came into his throat as he looked at Chen Yung-kuei and then at the devastated houses and land. "We've been hard hit, Yung-kuei," he said gruffly.

"How about our people?" Chen Yung-kuei asked anxiously.

"All safe."

"And the livestock?"

"All safe too."

"And the grain?"

"We've salvaged most of it."

Chen Yung-kuei heaved a sigh of relief and his knitted brows smoothed out. The proverb says: So long as the mountain remains, we shan't lack fuel. With the correct leadership of the Party and with its people, livestock and grain all safe, Tachai could surely win through and make a new start. The first thing to do was to reassure the commune members and put fresh heart in them. Patting Cheng-jiang on the shoulder he cried: "Men, livestock and grain safe — that's a great victory."

"But eighty per cent of our houses and at least half our land are in ruins. What's to be done?"

"Sure, it's a big disaster, but we in Tachai are loyal to the Party and the people. We showed our revolutionary spirit in our three battles of Wolf Lair. However great the damage done, we can make it good. But right now some of the villagers may have lost heart. The class enemy may seize this chance to make trouble. We've a heavy load to shoulder. We mustn't knuckle under, that's the main thing. We must stand firm and soldier on."

This resolute answer flooded their hearts with warmth.

"How's our people's morale?" Chen Yung-kuei asked next.

"Most of them are full of pep, just waiting for the weather to clear so that they can go up the hills to salvage the crops. Of course, a few have lost heart."

"Have the class enemy been up to any tricks?"

"Chia Yung-huo has been making trouble. He says: 'Ten years' work washed away by rain: Tachai's red banner is done for. The only way out is to leave the village.' This kind of talk has made some

of our commune members want to withdraw their savings and go to other villages," said Cheng-jiang.

Chen Yung-kuei replied, "Chairman Mao has told us repeatedly, '**Never forget class struggle.**' The most important thing at a time of difficulty is to grasp class struggle. Since the class enemy have exposed themselves we'll tackle them before tackling the flood damage. We must smash every attempt of theirs to stir up trouble."

Chen Yung-kuei's analysis built up their confidence, making them eager to fight. Pleased by their fine spirit, he turned to ask Cheng-jiang: "Where is everyone?"

"The cave-houses are in ruins, so they're all in the club for the time being."

"Come on! Let's go and see them."

Together they walked towards the club.

Darkness was falling as Chen Yung-kuei stepped through the door of the club. Instantly, the whole place was astir. At sight of their Party secretary for whose return they had been longing day and night, the villagers sprang to their feet and clustered round him, eagerly calling his name. Old men and women, catching hold of his hands and tugging at his tunic, began to pour out their sorrows. Their distress made his heart ache. But forcing a smile he called out cheerfully: "Well, folk, how are you?" Some women started sobbing.

"How can you smile, Yung-kuei, with Tachai laid waste like this?" Li Hsi-ching reproached him. "We're ruined."

Still smiling Chen Yung-kuei replied, "The damage is bad, I know. But I want to congratulate you all."

"Congratulate us?" All stared in astonishment.

Old Li Hsi-ching could not fathom what this meant. He muttered: "Congratulate us? What for? It's all we can do to keep from crying."

"I mean it, folk," Chen Yung-kuei boomed. "First of all, not a single life has been lost in the flood — the biggest in a century. Our great leader Chairman Mao teaches us: '**Of all things in the world, people are the most precious. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, as long as there are people, every kind of miracle can be performed.**' Not one of our people is missing: this

calls for congratulation. In the second place, no livestock have been lost. With men and livestock safe, we can get back to work right away. In the third place, we've salvaged our grain; and with grain we don't have to worry. What do we fear when we have man-power, grain and livestock? The old Tachai has been washed away by the flood. On its ruins we're going to build a new Tachai."

This spirited speech made them see things in the right light. As he recalled the malicious talk which had been circulating in the village, old Li Hsi-ching felt mounting indignation. "Right you are, Yung-kuei," he cried. "We've survived disaster. We can congratulate ourselves on that. But someone has been ranting, 'Ten years' work washed away by rain; the only way out is to leave the village.'" He waved his pipe furiously.

Chen Yung-kuei thought: Now that Hsi-ching's brought this up, this is a good chance to arouse folk to strike back at the class enemy. "Leave the village?" he said. "Remember what leaving Tachai meant in the old days." A sudden silence fell. "The year 1920 must be still fresh in the memory of our old people," continued Chen Yung-kuei. "That was a year of drought, a small disaster, though, compared with this flood. No soil was swept away. No houses collapsed. There was no rain for forty days, that was all. And yet it meant starvation for the poor. Some sold their children, others fled to beg for food. Still, many of them died of cold and hunger." The villagers listened with mounting hatred and anger as Chen Yung-kuei went on in ringing tones, "No words can tell all we suffered in the old society when we fled from a disaster. But now, who's inciting us to leave and go through that hell again? Who are these people?"

"Landlords!" came the answer.

"Mortal enemies of the poor and lower-middle peasants."

Then and there a man exposed Chia Yung-huo, who had egged him on to draw out his savings and leave the village. The rage of the others hearing this knew no bounds.

That evening a meeting was held to repudiate the reactionary rich peasant. Chia Yung-huo, his activities exposed by the masses, had to admit his crimes.

This meeting was a lesson for everybody. It was a victory for socialism, a heavy blow to the vicious class enemy.

"We've won a big victory today, comrades," declared Chen Yung-kuei jubilantly. "Our eyes have been opened to the fact that class enemies don't take their defeat lying down. They keep trying to undermine our collective economy and injure the poor and lower-middle peasants. This flood has done serious damage, but the situation's quite different from in the past. Then, landlords made use of disasters to rake in more money from the poor. Today, hard as we've been hit, we still have food and shelter. Above, we have the brilliant leadership of the Central Committee of the Party and Chairman Mao. Behind us, we have our collective economy: 70,000 catties of grain in reserve and more than 10,000 yuan in the bank. So long as we're united, we'll win through!"

By now everyone was smiling confidently.

Li Hsi-ching was so worked up that he sprang to his feet. "Give the order, Yung-kuei. What do we do now?"

"All in good time, old comrade." Chen Yung-kuei laughed. "You'll have plenty to do later on. First we must make a good study of Chairman Mao's works so as to be fully prepared. As soon as the weather clears, we'll really pitch in." Turning, he caught sight of Chia Yung-pao. "Hey, Yung-pao!" he called. "Did you get another son or a daughter?"

"A son." Yung-pao beamed.

"Still living in that cave of yours?"

"Don't bring that up." Yung-pao laughed sheepishly. "If Cheng-jang hadn't dragged us out, all seven of us would have been buried alive."

"Don't start accusing him of coercion now! I'm the one to blame." Chen Yung-kuei chuckled.

"I wouldn't dream of such a thing. I can't thank you all enough," was the quick reply.

"Take good care of your wife and see she eats well," urged Chen Yung-kuei with concern.

"Eats well?" echoed Yung-pao. "We've finished the rice we

brought along. We had to borrow some today from Cheng-jang. And I can't mill my wheat because the millstone's too wet."

It occurred to Chen Yung-kuei that others must have similar problems. He proposed, "Let's get our diesel engine going to mill some flour on the steel mill for the lying-in women, children and old folk." This cheered the villagers up even more.

3

By grasping class struggle and taking good care of their people, Chen Yung-kuei and the other Party members helped the villagers to calm down. Then Chen Yung-kuei considered his next move. The land had to be reclaimed, the houses rebuilt. How should they set about it? Ask the state for relief? Chairman Mao advocated hard work and self-reliance. They mustn't enlist outside help if they could manage without. He turned these problems over in his mind as he walked up the hill. About 140 *mu* on the slope and in the gullies had been laid waste, its good soil swept away. The retaining walls of another 40 *mu* had collapsed and the seedlings there lay buried in mud, finished. Even next year it would be impossible to sow crops on these 180 *mu*. The remaining 600 *mu* had also suffered. Maize and millet sprawled in all directions in the mire. What was to be done? He walked over to a plot of maize and carefully straightened one seedling, but it flopped down again. With one foot he pushed mud round the root and firmed it lightly. This time the seedling stood up. In the same way he propped up another seedling. The fields were well manured this year so the maize had a good start, he thought. If we right all the seedlings we'll still reap a good harvest. But in this heat they'll rot in the mud if we don't prop them up at once.

Back in the village Chen Yung-kuei called a Party meeting at which he proposed three tasks: "First, right the seedlings and clean up the fields. Secondly, repair the caves and build new houses. Thirdly, grow enough grain to supply our quota to the state, feed our commune members, and build up the brigade's reserve."

Three teams were formed: the first to prop up the seedlings and prepare for the wheat sowing; the second to compost weeds for next

year's crop; the third to make bricks and lime to repair the caves and build houses.

Chen Yung-kuei and some others were straightening up some maize near the village one day when young Chao hurried over to summon him to the telephone in the brigade office. It was a call from the secretary of the commune Party committee, who asked him to go to a meeting to discuss the whole commune's plan for production and rehabilitation, then told him that the commune had allocated Tachai a sum of money as relief. He was to bring along a receipt for this money.

An old carter who happened to be passing by overheard this. He thought: We need money badly to reclaim fields and build houses. Now the commune's sending us fuel in snowy weather, as the saying goes. He cracked his whip and drove joyfully off. So he did not hear Chen Yung-kuei's answer: "We appreciate the concern of the Party and Chairman Mao for our village. As for this money. . . ." He thought for a minute, then said, "Please bank it for the time being. After we've talked it over here I'll let you know whether we'll take it or not. . . ." Having rung off, Chen Yung-kuei stood by the phone thinking.

Our Party and Chairman Mao have shown deep concern for us ever since Tachai was hit by flood, he mused. They've sent several delegations here and we've been snowed under with letters and good wishes from all over China. Once money's spent, supplies used up, grain eaten, that's the end of them. But there's no end to the moral support given us by the Party and the people of the whole country. I must bring this up in our Party meeting and then talk it over with the masses to see what they decide.

The old carter felt this good news about relief should be spread as fast as possible to encourage people to work even harder. So when he drove to the quarry he announced the news to everybody there. When he carted stones to the work-site, he broadcast the news again. And when he passed the brick kiln, he stopped to spread it once more.

That evening Chen Yung-kuei had just picked up his rice bowl when he heard footsteps outside. Then the door creaked open. It was the old carter, come for more information.

"Is it true, Yung-kuei, that the commune's giving us relief?" he asked eagerly.

His bowl in one hand, Chen Yung-kuei shot a keen glance at him and answered, "Sure."

This confirmation of his news made the old man's spirits soar. He blurted out, "It's come just at the right time. We'll be off to Yangchuan in a few days to buy timber. Better get the accountant to fetch the money first thing tomorrow morning so that he'll be back before we leave." He turned to go.

"Wait a minute. What's this about buying timber? We can make do with the beams from the old houses. We must save wherever we can. As for the relief fund, we have to think it over."

Recalling that earlier on they had refused money sent by the government to buy medicine and matting, the carter realized that Chen Yung-kuei had not yet made up his mind to accept. His heart sank and his brows knitted. Noticing his disappointment Chen Yung-kuei asked, "Where did you hear about this relief fund, mate?"

"I overheard the telephone call from the commune," chuckled the carter. "Everybody knows the news now. They think it's fine—like fuel delivered in the snow."

His rice bowl in one hand Chen Yung-kuei thought this over. "Do you think we should take this money?" he asked.

"Why not? It's a gift from the state." The carter fixed his eyes on Chen Yung-kuei, eager to see his reaction.

Chen Yung-kuei shook his head. "I'm against accepting. Go back and sleep on it. Tomorrow we'll hold a meeting of all brigade members to talk it over, eh?" The carter nodded and left.

After supper Chen Yung-kuei lit a pipe. He could see from the carter's attitude that what was involved here was not just a sum of money but two different attitudes towards accepting relief, two different ways of thinking. He knocked out his pipe and stood up, meaning to call on the cadres and some poor and lower-middle peasants to hear their views. But just then in came Chia Chin-tsai with Li Hsi-ching.

"Is it true that the commune's offered us relief?" Li Hsi-ching came straight to the point.

"I was just going to look you up. Do you think we should take it?"

"A few of us talked it over this afternoon," replied Old Chia. "We mustn't take it. Although Tachai's been flooded, we can still give one yuan for each workday. Government funds should be used where they're most needed."

Chen Yung-kuei slapped Old Chia on the back. "Just what I think, mate!" he cried. "Because Tachai's hard hit doesn't mean we can throw overboard our socialist style of work. We must make good our losses by our own efforts."

"That's right," chimed in Li Hsi-ching. "All we need do is work a bit harder."

"Those are good points to make at the meeting tomorrow," suggested Chen Yung-kuei. The two old men agreed and went away happily.

This conversation strengthened Chen Yung-kuei's conviction. Excitement kept him awake. Lying on the *kang* he reflected: We'll refuse relief, that's for sure. But, more than that, we must explain to everyone the advantages to the state, the collective and individual commune members of not accepting relief. In the light of Chairman Mao's teachings and the opinion of the poor and lower-middle peasants, he summed up ten advantages of self-reliance:

1. Coping with problems we can handle ourselves, without relying on state aid, is good for the state.
2. Overcoming difficulties ourselves further demonstrates the boundless strength of the collective and is good for the collective.
3. Self-reliance and hard work give us the courage to go all out and overcome difficulties, and this is good for all of us commune members.
4. Recouping losses by our own efforts will prove the ability of our collective economy to weather all storms. This will help to deflate the arrogance of the enemy and to strengthen the determination of the working people.
5. It will toughen our cadres and make them use their brains more. It is good for tempering cadres.

6. It will promote socialist emulation campaigns.
7. It will embolden us to defy difficulties. This will help us to overcome future natural disasters and to increase our yield.
8. It will help to consolidate the people's commune.
9. It will help to train successors for the revolution.
10. Self-reliance and hard work will help Tachai Brigade to forge ahead.

These ten advantages outlined by Chen Yung-kuei won approval from a meeting of Party members. All were impressed by his far-sightedness.

A meeting of the whole brigade was called that evening. The villagers who crowded the club exchanged excited comments. Letters from all over the country lay piled on the desk, and Chen Yung-kuei started the meeting by getting young Chao to read these out. The commune members were deeply touched by the concern and encouragement shown them by the Party and Chairman Mao as well as by the good wishes of the people of the whole country. Then Chen Yung-kuei announced that the commune had allocated them some money as relief and threw the meeting open to talk this over. A heated discussion started.

To his immense satisfaction, the poor and lower-middle peasants, with very few exceptions, were all for self-reliance.

Chen Yung-kuei said, "The consensus of opinion seems to be: Accept all the good wishes of the Party and Chairman Mao but not a cent of relief. I thoroughly agree." Then he outlined his "ten advantages of self-reliance", concluding forcefully, "There's a limit to the money and grain the state can give us, but no limit to the spirit of self-reliance taught us by Chairman Mao. That's an inexhaustible treasure. The state is our state, the collective is our collective. If we can stand upon our own legs, we won't lean on others. That's the Tachai spirit." Again, Chen Yung-kuei's analysis helped the villagers to see things in the right light. Those who had wanted to accept relief now understood that by increasing production they could find a way out themselves. A resolution of "three refusals" was passed. First, refuse the state relief fund. Secondly, refuse relief grain. Thirdly, refuse relief supplies.

As the meeting was drawing to an end someone called out: "Wait! I want to raise something else." All eyes turned in surprise to the speaker, Li Hsi-ching. Raising his pipe the old poor peasant stated: "Everybody has agreed to these three refusals. But aren't we building new houses?"

"Sure," the villagers answered.

"Where's the money to come from? We can't make bricks without straw."

His questions baffled them all.

"Just what are you driving at, grandad?" someone demanded.

Waving his pipe again Old Li said, "Of the eighty or so households in Tachai more than seventy have savings in the bank. Why don't we use them to help the collective now that money's needed for building? I'll contribute 800 yuan." Fishing out his bank-book he thrust it at young Chao. "A flood can't get us down: we'll see this through," he added. The club resounded with applause.

"Weren't you saving up, grandad, to go to Peking to see Chairman Mao?" someone asked.

"Sure. I still mean to go, but not until we've fixed up our houses and land. Chairman Mao's heart is with us here in Tachai. He'll be pleased to know we're helping the collective."

"He's right," agreed others. "If we keep the Party and Chairman Mao in our hearts, we'll be able to see Tien An Men from Tiger-head Hill."

Many followed Li Hsi-ching's example, one contributing 500 yuan, another 800, yet another 700 yuan and two door planks. Young Chao, busy putting names down, had to protest: "Not so fast! Don't all speak at once. I can only put your names down one at a time."

In no time at all the donations amounted to more than ten thousand yuan, in addition to plenty of timber and other material.

Chen Yung-kuei, moved beyond words by the poor and lower-middle peasants' love for the collective, went over to wring Old Li's hands. Then he told the villagers, "We'll count this money of yours a loan to the collective. When production gets back to normal we'll return it. We'll pay a fair price too for all material."

The spirit of self-reliance and arduous struggle gave the people of Tachai the courage to storm heaven. After this meeting they went all out to restore production and rebuild Tachai. The whole village turned out, old and young, to rescue the maize crop.

Sung Li-ying, Kuo Feng-lien and the rest of the women's team were propping up seedlings at the foot of the hill while Chen Yung-kuei, young Liang and some other men did the same work higher up. Each team was quietly trying to race the other. At first the men, being stronger, worked much faster.

Sung Li-ying softly urged the women, "Speed up, sisters. They've got ahead."

This was overheard by a youngster who nudged Chen Yung-kuei. "Hear that? The women are trying in secret to race us."

Still bent to his work Chen Yung-kuei replied, "Why in secret? Let's have an open contest. You challenge them for us, lad."

The youngster straightened up, cupped his hands around his mouth and yelled, "Listen, you women! On behalf of the men I'm challenging you to a race. How about it? Are you game?"

Taken by surprise, the women hesitated.

"Why not?" said Kuo Feng-lien. "Who's afraid of them?"

"Their team's bigger than ours," another girl pointed out.

"What does that matter?" countered Sung Li-ying. Tossing back her bobbed hair she called out, "We'll take you on! You may have iron shoulders but this work doesn't need brawn. Just you wait. We'll come up and give you a hand when we're through here."

The women and girls of Tachai have plenty of guts. In less than the time it takes to finish a meal they caught up with the men.

The Tachai villagers started work at dawn. Their breakfast and midday meal were delivered to the fields. During the day they propped up maize seedlings; after supper they repaired houses and built a kiln. By dint of two months of hard work they got in a good harvest that autumn, reaping an average of over 740 catties of grain a *mu* on their 600 *mu* of fields. By this time, too, twenty new cave-houses had been hollowed out and reinforced with stone, while forty new houses with tiled roofs stood in neat rows in the village.

Some had reckoned that rebuilding Tachai would take from eight to ten years. "We'll have our work cut out," they said, "reclaiming the land in five years and building new housing in ten."

But in little more than two years the heroic Tachai people, after being hit by the worst flood in a century, completely rehabilitated their land. A flourishing new Tachai appeared on Tiger-head Hill.

High Winds Buffet the Red Flag

1

In the autumn of 1964, the bumper harvest reaped on Tiger-head Hill rejoiced the hearts of all the commune members.

Eyeing the stacks of corn-cobs and the threshing floor covered with golden grain, old Li Hsi-ching said cheerfully: "Fancy, such a fine harvest after that fearful flood! It's all owing to Chairman Mao's good leadership." Then looking round, the poor peasant asked, "Where's Old Chen?"

"The county Party committee just called up. He's gone to take the phone," someone answered.

Chen Yung-kuei was deeply stirred by this call, which was to inform him that the socialist education movement had started and a work team from the province was on its way to Tachai. He knew that during the three successive years of natural calamities a handful of landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries and bad elements had made many attempts to sabotage socialism. And at the 10th Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee, Chairman Mao had issued a great call to the whole Party and nation: "**Never forget class struggle.**" At the same time, our great leader had put forward a tremendous militant task: "Carry out the socialist education movement." Now a work team was coming and the movement was about to start in Tachai. Chen Yung-kuei hurried joyfully back to the threshing ground.

The young people resting there were egging each other on to sing when one keen-eyed girl spotted the Party secretary. "Look! Uncle

Yung-kuei's back!" she cried. They all crowded round Chen Yung-kuei to ask him the news.

"The county Party committee says that Tachai's to be one of the pilot units in our county for the socialist education movement. This movement is launched on Chairman Mao's instructions. We Tachai people faithfully carry out all Chairman Mao's directions. Our Party branch, our poor and lower-middle peasants and all our commune members must do our very best to help the work team make this great political movement a success."

As the commune members were taking this in, Li Hsi-ching went up to Chen Yung-kuei and whispered: "How will we go about this movement, Yung-kuei?"

"What do you think?" Chen smiled.

Scratching his head, Li grinned. "I reckon we must rely on our poor and lower-middle peasants and our Party branch. We people have been the mainstay of every movement since the Land Reform. It's us Chairman Mao trusts most."

"That's right! Chairman Mao has taught us: **'Without the poor peasants there would be no revolution.'** Our poor and lower-middle peasants are the pillars of the revolution. With Chairman Mao's brilliant leadership and these pillars, even if the sky falls we can prop it up!" Chen Yung-kuei's confident answer warmed their hearts.

That afternoon, a wind sprang up and the sky turned dark. The temperature dropped abruptly. The commune members sweated away on the threshing ground till nearly dark, but still no sign of the work team. Instead of going back for supper, they munched dried rations as they went on with the threshing. Pressure-lamps made the place as bright as day.

Then a little girl came running from the village. Catching hold of Chen Yung-kuei's hand, she said breathlessly: "Uncle Yung-kuei, the work team's arrived!"

Chen Yung-kuei, leaving someone else in charge, hurried with the other cadres to the brigade office.

There they were met by Hsing, head of the work team. Gripping

his hands Chen Yung-kuei cried: "Welcome to Tachai! You'll help us do our work better."

Hsing smiled and made a few polite remarks.

Then Chen Yung-kuei, on behalf of the Party branch, gave the work team an account of Tachai's development under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, the alignment of class forces here, the enemy's activities, and the commune members' state of mind. He thought: 'These comrades are new here. If they don't grasp the situation they may make unnecessary mistakes which could harm the movement. So he gave them all the details. The team members, Team Leader Hsing in particular, listened conscientiously and jotted down notes. Chen Yung-kuei ended up by saying: "So now you're here. Our Tachai Party branch and all our poor and lower-middle peasants welcome you from the bottom of our hearts. We're sure this socialist education movement will help us in Tachai to do our work much better and make a bigger contribution to the revolution."

It was now very late.

Hsing, standing up, said slowly: "Tachai's a red-banner unit. So we shall carry out the movement here differently from in other brigades. Here in Tachai, we and the Tachai Party branch will lead the movement together. And as a result of the movement, Tachai's red banner will be raised even higher!"

In order to ensure the movement's success, after consultation with the other cadres Chen Yung-kuei assigned young Liang to join the leadership of the work team.

Though this meeting had lasted several hours, Chen Yung-kuei and the other Tachai cadres had not found it too long. They were elated, brimming over with confidence.

2

It was the start of winter. Sear willow leaves chafed and rustled in the cold wind. But the pines on Tiger-head Hill stood green and vigorous as ever. After the autumn harvest, the Tachai people led by Chen Yung-kuei had divided into two groups. The group

headed by Chia Cheng-jang deep-ploughed the fields before the earth froze over. The other group headed by Chen Yung-kuei himself launched yet another assault on their seven big gullies, to build up some more high-yield plots before the spring.

The socialist education movement in Tachai was going with a swing. Chen Yung-kuei and the other cadres worked with the commune members during the day and made serious self-examinations of their past shortcomings and mistakes in the evenings. By humbly accepting criticism from the masses they improved their style of work. The villagers, impressed by the cadres' honest attitude, showed more drive than ever before.

Team Leader Hsing was extremely busy these days. Wherever a crowd gathered, there his plump smiling face appeared. As soon as the commune members were on familiar terms with him, Hsing tried to get them to voice their views about the cadres. However, they raised nothing but problems of work style and minor shortcomings. A fortnight had passed since the team's arrival here, but they had failed to get any material of the kind their superiors wanted. They could see that Tachai's grain output had been increasing year by year and that a good relationship existed between the cadres and the masses. Were there then no serious problems in Tachai? Hsing remembered the directive passed on to him by a certain leading cadre at the headquarters of the socialist education movement. Had he been misled by appearances? Or was his thinking Rightist? He decided it was necessary to carry out more detailed investigations. This reminded him that the old shepherd Chia Cheng-lu had just come back with his flock from West Village. Chia had been away from Tachai for quite a time and did not know much about the movement. It was up to the work team to put him in the picture. And perhaps the old shepherd would supply them with useful material.

So the next day Team Leader Hsing went to have his meals in Chia Cheng-lu's home. The old shepherd greeted him cordially, and Hsing made polite conversation as he looked the place over. The cave-house was clean and orderly. On the wall facing the door hung Chairman Mao's portrait flanked by the couplet: "Listen

to Chairman Mao's instructions" and "Follow the Communist Party". These expressed what was in the heart of this old shepherd who had now become one of his country's masters.

During the meal, Hsing angled for complaints against the cadres. When the old shepherd did not rise to his bait, he asked: "How much grain do you eat every year, Old Chia?"

"560 catties."

"And how much does your family get?"

Pointing to a row of containers, the old shepherd answered: "All these are filled with grain."

"Is the water weight deducted from your food grain?"

"No."

"Other brigades deduct thirty to forty per cent of water weight. Why doesn't Tachai?" Producing a small abacus from his bag, he made a calculation then exclaimed: "Fancy that! Old Chia, if the water weight's deducted you actually get only 230 catties."

Chia Cheng-lu was no fool. He thought: One big jar holds several hundred catties. Even if the grain dries out completely by spring, at most it'll lose a dozen catties in weight. To say half would be gone



is sheer nonsense. What is this fellow up to? He objected: "Even deducting forty per cent water weight, how can my 560 catties of grain dwindle to 230?"

Hsing had nothing to say to this. Still, he did not give up. He asked the shepherd whether he had paid for 560 or for 230 catties.

Old Chia thought the question ridiculous. He retorted: "Since I got 560 catties why should I pay for 230 only? Should we make a profit out of the collective?"

"What an ideal!" Hsing chortled. "I know you don't take advantage of the collective, but some of the cadres may. Take Chen Yung-kuei. His wife has a sewing-machine and she wears good clothes. But you. . ."

The old shepherd lost patience. He cut in indignantly: "They worked for those things — they didn't steal them!"

This rebuff thwarted Hsing's scheme and spoiled his appetite. Like a deflated balloon he slouched away.

After Hsing left, the old man thought over his insinuations. Then, throwing his sheepskin coat over his shoulders, he hurried to Chen Yung-kuei's house. He found it crowded with people arguing about the deduction of water weight from grain. The old shepherd reported Hsing's talk with him. Chen Yung-kuei saw at once that it was no accident that several commune members had brought up this question of water weight today. To his mind, they had been quite right not to deduct water weight from Tachai's grain because it had been thoroughly dried in the sun. He said straight out: "We've Tachai's tradition to keep up — we must think first of the state and the collective."

Most of the commune members approved. But Chia Yu-cheng insisted: "The work team says water weight should be deducted. You cadres should care for the welfare of the masses."

The old shepherd rounded on him, "Have you gone hungry all these years?"

"Of course not," replied Chia Yu-cheng. "But the deduction of water weight and going hungry are two different things."

All eyes turned to the shepherd. He asked again: "Is your family short of grain?"

"All of us work so we get a lot of grain. We four can save two to three hundred catties a year."

"How much do you eat every day?"

"At least one catty and three ounces."

"All right then." The old shepherd chuckled as he knocked out the ash from his pipe. "Let's say you eat one catty three ounces a day. There are 365 days a year. How much do you eat a year?"

Chia Yu-cheng made a quick calculation. The grain eaten came to 475.5 catties. Plus the grain saved this totalled more than 530 catties. It dawned on him that he had been fooled. He admitted sheepishly: "You're smart, brother. The truth is, after the work team said the water weight should be deducted from our food grain, my selfishness got the better of me. Now that you've worked it out for me — hah!" He slapped his head hard. "Selfishness is the very devil!"

Pleased to see that Chia Yu-cheng had straightened out his thinking, the old shepherd said: "We really must raise our political consciousness, brother. Otherwise people can lead us by the nose." At this everyone burst out laughing.

Chen Yung-kuei commented with a smile: "That's right. We can't build socialism with selfish ideas. Comrades, the purpose of this socialist education movement is to do away with selfishness. When something new crops up, we must look at it in the light of Chairman Mao's teachings. That way, we'll keep clear-headed and not be fooled."

"From now on," declared Chia Yu-cheng earnestly, "we ought to examine Team Leader Hsing's words and actions in the light of Chairman Mao's teachings. We mustn't let him fool us."

On Hsing's return, exasperated, from the shepherd's home, he picked up his note-book and re-read the notes he had taken down from Chen Yung-kuei's report the previous day. As he was doing this, the door creaked open. A head peeped in. It was the rich peasant Chia Yung-huo.

This diehard had been on tenterhooks ever since the work team's arrival. The high spirits of the poor and lower-middle peasants

struck him as ominous. So he put on a show of meekness and worked hard. But when he learned that the work team was investigating the cadres and urging the masses to voice complaints about them, this seemed to him a good chance to get his own back. He made up his mind, on the pretext of reporting on his thinking, to sound out the work team's attitude.

After a hasty supper that evening he made his way stealthily to the work team's office. When he saw that Hsing was alone, he summoned up his courage and stepped in. Hsing immediately closed his notebook and invited the visitor to take a seat. But Chia just stood there respectfully, announcing, "Team Leader Hsing, I am Chia Yung-huo, a reactionary rich peasant. I've come to report my thinking."

Hsing saw before him a man of about sixty, of medium height, rather stooped, with shifty eyes. He said, "Chia Yung-huo, the Party policy towards landlords and rich peasants has always been clear. As long as you abide by the law and remould yourself, you will be given a way out."

"I know," replied Chia. "I've always been law-abiding, and I've tried to remould myself too, but I haven't done well enough. I must remould myself more seriously in future."

"Your attitude today is good," said Hsing. "It shows that at least you're willing to reform."

Since Hsing took this mild tone, Chia Yung-huo pulled a long face and sighed, "Team Leader Hsing, I have honestly been obeying the law and I do want to remould myself, only. . . ." He broke off to dart a furtive glance at Hsing.

"Speak up, man," urged the team leader. "If you have any problems, I'll deal with them."

"The cadres always get the masses to struggle against me. They call me a reactionary rich peasant and use me as a live target to educate the younger generation of poor and lower-middle peasants."

Knitting his brows, Hsing said: "If the landlords and rich peasants show willingness to remould themselves, it's against Party policy to attack them for no good reason."

"That's right, team leader," chimed in Chia. "In this movement I mean to turn over a new leaf, become a new man. Just give the word, and I'll do whatever you say."

"First, in this movement you must honestly accept re-education. You can express your opinions of the cadres too. If they are correct, we'll support you."

Satisfied that he now understood the team leader's attitude, the rich peasant left.

As soon as Chia Yung-huo had gone, Hsing hurried to the brigade office where members of his team were checking the records of work-points.

"How's it going?" he asked.

"We haven't found anything wrong."

Hsing frowned and said reprovingly: "Bad cases of fiddling with work-points have been reported from all other brigades. You mean to tell me there are none in Tachai?"

One team member pushed his account book over to Hsing. "There really are none. We can't fake them. If you don't believe this, check the books yourself."

"Checking up on work-points doesn't call for any special brilliance," said Hsing calmly. "It's thoroughness that counts." He took up the record for 1963 and leafed through it carefully. After a while he clapped his hand on the book and exclaimed: "Just look at this! If you search hard you can always find something wrong."

All the team members stepped forward and saw that his discovery was work-points for sweeping snow.

Hsing told them exultantly: "You've all worked at the grass-roots' level. Have you seen work-points for sweeping snow in any other brigades?"

They shook their heads.

"Only Tachai gives work-points for sweeping snow. This is the most irresponsible way of allocating work-points I've ever seen!"

Hsing was so elated by this discovery, he called up that same evening to report it. That leading cadre at headquarters told him to write a report on this "material" and send it in at once. He was

also told to pay special attention to encouraging criticism of the cadres in order to keep the ball rolling.

The next evening, after work, young Liang went to the work team's office to discuss the next stage of the movement.

Hsing's first words to him were: "Young Liang! The leadership says the situation in the countryside is very complex, what with contradictions between the people and the enemy, contradictions within the ranks of the people, and contradictions both inside and outside the Party. Moreover, all these contradictions are interrelated. So it won't be easy getting the movement going."

Young Liang, bewildered by this, said: "Never mind what contradictions there are. Anyway we're all for taking the socialist road and against those who take the capitalist road."

"Still, the contradictions are so involved, I suggest we first hold discussions with different groups to hear opinions from all sides. This will help to get things moving."

"First we must hold a discussion with the poor and lower-middle peasants."

This was not Hsing's idea. He asked: "Did the landlords and rich peasants attend your general meetings in the past?"

"Sometimes we let them come and listen in order to educate them."

"That's good." This was the answer Hsing had been hoping for. "Suppose we hold a general meeting tonight and let the landlords and rich peasants attend?"

"We can't let them attend this meeting," protested Liang. "But we can organize them separately, and let the work team and our security officer give them some talks."

Having such divergent opinions, neither could convince the other.

"Team Leader Hsing," said young Liang earnestly. "We have to rely on the poor and lower-middle peasants to make revolution in the countryside. This is a matter of principle involving the class line we take."

Hsing turned red in the face, astounded that a local cadre had the nerve to criticize him. "Just talking about the line is no use," he shot back. "Do you really understand the line? The main

danger at this stage of the class struggle in the countryside is the emergence of new anti-Party bourgeois elements among our cadres. We must understand that the landlords and rich peasants no longer dare make trouble. Unless we grasp this our thinking will lag behind the situation. If we keep on attacking the landlords and rich peasants, we'll be guilty of dogmatism."

The more Hsing said, the more Liang disagreed. Trying to control his temper he retorted: "Team Leader Hsing, we confiscated the land of the landlords and rich peasants after Land Reform, but we couldn't confiscate their ideas — their hope of restoring reactionary rule. They may put on a good front so as to fool us. Take that rich peasant diehard Chia Yung-huo, who looks such a simple honest fellow now. During the flood last year he sprang out to incite the masses to run away and attempted to undermine the socialist system. Team Leader Hsing, those swine are dreaming day and night of restoring the old regime. We should **'never forget class struggle'**."

Hsing was surprised that a local cadre who worked in the fields all day could argue so eloquently. Unable to stomach this fresh rebuff he burst out: "Comrade, don't imagine you're always on the revolutionary line. Just talk isn't going to win the revolution."

At this Liang flared up and bellowed: "So according to you the landlords and rich peasants are taking the revolutionary line while the Tachai cadres and the poor and lower-middle peasants are counter-revolutionaries. What's your class stand?"

The more they argued the more heated they grew. At last Liang noticed that it was after midnight, so he left the office, fuming with indignation. Hsing followed him to the door and, from the threshold, watched the young man's receding figure. Then lowering his head in disgust he shut the door.

Young Liang started back bursting with anger. But the sight of the stars in the sky and the distant houses soothed him. He took a deep breath and gradually calmed down. Carefully recalling his argument with Hsing, he felt that the situation was serious. He must report it at once to Chen Yung-kuei. He broke into a run.

After this head-on confrontation, the contradictions between the work team and the Tachai Party branch came into the open.

In line with his instructions from that leading cadre at headquarters, Hsing started cold-shouldering Chen Yung-kuei and all the other cadres. He also moved the work team's office to a cave-house in a distant gully. The struggle between two lines with the socialist education movement as its storm-centre was gathering momentum in Tachai.

3

For two days the sky was overcast. The northwest wind gusted. Old peasants predicted snow.

After supper young Liang, approaching the work team's office, heard quite a rumpus inside. Pushing open the door he found to his surprise that the room was crowded with people, among them the rich peasant Chia Yung-huo. Liang felt as if his head would burst with anger. He could have kicked himself for barging in so quickly instead of listening outside to what they were saying. After his argument with Liang, Hsing had received instructions from that leading cadre at headquarters to call a meeting of some commune members without the Tachai Party branch. The diehard Chia had also squeezed his way in. Hsing hoped these people would divulge some "crimes" of the cadres.

Liang's sudden entry flustered Hsing. To cover up, he said, "I was just going to look for you." He led the young man outside. As for Chia Yung-huo, the sight of Liang had made him hang his head in consternation. But Liang had already seen him. He controlled his temper however, for Chen Yung-kuei had impressed on him the need to keep calm and consider the best tactics to use in class struggle. But from Liang's expression Hsing guessed what was in his mind. He said bluntly: "Your brigade is very busy these days. From now on I'll send for you if I need you."

This came as no surprise, as Chen Yung-kuei had warned Liang to expect something of the sort. He answered curtly: "As you please."

Team Leader Hsing felt too put out to continue the meeting, knowing that Liang would tell Chen Yung-kuei all about it. This



put him on the defensive. He must try to win back the initiative. At once he adjourned the meeting and sent a team member to fetch Chen Yung-kuei and the other Party cadres.

Young Liang had hurried straight to Chen Yung-kuei's house. All the Party cadres were there. When Liang charged in they asked him what had happened.

"To hell with it!" he swore, then told them what he had seen.

This made everybody angry. They gazed expectantly at Chen Yung-kuei.

Chen Yung-kuei, his dark brows knit, was just as worked up as the others. He realized that the members of Hsing's work team had gradually cut themselves off from Tachai's cadres and the poor and lower-middle peasants, till it now seemed as if there was a gully between them. The team never organized the Tachai people to study Chairman Mao's works. He thought: There's something wrong, but we still lack solid evidence to prove it. We must make further investigations and not charge ahead rashly. The first thing to do in a struggle is to distinguish between friend and foe. We must put the facts before the work team and argue them out. And we mustn't let the class enemy take advantage of the situation.

Having reached this conclusion he said earnestly: "Comrades, we must be on our guard against wrong ideas — that's the first thing. We must fully mobilize the poor and lower-middle peasants to see what this work team is up to in Tachai. Class struggle is complex: never imagine it isn't. The fight's just starting and, mentally, we've got to be fully prepared."

The Party committee members agreed with him. They went confidently ahead with their discussion of a plan for levelling the top of Wolf Lair before the spring. Just then, a man from the work team summoned them to a meeting. As they set out with him to the work-team office it started snowing hard.

When they arrived, Hsing tried to address them calmly. "Old Chen, we've studied the experience of Taoyuan Brigade* more than

*In 1963 under the direction of Chairman Mao, the *Draft Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on Certain Problems in Our Present Rural Work* was worked out. This pointed out that the main task of the socialist education movement in the countryside was to solve the contradiction between socialism and capitalism. However, soon after this, China's arch renegade Liu Shao-chi sent his wife to "study" the situation in Taoyuan Village, Funing County, Hopei Province. In this village she made use of reactionary local landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries and other bad elements to smear the local cadres and concocted the so-called experience of Taoyuan Brigade. Liu Shao-chi took advantage of his high position to peddle this "experience" in all parts of the country where the socialist education movement was being carried out. Liu's bourgeois reactionary line was "Left" in form but Right in essence. Its aim was to lead this revolutionary movement astray, in order to restore capitalism in the countryside.

twenty times. You cadres have also made several self-criticisms. But none of you have made a proper self-criticism yet. What sort of attitude does this show towards the socialist education movement?"

Chen Yung-kuei smiled. "Team Leader Hsing, we certainly have shortcomings in more than ten years' work as cadres. But we have made serious self-criticisms."

"Chen Yung-kuei," blustered Hsing, "the poor and lower-middle peasants are very dissatisfied because you haven't deducted the water weight from their food grain. You cadres are simply ignoring the voice of the masses."

Chen Yung-kuei had foreseen that Hsing would try to stir up dissatisfaction over this question. He retorted calmly, "So you think we should deduct the water weight from grain?"

"Of course."

"But we dried our grain thoroughly. What water weight is there left to deduct?"

Hsing hummed and hawed but could not answer.

Standing up, Chen Yung-kuei continued: "The state is our state, the commune members are our commune members. If water weight is deducted from well-dried grain, it actually amounts to embezzling grain. This is a fraud, cheating the state."

Hsing thought he saw his chance here. He put in quickly: "That's right. By not deducting water weight from your food grain, you were actually claiming a higher yield. Falsifying your output is also cheating the state."

Only then did Chen Yung-kuei realize that the work team wanted to challenge Tachai's grain output. Suppressing his fury with an effort, he said: "You mean you doubt Tachai's grain output?"

But Hsing knew perfectly well that Tachai's grain output had not been falsified. For a fortnight spent checking the accounts at the county bureau had established the correctness of the figure of grain sold to the state. Once more he was unable to reply. His face turned a mottled red and white.

Then Hsing changed the subject, asking: "Have you been fiddling work-points?"

"We Tachai cadres and commune members receive work-points according to the work we do. We've never given work-points when none are due."

"I have irrefutable evidence in my hand. Do you still dare deny it?"

"I certainly do!" was Chen Yung-kuei's firm answer.

Hsing snatched the 1963 record of work-points from the table and brandished it before him. Pointing at the record he snapped: "See here! What kind of work is this?"

Stepping forward, Chen Yung-kuei saw an entry of work-points for sweeping snow. Glancing at the heavily falling snow outside, he said: "All right, if you don't think sweeping snow deserves work-points, we won't give any in future."

"How about those already given?"

Chen Yung-kuei smiled. "You can cancel them."

The snow didn't stop until after midnight. Early the next morning Chen Yung-kuei led the commune members to terrace more fields.

Just before ten, four trucks arrived loaded with people come to see over Tachai. Alighting, they were unable to make out the roads, which were drifted over with snow. The head of the party asked the brigade for help, and a work-team member took him to their office. Hsing was cheerfully calculating how many work-points for sweeping snow could be cancelled. When he heard that the visitors were unable to find their way up the hill, he sent for Chia Cheng-jang.

"Old Chia, a party's come to see round, but they can't get up the hill. Get a few commune members to clear the snow, will you?"

"The work's already been assigned, there's no one free," said Cheng-jang.

"Then give them work-points."

"We made that mistake before. We don't want to repeat it." Cheng-jang turned and left.

Hsing had to send for Chen Yung-kuei.

When Chen Yung-kuei arrived, Hsing said: "Old Chen, I just told Cheng-jang to get some people to sweep snow and to give them work-points. What do you think?"

Chen Yung-kuei grinned. "Have you figured out the amount of work-points we gave for sweeping snow?"

Hearing this, Hsing flushed crimson.

Before coming to Hsing's office Chen Yung-kuei had told Cheng-jang to take people to sweep snow, and by now they had cleared the road from Wolf Lair to Tiger-head Hill. Beckoning the visitors, Chen Yung-kuei called: "Come on, comrades! The way up is cleared." He led them up the hill.

Hsing sat alone in his office staring blankly at the record of work-points which he had marked all over with red pencil. Sighing he thought: There's bound to be trouble if we go on this way. I must report the real situation to that cadre at headquarters. That night, he tossed and turned but could not sleep. The next day he got up as soon as it was light and set off on his bicycle to headquarters.

At headquarters the leading cadre cut short Hsing's report to say: "Old Hsing, the leadership considered the matter carefully before sending you to Tachai. Our leading comrade now at Mamu Brigade trusts you to carry out your task successfully."

This "leading comrade" was an important official whom Liu Shao-chi had sent to work in Shansi and who was staying at Mamu Brigade. During the socialist education movement, he did his utmost to carry out Liu Shao-chi's bourgeois reactionary line. In cahoots with Liu he peddled the "experience" of Taoyuan Brigade. He was the key man used by Liu Shao-chi to sabotage the socialist education movement in Tachai.

The fellow at headquarters told Hsing: "The embezzlement of huge sums has come to light in other brigades. How come Tachai is not a single cent out? Don't tell me there's no graft in an advanced unit like Tachai. In recent years, the higher-ups have smelt something fishy there. Termites are eating away the pole of Tachai's red flag. If we don't dig them out, we can't keep the red flag flying — it will be toppled." Patting Hsing on the back, he continued: "Go ahead boldly. Tachai's fate is in the hands of that leading comrade at Mamu Brigade. How are we to account to him if you fail to dig up any dirt?"

This put Hsing on the spot. He had to promise to discover something incriminating in Tachai.

After Hsing's return from headquarters, the situation in Tachai became more tense. The cadres were watched and followed by members of the work team and Hsing's "activists". Chen Yung-kuei felt the hostility in the air.

Just then stirring news reached Tachai: Chen Yung-kuei was to attend the Third National People's Congress. He would be going to Peking, to Chairman Mao's side!

That evening Chen Yung-kuei presided over a Party meeting in a cattle-shed at one end of the village. All present were solemn and intensely moved.

"Comrades," said Chen Yung-kuei. "Whether or not Tachai keeps to the socialist road depends on the success or failure of this movement. Each one of us must make a serious self-criticism, listen modestly to the masses' opinions and do our work as well as we possibly can. We must expose and criticize capitalist trends; we must arouse all our people to attack the enemy hard. We must have the guts and the determination to make this movement a success. . . . But this team leader Hsing who's come here never talks about Chairman Mao's instructions on the socialist education movement and he's cut himself off from the Tachai Party branch and the poor and lower-middle peasants. What's his team up to here? We must figure this out."

Chen Yung-kuei knew that Tachai's progress had not been plain sailing. They had run into countless obstacles. At each critical moment it was Chairman Mao who had pointed out the direction, enabling them to advance along the socialist road. Bearing this in mind he said firmly: "Tachai is what it is today because we've acted all along on Chairman Mao's instructions. In this struggle too, our only way to win victory is by doing as Chairman Mao says and relying on the masses." He opened his *Quotations From Chairman Mao Tsetung* and read in ringing tones: "**Revisionism, or Right opportunism, is a bourgeois trend of thought that is even more dangerous than dogmatism. The revisionists, the Right oppor-**

tunists, pay lip-service to Marxism; they too attack 'dogmatism'. But what they are really attacking is the quintessence of Marxism."

The committee members spoke up one after another. The atmosphere in the meeting was electric. All were ready, eager, for the coming fight. Finally Chen Yung-kuei presented the *Quotations From Chairman Mao Tsetung* to Liang, to whom he said earnestly: "Comrade, a heavy responsibility rests on the shoulders of our Party members and poor and lower-middle peasants. We've got a hard battle ahead."

"Don't worry, Old Chen," replied Liang. "Under the leadership of our great leader Chairman Mao and the Party and with the support of the poor and lower-middle peasants, however fierce the storm, we can win through it!"

Pair after pair of hands reached out to grasp Chen Yung-kuei's hands in a grip of iron.

4

The news that Chen Yung-kuei was going to attend the Third National People's Congress thoroughly disconcerted Team Leader Hsing. If Chen was a suspect, why was he allowed to go to Peking and attend this important meeting? Hsing was in a quandary. What should he do? As he was worrying, the telephone rang. It turned out to be an urgent call from headquarters asking him to go there at once. He set off immediately to the county town, telling himself: This must be about Chen Yung-kuei.

As soon as he reached headquarters, that leading cadre told him: "The provincial office just called us up to pass on an instruction from Mamu Brigade. You mustn't think Chen Yung-kuei is in the clear just because he's a deputy to the people's congress. Far from it, his case is very serious. You comrades who are responsible for the movement in Tachai must make full use of Chen Yung-kuei's absence to arouse the villagers. Utilize the contradictions between the Tachai cadres and between them and the masses, and do your work extremely carefully. This is the only way to make a thorough exposure of Chen Yung-kuei."

After this, the work team in Tachai under the direct control of Liu Shao-chi's bourgeois headquarters made no further pretence of relying on the local Party branch and the poor and lower-middle peasants. Instead, they blatantly carried out Liu Shao-chi's reactionary line. But the Tachai cadres and poor and lower-middle peasants led by their Party branch, keeping Peking and Chairman Mao in mind, exchanged blow for blow with the work team and opposed its erroneous line.

One day, for the first time, Team Leader Hsing called a meeting of all the commune members in the village. Acting on instructions from his headquarters he told them gravely, "Comrades, we've come to Tachai in the first place to help you clean up the dry-rot in the flag-pole of your red banner. If we fail to do this, not only will you be unable to hold high the red banner but it may even crash down. Secondly, we've come to help you vent your grievances and your criticism of the cadres. We'll support, help, unite with and rely on all those who have the courage to speak out. Thirdly, anyone who has the nerve to oppose our movement will be treated as a counter-revolutionary." He halted a second before he went on, "Some people hold that Tachai is an advanced unit. In my opinion it's not advanced but is taking an adventurist line."

Hearing this, the poor and lower-middle peasants were furious. Old Li Hsi-ching and Chia Cheng-lu puffed hard on their pipes, racking their brains for a way to refute the team leader.

And what of the rich peasant Chia Yung-huo? He had perked up recently and begun to speak more loudly. When Hsing called for exposures of the cadres, he sprang to his feet; but before he could open his mouth the poor peasant Chia Yu-cheng bellowed, "Let me have first say!"

Hsing signed to the rich peasant to sit down and exultantly urged the poor peasant, "Take your time, Old Chia. You can raise whatever complaints you have of the cadres. The work team will support you."

"My complaints are of you!" declared Yu-cheng. "Our cadres have never ganged up with the landlords and rich peasants; they've never turned their back on the socialist road; never given themselves

airs or lorded it over us. What grounds have you for saying that our Tachai cadres live on us commune members? Why pick fault with all our good cadres?"

This outburst by Chia Yu-cheng set the ball rolling. All the other poor peasants clamoured to air their views. This took Hsing completely by surprise. "Let me repeat," he shouted. "Whoever doesn't criticize the cadres is shielding them. And whoever attacks the work team is a counter-revolutionary!"

This was too much for Li Hsi-ching. Although the old man seldom spoke at meetings, he now rose furiously to his feet. Knocking his pipe hard on the bench he said, "Chairman Mao tells us that **'without the poor peasants there would be no revolution.'** But you hadn't been in Tachai many days before you pushed aside the poor and lower-middle peasants and cadres and pulled in rich peasants to take part in meetings. And look at these three rules you've announced today. Let me ask you: Do you believe in the Party's class line or not?"

This challenge, like salt thrown into boiling oil, made the whole hall sizzle with excited comments. Chia Yung-huo saw that the tide had turned against him. He shrank back and kept silent. Livid with rage, Hsing pounded the table and bellowed, "What makes you all side with your cadres? If you don't have big complaints, you must have small ones. Or some suspicions at least."

Up stood old Chia Cheng-lu, a fellow who always talked sense. So the others quieted down. Cheng-lu laid aside the old sheepskin coat which had been draped over his shoulders. "If you're talking of suspicions, I have one," he said.

Everybody stared.

"Out with it, quick," urged Hsing. "We'll help you analyse it."

"I suspect you of being a murderer."

The villagers caught his meaning and burst into wild applause. And Hsing? He flew into a fury. "What grounds have you for saying this?" he yelled.

Cheng-lu laughed. "So you know, Team Leader Hsing, that suspicions should have some grounds. All right then, what grounds have you for suspecting our cadres?" Before Hsing could reply,

Cheng-lu went on vehemently, "I have ten fingers on my hands; if one of them is bitten, it hurts. Our cadres are close to our hearts. They wouldn't take even a single grain from the collective, let alone swindle or rob us. Yet you're trying to force us poor and lower-middle peasants to slander them. Have you people no heart? I'm not taking part in this dirty meeting of yours." With this he draped the sheepskin coat over his shoulders and strode out of the hall. Li Hsi-ching, Chia Yu-cheng and some others followed. In no time, the only people left in the hall were a few of Hsing's own gang. The team leader was speechless with dismay.

Back in his office Hsing slumped in a chair and lit a cigarette. He thought: I've done all I could but still failed to dig up any dirt. There really seem to be no problems in Tachai. Though in a dilemma, he lacked the courage to face up to the facts, because headquarters had insisted that Chen Yung-kuei had done something very wrong. And, as a Party member, he thought it his duty to accept unconditionally all decisions from above, acting as a submissive tool for the Party. He therefore suspected that his failure was due to his own Rightist tendency and lack of resolution in carrying out directives. At this point he remembered his instructions from that leading cadre to take advantage of the contradictions among the cadres and between the cadres and masses. He decided to tackle Chia Chin-tsai, one of the oldest Communists in Tachai but now merely a member of the Party committee. According to Hsing's logic, Chin-tsai must have a grudge against Chen Yung-kuei. If he could be induced to talk, that would make things easier for the work team in Tachai. He determined to pay another visit to Chia Chin-tsai.

Hsing's arrival that evening surprised Old Chin-tsai, but he knew how to deal with the team leader. After some conventional remarks Hsing said, "Old Chia, Tachai owes a lot to you."

"Not to me, but to the Communist Party and Chairman Mao. As well as to our Yung-kuei."

"You're an old Party member too."

"Yes. All the more reason for me to listen to Chairman Mao and work better for the revolution."

"Of course..." Hsing forced a smile. "Still, Chen Yung-kuei looks down on you."

"Who says so?" demanded Old Chin-tsai angrily. "Or is that your idea?"

"It doesn't matter who says so. See, Chen Yung-kuei is now both a people's deputy and a famous model worker. Why should he respect a wrinkled old man like you?"

"How can you, a Communist, say such a thing?" exploded Old Chin-tsai. "Let me ask you: What's your purpose in coming to Tachai? Is it to launch the movement for socialist education or to break up our Party branch? In less than a month here you've certainly made a good many 'discoveries'. I've worked with Yung-kuei for over thirty years. How is it I never noticed that he looks down on me? What are you trying to do, stir up trouble here?"

Hsing was standing there crimson with embarrassment when one of his men came to fetch him. He hurried off.

The night was quiet. But the lime kiln outside the village was far from quiet, for the Party committee was holding a meeting there. Indignantly they reviewed the activities of the work team. The more they discussed these, the clearer it became that Hsing was wrong and the more determined they were to fight back. Cheng-jang was feeling the strain these days, but he learned a lot from this meeting. He said, "Team Leader Hsing has put pressure on me to confess that I embezzled money and grain from our brigade. But I won't. What's more, he wants me to say that Tachai has no right to the red banner. I know quite well that our Tachai led by Comrade Chen Yung-kuei has been following Chairman Mao's instructions and forging steadily ahead through storms. So how can I say Tachai's bogus? Chairman Mao tells us, **'In times of difficulty we must not lose sight of our achievements, must see the bright future and must pluck up our courage.'** With Chairman Mao's teachings in my heart and with you comrades standing by me, I've got the courage to fight it out with them!"

Touched by these words and by the brigade leader's haggard face, the others gave him such comradely encouragement that Cheng-jang

was moved to tears. They all knew that fresh and harder tests were in store.

5

On January 13, 1965, Chen Yung-kuei returned to Tachai from Peking. The news like a gust of spring wind warmed the hearts of all the poor and lower-middle peasants. They flocked to the big willow tree beneath which they had their meals. The earliest to turn up was Li Hsi-ching, so beside himself with happiness that he had brought a bigger rice bowl than usual. Next came old Cheng-lu and Yu-cheng, chatting cheerfully together. Presently a member of the work team arrived.

"Listen!" he warned. "Team Leader Hsing says none of you must have anything to do with Chen Yung-kuei."

The villagers simply ignored him.

A moment later, some youngsters waiting by the roadside shouted, "Look, Uncle Yung-kuei's coming!" All swarmed forward to greet Chen Yung-kuei. As young Liang grasped his hands a lump came into his throat so that he could not speak. Others, too, could only fix on him eyes brimming over with tears.

At sight of these familiar faces and the terraced fields which they had sweated so hard to build, Chen Yung-kuei too blinked back tears. "I know what's been happening in our Tachai," he said gruffly. "All the time I was in Peking, I kept thinking of the struggle here and of every one of you." Raising his voice he continued, "Let me give you some good news. On the 26th of December, our great leader Chairman Mao received me in Peking. He had a fine colour in his cheeks, he's hale and hearty! Chairman Mao has issued a great call to the whole country to learn from Tachai in agriculture. And he sends his greetings to all the poor and lower-middle peasants in Tachai."

Moved to tears, they all raised their arms and shouted, "Long live Chairman Mao! Long live Chairman Mao!" The whole village was in a turmoil of excitement.

Old Li Hsi-ching elbowed his way up to Chen Yung-kuei and, having wiped his own hands on his jacket, caught hold of Chen Yung-kuei's hands and gripped them hard. Chen Yung-kuei had shaken hands with Chairman Mao, Chen Yung-kuei had the callused hands of a poor peasant. One by one, they all gripped his hands.

Now Chen Yung-kuei turned with a smile to the old hero Chia Chin-tsai. "Old Chia," he cried, "Chairman Mao asked after you specially!"

Chin-tsai stared unwinkingly at Chen Yung-kuei, hot tears of joy running down his cheeks like pearls from a broken thread. After all he had suffered in the past, the knowledge that Chairman Mao knew his name and had asked after him nearly robbed him of speech. From his throat burst the shout, "Long live Chairman Mao!" After a pause he blurted out, "All I did was break a few stones; yet Chairman Mao who's so busy asked after me. Who could dream of such a thing? I promise you, Chairman Mao, I'll follow you and lay down my old life, if need be, to make revolution."

The villagers turned towards the red sun in the east and their loyal hearts beat faster.

Then young Liang told Chen Yung-kuei, "Team Leader Hsing and his lot have been turning the village upside-down since you left. Three days and three nights wouldn't be enough to tell you all they've been up to."

"I know," said Chen Yung-kuei. "Their work team's sent in a report that Tachai isn't a genuine red-banner unit and Chen Yung-kuei's not fit to be a people's deputy. But we have Chairman Mao's backing. And Premier Chou in his report on the work of the government praised our principle of putting politics in command, our belief in self-reliance and hard struggle, and our communist love for the collective and the country." At this, everybody cheered. He continued firmly, "Comrades, what Team Leader Hsing and his lot have done isn't in line with Chairman Mao's teachings. We must struggle against them. As long as we obey Chairman Mao's instructions, as long as we dare to struggle and know how to struggle, the victory is bound to be ours."



The villagers' faces lit up. And young Liang, brandishing his fist, proposed, "Let's go and argue it out with them right away."

"There you go again." Chen Yung-kuei laughed. "Have we got all our arguments ready? As Chairman Mao says: **fight no battle unprepared.**"

Young Liang simply scratched his head, grinning.

"How's production going these days?" Chen Yung-kuei asked.

"The embankments we're building at Wolf Lair have been held up. We haven't finished the job on time," answered Cheng-jang ruefully.

Troubled by this, Chen Yung-kuei reminded them, "We must not only keep up the fight, but boost production too. First thing tomorrow morning, we'll all turn out to take Wolf Lair by storm!"

Before dawn the next day, Chen Yung-kuei climbed up Wolf Lair by moonlight. After nearly a month in Peking, his powerful, iron hands were itching to do a job of work. He picked up a big stone weighing some two hundred catties and set it in place on the retaining wall, making it another foot higher! Presently Chia Cheng-jang, Sung Li-ying and other commune members turned up. All pitched into the battle.

What of Team Leader Hsing now? Chen Yung-kuei's return had so agitated him that he was like an ant on a hot pan. Having ordered the commune members to have nothing to do with Chen Yung-kuei, he rang up headquarters to ask for further instructions. But before the call was put through, Chia Yung-huo sneaked in with another written "exposure". Hot on his heels came Chen Yung-kuei and the Party committee members with many other villagers, for the old peasant charged with watching Chia Yung-huo had spotted him going to Hsing's room and immediately reported this to Chen Yung-kuei.

Hsing though badly shaken behaved as if nothing had happened. "So you're back," he said to Chen Yung-kuei.

"I'm back. Now you can judge my crimes to my face."

Not liking the tone of this, Hsing decided to take him down a peg or two. He grabbed Chia Yung-huo's "material" and waved it,

bawling, "Here are charges brought against you by the revolutionary masses."

Chen Yung-kuei cast him a withering look. "Rubbish! Tell me: why did you come to Tachai?"

"To launch the movement for socialist education." Hsing wagged a finger at Chen Yung-kuei and blustered, "Chen Yung-kuei, you Tachai cadres are guilty of serious malpractices. You'd better come clean. Those who own up are leniently treated; those who don't are severely treated — that's Party policy. You..."

"Well, since all the poor and lower-middle peasants and commune members are here, tell them clearly what our crimes are."

This was calling the team leader's bluff. The black look on Chen Yung-kuei's face made Hsing even more flustered. To hide his panic, he snatched up some "material" at random.

"See how the revolutionary masses resent the way you built houses." Then he read: "Call this building houses? It was just creating trouble..."

"Shut up!" thundered Chen Yung-kuei. "Who said that?"

"As a matter of principle, I can't answer that question."

"No. We must get this cleared up. This is a matter of principle too," said Chen sternly.

"Right. Out with it!" roared the poor and lower-middle peasants who had gathered inside and outside the office. "Who wrote that rubbish?"

Beads of sweat trickled down Hsing's forehead. Chia Yung-huo, skulking behind him, was trembling. Old Li Hsi-ching pushed his way up to Hsing and demanded, "Who opposes building a new socialist village? Only landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries and bad characters. Led by the Party and Chairman Mao, we're rebuilding Tachai with our own hands and all living in fine stone houses. This is something we never dreamed of. Who dares call this creating trouble? We must drag that swine out and ask him just what he means."

Young Liang reached behind Hsing and hauled out Chia Yung-huo. The diehard was limp with terror.

"What are you?" barked Liang.

Shaking in his shoes Chia stammered, "A reactionary rich peasant."

"What did you come here for?" some villagers shouted.

Sweating profusely he stuttered, "To hand in ... n-no ... to report what I've been thinking."

He was so obviously lying that Liang grabbed him by the collar. "Out with it! What did you come for?"

His face ashen, the rich peasant admitted that he had handed in a piece of "information".

"What information?"

"What Team Leader Hsing just read you."

This admission fired the villagers with fury.

"Why say we were creating trouble?" they roared.

"To ... overthrow Chen Yung-kuei and stage a come-back."

He stood there, cringing, while angry slogans reverberated through the hills like spring thunder. And Hsing, at his wit's end, kept wiping his sweating forehead.

Chen Yung-kuei now jumped on to a bench to call for silence. "Team Leader Hsing, did you hear that?" he boomed. "The confession made by your 'revolutionary' is a lesson to us, isn't it? It tells us that our enemy won't take defeat lying down. Even though they're doomed they'll go on making trouble and trying to sabotage us. All throughout the period of the socialist revolution and socialist construction, we must never for one moment forget class struggle. But you —" He pointed to Hsing. "As soon as you entered the village, you tried your best to cut down our output from eight hundred catties per *mu* to three or four hundred, and our commune members' food ration from five hundred to little over two hundred. Can you say that you came to launch the movement for socialist education in Tachai? No! You tried to smear our collective economy."

Hsing protested, "But..."

With a sweep of his hand Chen Yung-kuei stopped him. "Chia Yung-huo is always in and out of your office. You treat him as a 'revolutionary' and listen to him. You've said what he dare not say publicly, and done what he dare not do openly. If you go on like this, you'll bring the landlords and rich peasants back into power. You're playing with fire, comrade! This is a far cry from what Chairman

Mao teaches us.” These stirring words voiced what the commune members felt and made them hold up their heads.

Having no other way of justifying himself, Hsing said with a sigh, “I have to carry out orders.”

One of the work team put in, “Applying Taoyuan Brigade’s experience in this movement, we keep knocking our heads against brick walls. Chairman Mao says we should seek the truth from facts. But you’ve jumped to conclusions in Tachai without any previous investigation or study. Yet you accuse us of having Rightist tendencies.”

Hsing could only scratch his head and sigh.

Chen Yung-kuei told him gravely, “Some people are set on wrecking Tachai. But you can see for yourself, under the leadership of Chairman Mao and the Communist Party we Tachai people can’t be put down or crushed. All these charges you’ve cooked up against us are quite useless.”

In the face of these facts Hsing had nothing to say. In the grip of a sharp mental conflict, he reflected: I’ve worn myself out to carry out my instructions, yet after more than two months in Tachai I’ve got nowhere. All this time the cadres and commune members have been united as one. However much pressure I put on them, they just go ahead with their work, afraid of nothing. I’ve personally supervised the examination of their accounts and the inspection of their storerooms, leaving nothing to chance. And certainly there seems to be nothing wrong. But in that case, why do the higher-ups insist on making out a case against Tachai?

The fact was that in the movement for socialist education the renegade Liu Shao-chi was pushing a reactionary bourgeois line which was Rightist in essence but “Leftist” in appearance. Under this line, they attacked the majority of the revolutionary cadres in order to protect a handful of landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries and bad characters in a vain attempt to restore capitalism in the countryside. This line was firmly resisted from the start by hundreds of millions of the revolutionary people throughout China, armed with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. And at this critical juncture our great leader Chairman Mao convened a National Working Conference of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party

and authorized the document *Some Current Problems Raised in the Socialist Education Movement in the Rural Areas*.^{*} This historic document served to bring the movement back on to the right course and foiled Liu Shao-chi’s counter-revolutionary plot to restore capitalism.

After Team Leader Hsing made a careful study of this document he realized that what he had done in Tachai was entirely wrong. He voluntarily admitted his mistakes at a meeting of all the cadres and commune members. Then the Central Committee of the Party headed by Chairman Mao sent a new work team to Tachai.

The new work team resolutely carried out Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line, relying closely on the local Party branch and the poor and lower-middle peasants. The investigations made in the movement proved that Tachai Brigade had firmly implemented and defended Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line in the fields of politics, ideology, organization and economy. Tachai was, beyond dispute, a model from which the whole country should learn!

Hsiyang Blossoms Out Like Tachai

1

Late autumn, 1968. The first glimmer of dawn lit up the perspiring face of a man, his coat unbuttoned, who was speeding towards the county town along the rugged winding path on the bank of the Sung-hsi River. It was Chen Yung-kuei, now chairman of Hsiyang County Revolutionary Committee.

Ever since this committee was formed it had led the 180,000 people of the county to follow Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line, learn from Tachai and go all out in capital construction. The county’s output of grain in 1968 broke all previous records.

^{*}This document debunked Liu Shao-chi’s fallacies regarding “the intertwining of the contradictions inside and outside the Party”. It specified that the main target of this movement was “those Party persons in power taking the capitalist road”.

They were now at a new cross-road: should they continue to march boldly forward, or should they rest on their laurels, content with minor improvements and reforms? The committee members were divided on this question. Most were keen to make a thorough job of taming their rivers and transforming their hills. But Chou Wan-yi, the man in charge of water conservancy, argued that during the past two years they had done well enough in learning from Tachai, and tackling Old Man Heaven wasn't easy, so they should take their time.

Chen Yung-kuei regarded these conflicting opinions as essentially part of the struggle between two lines. The key to success in learning from Tachai lay in taking the correct line. So he suggested that, before reaching a decision, the members of the committee should go to different communes and brigades to make detailed investigations on the spot and to consult the poor and lower-middle peasants.

After the meeting, Chen Yung-kuei left the county town. For more than forty days, climbing hills and fording streams, he made his way on foot from village to village, holding discussions and carrying out investigations. He covered pretty well the whole county, his drive and confidence growing the further he went. A blueprint for a new Hsiyang gradually took shape in his mind.

This morning, having completed his tour of the villages, he was hurrying back to the county town for a meeting of the revolutionary committee. They would discuss the masses' opinions and work out a plan for transforming the whole county.

Old Chi was poring over Chairman Mao's works in the committee office when there came a knock at the door. He hurriedly opened it. In stepped Chen Yung-kuei, covered with dust. Pouring a cup of water for him, Chi asked, "Learn much from your trip, Old Chen?"

Smiling, Chen Yung-kuei sat down and began describing what he had seen in the communes and brigades. In conclusion he said, "What the poor and lower-middle peasants want of us can be summed up in one sentence: Stick to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, and have the determination to reconstruct the hills and streams of Hsiyang."

"Fine!" exclaimed Chi. "Let's call a committee meeting right away to put forward this idea of yours."

"It's not my idea," replied Chen Yung-kuei promptly. "It's the demand of the poor and lower-middle peasants in this county."

The next day the revolutionary committee assembled in force. The meeting hall was packed. One after another the committee members expressed their views. When Chi's turn came, he said eagerly, "The people of the whole county are looking to us. We must have the vision and the guts to build up a new Hsiyang! Of all our rivers, the Sunghsi's the most destructive. As the proverb says: To kill a snake you must strike at its head. If we can tame the Sunghsi, it shouldn't be hard to put an end to Hsiyang's backwardness. Let's first tackle South River, that section of the Sunghsi which flows through this town. That will set an example for the rest of the county and lessen the threat of flood here."

This proposal won immediate approval. Even Chou Wan-yi was in favour. "I've learned a lot during this trip to the countryside," he said. "Before, I was rather too conservative. I think Old Chi's suggestion is feasible. We can dig soil from beside South River to build dikes along both banks. This way we can save both labour and material, and get results the same year without affecting agricultural production. This conforms to the general line for getting greater, quicker, better and more economical results in building socialism."

Chou assumed that Chen Yung-kuei and the others would agree with this. But Chi took the floor again. "This way doesn't seem to me thoroughgoing or revolutionary enough," he said. "If we build a big dam across the upper section of South River, we can straighten the channel by cutting through that hill at Chaichiawan. This is the only way to bring the river under permanent control."

His bold suggestion was once again loudly applauded. However, Chou retorted, "Old Chi's enterprising spirit is fine, but his proposal's too risky. It's not as easy as it sounds to cut through a hill. Besides, when the Sunghsi floods, can a single dam hold back that huge spate of water? This is the first water conservancy project to be tackled by our revolutionary committee. Let's not bite off more than we can chew. Better take a scientific attitude and consider the political repercussions."

To refute Chou, Chi cited all the opinions he had collected from the masses. A hot debate ensued.

All this time Chen Yung-kuei remained silent, listening quietly to their arguments. If we cut through the hill at Chaichiawan, he thought, Tungkuang Brigade will lose two hundred *mu* of rich land on the slope. But if we change South River's course we can open up more than 1,200 *mu* of irrigated fields on the old river-bed. Weighing the two alternatives, he decided that Chi's suggestion was the better. He rose from his seat and said, "Come along, comrades, let's shift our meeting place to the river bank." With that he led the way off to Chaichiawan.

Once up the hill, Chen Yung-kuei pointed at the wide river-bed strewn with rocks and pebbles. "See how much land this river has stolen from us," he said. "There used to be a ballad about this county which started:

The River Sunghsi is our county's bane,
Year after year it floods the Hsiyang plain;
In summer floods and dust-storms in the spring
Cause men and cattle endless suffering.

After Liberation, we did consider harnessing the Sunghsi but some people vetoed our plan. Today, after the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, we've all raised our political consciousness in the struggle between the two lines. If we still don't tame this river, how can we face the Party and the people?"

At this point they saw Chi helping an old man up the hill. He was Li Yung-chung, the former poor peasant who was known as the "old steward" of Tungkuang Brigade. Chen Yung-kuei had sent Chi to fetch him.

At sight of Chen Yung-kuei the old man called out: "Chi tells me that our revolutionary committee means to tame South River. We poor and lower-middle peasants are all for it!"

"Right, old brother," said Chen Yung-kuei, smiling. "And how do you think we should go about it? Do the job once and for all, or just tinker with it?"

"Tame it for good!" the old man answered promptly. "This is

like treating a disease: you must cure it completely or it will flare up again."

"What's the best way to handle this then?"

"To my mind," the old man said after some thought, "we should cut a channel through this hill we're standing on. Then we can keep the river under control."

Chen Yung-kuei nodded but Chou Wan-yi objected, "That's a tall order, grandad. Our losses will be heavy if we fail, and think of the bad impression that would make!"

"That's a strange way to talk." Old Yung-chung glanced at Chou sharply. "How come you think only of failure, not of the advantages if we succeed?"

Chou had nothing to say to that.

"Still, old brother," said Chen Yung-kuei, "cutting a channel here would deprive your brigade of two hundred *mu* of good land."

"Old Chen, I'd be lying if I said the loss of that land wouldn't hurt. But we ought to take the long view and keep the whole picture in mind. To stop flooding once for all, it's worth giving up this piece of good land."

The committee members were very moved. "Well said!" exclaimed Chen Yung-kuei with a sweep of his hand. "To transform Hsiyang, we've got to take a long view. If we just sit back content with what we've got, instead of aiming high and forging boldly ahead, we're in fact cowards who take the easy way out. That doesn't tally with Chairman Mao's revolutionary line." Turning to the old man he continued, "When you go back, old brother, talk it over with your Party secretary Old Chao, so that he can be mentally prepared."

"That's all right." Old Yung-chung beamed. "I'll be waiting for the good news that you've started work."

That day Chen Yung-kuei took his colleagues from South River to Chiehtu and from Chiehtu to Yehtou to size up the situation. On the way they had a stimulating discussion. And though it was late by the time they went back to headquarters, they worked out their plan in high spirits and finally passed a stirring resolution: To turn Hsiyang into a Tachai-style county within five years at most!

Early the next morning Chen Yung-kuei went to announce this



decision to the revolutionary committee of Tungkuan Brigade. As he approached the brigade office he heard Li Yung-chung demanding angrily: "Can you achieve communism by clinging to our two hundred *mu* of land?"

Chen Yung-kuei realized that the Party branch secretary must be opposed to this scheme. He pushed the door open and stepped in.

At sight of him, the old man complained, "Old Chen, you never saw such a pig-headed fellow. I've practically worn out my tongue arguing with him the whole of yesterday evening and this morning, but I just wasted my breath — he still can't see sense."

Chao Ching-feng, Party secretary of the brigade, was hanging his head.

"Ching-feng, what do you think about the project?" Chen Yung-kuei asked bluntly.

"Frankly," replied Chao with knitted brows, "I've no objection regarding taming the river. But scrapping those two hundred *mu* of good land would mean smashing Tungkuan's 'rice bowl'."

The fact was that, since learning from Tachai, Tungkuan Brigade had opened up two hundred *mu* of fields with good spongy soil on the slope of the hill. In normal years these yielded at least six hundred catties of grain per *mu*. So the local people said, "Baskets of silver and gold are not as good as Tungkuan's land on the hill." And they called this plot their "rice bowl". For the

crops it produced were more or less enough to fulfil their yearly quota. This, Chen Yung-kuei knew quite well. But to tame South River completely, that rice bowl would have to be smashed.

He patiently explained to Chao, "We Communists mustn't just concern ourselves with our people's immediate interests, forgetting the needs of the whole revolution. Think, once this project's completed, we can open up 1,200 *mu* of fertile land — the size of six of your 'rice bowls'. In view of the loss to your brigade, Old Chao, the revolutionary committee has decided to give you the first two hundred *mu* opened up on the old river-bed. Besides, think what an inspiring

example this will be for our whole county — cutting through a hill to change the course of a river!”

But Chen Yung-kuei's eloquence fell on deaf ears. Chao muttered, "It's not that I'm short-sighted, Old Chen. Of course everybody wants to get rid of floods. But it's easier said than done."

Old Yung-chung pounded his stick on the ground and rapped out, "Is it the land you're worried about, or losing the title 'Advanced Brigade'?"

Li Yung-chung had hit the nail on the head. Ever since 1966 and the start of the Cultural Revolution, Tungkuan had been one of Hsiyang's advanced brigades in learning from Tachai. And Chao had come to feel that to blaze a new trail was risky, to stick to their old successful way was safe. "As long as our output goes up every year, why take unnecessary risks?" — that was his logic. Now that old Yung-chung had exposed his selfish way of thinking to Chen Yung-kuei, Chao flushed with embarrassment. After a pause he muttered half-heartedly, "Since the leadership's made this decision, I'll have to go along with it."

Chao's reluctance was quite evident. Chen Yung-kuei thought: If the leading man in the brigade isn't convinced but we put pressure on him, that may affect the whole project. So he said, "Since you're against the idea, Ching-feng, we'll postpone starting for a while. Still, you'd better get your thinking straightened out. What's the aim of learning from Tachai? What should our attitude be to success? How do you look at these questions?" He added significantly, "Comrade Chao, don't forget we're the vanguard of the proletariat. I'm sure you'll see things in the right light if you face up to the facts."

This talk of postponing the project dismayed Li Yung-chung. "Old Chen," he said, "our people are already assembling in the county town to volunteer their services. What's to be done about them if the project's called off?"

Chen Yung-kuei smiled and said reassuringly, "Old brother, the revolutionary committee has considered all these problems and we have an alternative plan. It would be best to start work on South River. Failing that, we can make a start on the stretch of the river at Chiehtu. Anyway, we're determined to transform Hsiyang!"

Finally the revolutionary committee decided to start the battle at Chiehtu. For several days peasants from the communes had been coming to the county town to volunteer their services. The preparatory work had been speeded up. Chen Yung-kuei spent over half his time at the work-site, discussing the project with the poor and lower-middle peasants.

One day Chi called together some experienced old poor peasants for a meeting at the work-site. When they saw Chen Yung-kuei and Chou Wan-yi approaching, they quickly gathered round them.

"Many useful suggestions have been made," said Chi. "We're just waiting for your decision."

Chen Yung-kuei asked Chi to explain their proposals to Chou.

"After studying the river here," Chi began, "we suggest building a dam in the shape of a bow, because that would give it greater powers of resistance. As to the width of the channel, a hundred and twenty metres should be enough."

"Plenty wide enough," added Grandad Chang. "So long as we build the dam firm as a rock, the flood water will be forced to flow into the channel. At most it will only be able to wash away earth and rocks at the foot of South Hill. And that would widen the channel there, making our dam even safer."

"That's a good scheme." Chou was satisfied. He asked Chen Yung-kuei, "Should we get everybody to discuss our draft budget now?"

"That's simple," put in Grandad Chang before Chen Yung-kuei could speak. "Spend only what's absolutely necessary. Apart from cement, which we can't make ourselves, we can produce all the material we need. And we should try to economize on cement too. For example, the main dam must be solid, with both sides sealed with cement. But the dike and the embankment are under less pressure, so we need only use cement on the sides by the river."

"Excellent," exclaimed Chen Yung-kuei. "That's how we'll do it."

"The masses are the real heroes!" commented Chou Wan-yi.

"It's important to grasp that thoroughly," stressed Chen Yung-kuei. "Remoulding our world outlook can't be done overnight."

On the twenty-third of September a great rally was held to launch the all-out attack on the Chiehtu River. Then, headed by Chen Yung-kuei, the army of commune members more than 1,500 strong marched off to the work-site.

Arrived at Chiehtu, the peasants plunged into battle. Having rolled up his sleeves and tightened the towel round his head, Chen Yung-kuei swung his mattock high and struck the first blow. Instantly the whole contingent went into action.

Blasting shook South Hill, dense smoke billowed to the sky. At the foot of the hill, men with hand carts and shoulder-poles shuttled to and fro with their loads, racing each other on the old riverbed. The ding-dong of hammers on drills, the clanging of spades and the shouts of the labourers aroused the Chiehtu River from its age-long slumber.

Chen Yung-kuei, working away with all his might, knew that the county's future depended to a great extent on the success or failure of this project. The building workers, armed with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, showed tremendous revolutionary drive. At this rate they should be able to complete the main dam three months ahead of schedule.

Chou Wan-yi had never believed this possible. He was very pleased, but at the same time worried, because the supply of rocks and lime could not keep pace with the speeded up construction. The different work groups kept asking him for more material. He rushed right and left trying to keep them all supplied.

Snow was falling. The draughty headquarters of the construction site was bitterly cold. Chou had just poked up the fire and was staring blankly at the flames when someone burst in. It was Chen Yung-kuei, straight from a meeting of the county revolutionary committee. He had groped his way through the dark, braving wind and snow, to see how the workers at Chiehtu were making out.

Chen Yung-kuei was covered from head to foot with snow. Deeply touched by his arrival, Chou hailed him warmly, grasping his hands.

Brushing the snow off his coat, Chen Yung-kuei asked, "Have you seen to it that the workers are all right?"

"They're all staying with the villagers, everything's fine. The work's going with a swing. The only trouble is that the supply of rocks and lime can't keep up. This is a real headache."

"Put the problem to the masses. There's no end to their resourcefulness."

Chou Wan-yi sighed. "These days I've been chasing around the quarry and the lime-kiln, Old Chen," he said. "The comrades there are doing their very best, but they just can't meet the demand for stone and lime."

"We cadres must have faith in the masses. At the same time we must help them with ideas, use our brains. We mustn't just sit back and leave others to find a way out."

Then the two of them went together to the quarry.

South Hill was lit up as brightly as in daytime. Though it was snowing, Chang Chuan-hsiao, the man in charge of quarrying, was working away with his group. When the two cadres arrived, the workers crowded round them.

Chang Chuan-hsiao said, "Old Chen, we've heard that more stones are needed. We've put our heads together and are thinking of trying more powerful explosives. What do you say?"

Looking into Chang's honest eyes, Chen Yung-kuei said encouragingly, "We can at least try. If we fail, we'll think up something else. There's nothing to be afraid of. Paths are trodden out by men."

Bucked by this approval and eager not to hold up the work, Chang and his men decided to try blasting on a larger scale during the lunar New Year holidays.

Soon the lunar New Year came round. Early that morning Chen Yung-kuei set out for the quarry from the county town. He found everything ready at the site. Chang Chuan-hsiao, Chou Wan-yi and the others had drilled an opening one metre high, one metre wide and seventeen metres long and filled it with 2,500 catties of dynamite. The others retreated a safe distance while Chang lit the fuse. As it sizzled and sparked they held their breath, their eyes fixed on the pitch-black opening. One minute, two minutes ... thirty minutes passed

but there was no explosion. The workers turned frantic eyes to Chen Yung-kuei, who thought: Something's gone wrong, I must fix it. He dashed forward. But Chang overtook him and shoved him back, then darted towards the cliff. The atmosphere was even more tense. In a flash, Chang rushed back from the opening, shouting, "Down, quick!" A tremendous explosion shook the whole site, sending a column of smoke up to the sky. When this cleared, they saw half the hill had been blasted away. Chou Wan-yi reckoned that the blast had dislodged more than four thousand cubic metres of rock!

Chen Yung-kuei thought: If we can get more rocks by blasting on a larger scale, why shouldn't we build bigger kilns to produce more lime? He carried out some experiments with Grandad Chang and the men in charge of this work. They succeeded in making a kiln which could fire 300,000 catties of lime, a tenfold increase on the small kiln's output.

Now that the two major obstacles holding up the project had been removed by the heroic people of Hsiyang, the work went ahead fast. Section by section the massive dam rose on the dry river-bed.

But the high water season was approaching. The river was liable to rise suddenly and turbulent waves might submerge the dam's foundation. To go on building now would be dangerous: they could only tamp earth in the gaps until the flood season was over. But this meant delaying the project. This was the problem confronting the dam-builders. Should they go on building the dam or stick to the old rules and just mark time? Chen Yung-kuei pondered this problem day and night.

One day Chou decided to call a meeting to talk the matter over with the heads of the different work groups. As he left headquarters his eye was caught by a big-character poster on the bulletin board:

The River Chiehtu we have come to fight,
And miracles are worked when thinking's right;
Let's battle on and gallop through the mud;
Songs on our lips, we'll build in time of flood;
No flood can daunt us, our resolve is strong:
With iron hands we'll build a new Hsiyang!

This poster galvanized the whole work-site. Groups of workers swarmed to the headquarters to read it, exchanging excited comments. Chou did not know what to do. He copied down the verse and headed as fast as he could to the county town to report to Chen Yung-kuei.

When Chen Yung-kuei heard of the worker's proposal he asked, "Have you discussed in detail how to carry on, Wan-yi?"

Seeing that Chen Yung-kuei took the suggestion seriously, Chou objected, "Old Chen, I've never heard of dam-building during the high water season. It's like carrying a drum on your back — asking for a drubbing. We're hoping to steer clear of the Dragon King, how can we thrust our heads into his mouth?"

Chen Yung-kuei realized the need for caution. But he did not approve of Chou's attitude. "Had you ever heard of quarrying rocks by blasting on a big scale or using a big kiln to burn lime?" he retorted. "But we succeeded in doing both at Chiehtu."

"This is different," Chou insisted stubbornly. "If anything went wrong we'd lose pots of money — and maybe men's lives too."

"Just because so much is at stake, we must be very careful to work out a feasible plan. If the masses make good suggestions, we should back them up to the hilt and discuss them seriously, instead of pouring cold water on them. Just what steps to take, we haven't yet worked out. However, we should first consult the masses and not ignore their proposals."

The shack serving as the work-site headquarters was packed with group leaders and representatives of the poor and lower-middle peasants. This meeting had been called by Chen Yung-kuei to discuss the possibility of continuing work on the dam during the high water season. Many arguments in favour were put forward. By going ahead they could complete the project and start profiting from it earlier than planned; the long warm days in summer would make it easier to work in the water, while the damp nights would enable the cement to set well. All this would speed up the project and ensure its quality.

Beaming, Chen Yung-kuei suggested, "How about concentrating our forces to tackle section by section? Then, if the river rises suddenly, it can't wash away what we've built."

This proposal met with a chorus of approval. The only dissenting voice was that of Chou Wan-yi. "Getting as far as we have here has not been easy," he objected. "Failure now would cost us too dear. I'm against this plan."

But since Chen Yung-kuei's proposal had practically unanimous support, he said, "Comrades, we should have confidence in our ability to do this job and faith in the strength and wisdom of the masses. The urgent task now is to get all the needed material ready. Remember that, strategically, we must despise all difficulties but, tactically, we must take them seriously. Let's first build a temporary dike beside the dam, to be ready for the worst."

All agreed to this. Only Chou sat there saying nothing. Knowing that he was still unconvinced, Chen Yung-kuei took time after the meeting to help him with his ideological problem. Then Chou consented, grudgingly, to go along with the plan.

In June, before the high water season arrived, a long dike had been completed alongside the site of the dam. Grey rocks, yellow sand, heaps of lime and sacks of cement were piled up at the work-site — all was ready. The dam-builders, determined to race the flood, were fighting round the clock at Chiehtu.

At noon one day, Chen Yung-kuei was hoeing a terraced field on Tiger-head Hill when he spotted dark clouds gathering in the south-east. In less than the time it takes to smoke a pipe, these clouds had massed and turned an ominous black. They were pressing down on the hills near Hungshan, the neighbouring commune. Chen Yung-kuei turned to look towards Chiehtu. Above it there were only a few white clouds. But he knew from years of experience that any moment now the weather would break and there would be a heavy downpour over the upper reaches of the Sunghsi. How was the work going at Chiehtu? With his hoe on his shoulder he dashed back to Tachai. In the brigade office he put through an urgent phone call to warn the work-site headquarters of the storm. He then hurried off to the construction site.

Chou Wan-yi was consternated by Chen Yung-kuei's warning. He immediately organized men to move away the tools and sacks of

cement at the site. They were busy doing this when Chen Yung-kuei arrived.

"We plunged into action the moment we received your call," Chou announced. "Now we're moving the cement away."

Chen Yung-kuei approved of this, but his face fell when he saw that no sandbags or rocks had been brought to the dike ready for an emergency.

"What if the dike's breached?" he demanded.

At once Chou grasped the danger of this. And now the wind sprang up, thunder rumbled, lightning flashed. Rain poured down so hard that they could not keep their eyes open. Chen Yung-kuei at once led the men to fight the storm by rushing rocks and straw sacks filled with earth to the dike, while a shock troop headed by Chou strengthened the dike. They were hard at work when, with a tremendous roar, the turbid, foaming flood waters swept down on them.

The water pounded the dam but it stood firm! Then the torrent rushed past it to buffet the dike and carried off layer after layer of its soil. Every second the river was rising. Consumed with anxiety, Chen Yung-kuei thought: If the dike gives way, the flood will swallow up all the material and tools on the work-site. The political effect will be even more serious. Not stopping to wipe his streaming face, he grabbed up a sack weighing over a hundred catties and battled his way against the gale to the dike. Meanwhile the torrent was sweeping away both earth and stones from the dike. Chou Wan-yi was frantic. But the sight of Chen Yung-kuei and the rest charging so fearlessly into the teeth of the storm restored his confidence and gave him fresh courage.

Now waves were pounding the dike with a roar like thunder. All of a sudden a huge wave leapt over it. Crash!

"The dike's breached!" some workers yelled.

Water surged through the breach like wild chargers. Another second and the river brimmed its banks. Chou, standing aghast on the dike, saw a worker holding a sandbag jump into the breach. With a wave of his hand Chou shouted: "Follow me, comrades!" He seized a sandbag and jumped into the river. One after another



the workers followed suit. Erect in the waist-high water, hand-in-hand and shoulder-to-shoulder, they formed a wall which no torrent could break or sweep away. Chen Yung-kuei and others splashed through the muddy water to bring them more sandbags and rocks. The poor and lower-middle peasants of Chiehtu Brigade also came rushing over to join in this fierce battle against the flood. At last the towering waves had to bow their heads before these heroes and flow abjectly downstream.

The breach was closed, the flood defeated. Chou, though drenched, was warm at heart. This soul-stirring struggle helped him to grasp the great truth of Chairman Mao's teaching: **"The masses are the real heroes."**

This victorious battle against the flood further strengthened the confidence of the dam-builders. In less than half a year's time, a dike two thousand metres long and a massive dam were erected under the very nose of the Dragon King.

3

The triumphant completion of the Chiehtu dam thrilled the 180,000 people of Hsiyang, strengthening their determination to subdue their barren hills and turbulent rivers, to make new contributions to socialist construction.

Chen Yung-kuei thought: 'The whole county's mobilized now. How can we heighten the masses' enthusiasm and speed up their advance? The directives issued by Chairman Mao and the Party on strengthening the ranks of the cadres ideologically and organizationally were ringing in his ears. He understood that his first task was to further remould the world outlook of the cadres by raising their political consciousness in class struggle and the struggles between the two lines, so that they could take the lead in the revolution. After discussion with Chi and some other comrades, he called a meeting at the Chiehtu dam of the county revolutionary committee and the cadres from different communes, brigades and teams.

Chen Yung-kuei took these cadres to see the dam and the dike and then to inspect the embankment. He described to them the whole process of construction. All were moved and learned a lesson.

Old Li, Party secretary of Hsikupi Brigade, stood up and declared, "Old Chen, before the Cultural Revolution our brigade wanted to build a dike but some big shots in the county vetoed it. Now all our commune members have talked it over. We've resolved to cut through Chailing Hill to straighten the Sunghsi there, so as to reclaim 1,200 *mu* from that bend in the river."

Chen Yung-kuei thought: If a brigade like Hsikupi can handle such a project, that will spur on the rest of the county. "How many cubic metres of earth will you have to move?" he asked eagerly.

"More than half a million."

"How long will it take?"

"Some technicians say it'll take seven and a half years if all of us pitch in."

People were staggered.

"How will you go about it then?" asked Chen Yung-kuei.

"Our poor and lower-middle peasants have a good answer to that," boomed Li. "If the Foolish Old Man and his family could move two mountains, our 160 households can certainly cut through one Chai-ling Hill!"

This bolstered the morale of all the rest.

Another man leapt to his feet and strode over to Chen Yung-kuei. It was Chao Ching-feng from Tungkuan Brigade. Flushed with emotion he said, "If we can pull off such a grand project at Chiehtu and if Hsikupi Brigade all on its own dares to cut through a hill, what have we in Tungkuan to fear? I used to be too set in my ways, afraid of wolves ahead and tigers behind. Now, on behalf of Tungkuan Brigade, I ask the county revolutionary committee's permission to launch an attack on South River straight away!"

This touched off a series of requests from other brigades to tackle new fighting tasks. The meeting turned into a rally to pledge determination to go into battle and win!

Chen Yung-kuei thought jubilantly: This Chiehtu project has proved a call to arms and has taught the cadres a good lesson. Rising to his feet he declared, "We must bring into play the spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle to turn Hsiyang into a Tachai-type county. As the saying goes: When men are of one heart, they can move mountains. Unity is strength. We must march unflinchingly along Chairman Mao's revolutionary line."

The day that the South River project started, old Li Yung-chung was ill. When he heard that Chen Yung-kuei was working with the other commune members at the construction site, he wanted to leave his *kang* and join him there. But his daughter-in-law would not hear of such a thing.

"Old Chen has so much on his hands yet he comes to work here with us," said the old man. "This old trouble of mine is nothing. How can I lie here idle? Even if it kills me, I must see with my own eyes how our Old Chen, carrying out Chairman Mao's teachings, builds happiness for our children and children's children."

His daughter-in-law, though touched, insisted that he was too ill to go out. She locked the door and went to the work-site herself. Old Yung-chung had to wait restlessly at home till his grandson came

back from school. Then a spade on his shoulder, taking his grandson's arm, he hobbled to the work-site.

Chen Yung-kuei hurried over to support him. "Old brother, you're ill," he said with concern. "You should take good care of your health."

The old man grasped Chen Yung-kuei's hands and replied with a smile, "The news that work had started on South River completely cured me. Last year, after you left, I lambasted Ching-feng all night!"

"But now, it's he who's asking to break up the 'rice bowl'," chuckled Chen.

"Hey there, Old Chen!" They heard a shout from Chao Ching-feng. "I've tracked you down at last." When asked what he wanted, Chao grinned. "Some of our cadres and poor peasants have just held a meeting. They want to send fifty more of our strongest men to aid the South River project. What do you say, grandad?"

Stroking his beard, the old man beamed. "Well, Ching-feng, remember, we can't build communism in Tungkuan alone."

"Will that affect your production?" asked Chen Yung-kuei.

"Where there's a will there's a way," responded Chao. "We can help the construction without neglecting production."

"Spoken like a Communist!" Chen Yung-kuei approved. "That's the spirit we need in making revolution."

In the winter of that year various land-reclamation and water-conservancy projects started one after another in Hsiyang. Chen Yung-kuei's load became heavier, especially as the South River and Hsikupi projects required a great deal of man-power to shift large amounts of soil and rock. If they used nothing but carts and shoulder-poles, this work would take a long time. They must find some better way of doing things. He recalled the three battles of Wolf Lair, in which huge rocks had been carried for miles by the torrent, and the flood of 1963 which had washed half a hill about sixty yards away. Why not harness these turbulent waters to shift soil and rocks at Chaichiawan to benefit the people? Chen Yung-kuei told Chao and old Yung-chung his idea. They approved it but pointed out that the high water season was still a long way off.

Just then, along came Chou Wan-yi. When he heard this proposal he said thoughtfully: "There's plenty of water in the reservoir at Kuochuang. They are planning to open the sluice-gate in a day or two to try out the channels."

"Fine!" exclaimed Chen Yung-kuei. "While they test the east channel, we can use the rest of the water to flush the South River site and silt up Chiehtu's old river-bed. Make this water work for us!"

Some days later, at Chen Yung-kuei's suggestion, Chao Ching-feng withdrew more than five hundred men from the construction site. They dug a narrower channel than that originally planned and worked quickly. When the whole length was completed, Chen Yung-kuei gave the order to open the sluice-gate of Kuochuang reservoir. As the water poured out it swept away the soil on both banks of the river at Chaichiawan, so that the channel widened rapidly. Meanwhile workers directed by Chen Yung-kuei and Chao shovelled earth into the water and blasted rocks away with dynamite. Tons of soil and rock were carried downstream to Chiehtu. In this way the project was greatly speeded up. In no time Chou Wan-yi and his team at Chiehtu levelled more than a thousand *mu* of irrigated fields with the fertile silt washed down there.

"Talk about full utilization of all resources!" everybody gloated.

Now the Hsiyang people clearly saw their way to transforming their hills and rivers. Led by Chen Yung-kuei and the county revolutionary committee, they forged steadily ahead along Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, and by dint of three years' arduous struggle succeeded in turning the whole of Hsiyang County into a bigger Tachai.

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

Chu Yu-yuan

The Young Herdswoman

Like the swift receding of a tidal race
The vast herd wheels and scatters;
With a whirlwind's frenzy the horses swerve
First to the right, then to the left.

Who is this girl on a flying mount
That outruns the swiftest in the herd?
Like a streak of fire her chestnut mare
Flashes along the Huolin river bank.

Many eyes watch her lift the pole and noose;
The whole wide grassland seems to swirl around her;
Once a Red Guard, received by Chairman Mao,
Now she herds horses in the Ulanhada Commune.

Through driving rainstorms she rounds up the colts,
In blizzards at night, she drives off hungry wolves;
"To watch this brave youngster," an old herdsman says,
"Is sweeter and more warming than a cup of wine."

Many fine horses stream past her now;
Gay Chrysanthemum, Sea Serpent and Snow White. . . .
Why does she hesitate, the old herdsman wonders,
Why not drop the noose over one fine arching neck?

It's not that she is dazzled by those flying manes,
But, because her choice will convey all the herdsman's love,
With the greatest care she'll select none but the finest mounts,
To be sent to our cavalry on the far frontier.



Chu Yu-yuan

Ulan Bulgod, the Red Eagle

A young hero is acclaimed on the Kolchin Steppe,
Named Ulan Bulgod, which means Red Eagle.
Everyone tells tales of brave exploits
As numerous as the wild flowers that cover our grasslands.

Some tell how Red Eagle walked three days and nights
Through sleet and snow to save a flock of sheep;
Others, how Ulan Bulgod with clothes soaked in water,
Plunged into a blazing fire to rescue winter fodder.

So on horseback I gallop over the wide Kolchin Steppe,
Impatient to find and interview this hero;
Many I meet have the same name, but when questioned,
They all reply, "Oh no, that wasn't me!"

The first I met was a young girl herding sheep,
The second was a young chap on a tractor's seat,
The third was going to teach some scattered pupils,
Another was transporting goods for sale.

Finally, confused, I called on an old herdsman
And said, "Where can I find this young hero?"
Pointing to circling eagles in the sky, he asked,
"Comrade, which young eagle are you looking for?"

While I stared at him bewildered,
His laughter rang out loud and clear. "We herdsmen
Call all school-leavers who settle here, Ulan Bulgod,
For are they not all fine red eagles?"



Our Rubber Plantation

Mountains loom through the morning mist,
Cheerful songs resound in the valleys;
On dew-spangled grass we go to gather precious sap,
Tapping the rubber trees on our jade-green plantation.

With sharp, well-honed knives in hand,
When we start to cut, the shavings fly;
Swiftly with skilful strokes we encircle each trunk,
Adorning it with a silver necklace.

In the deep green sea of our plantation,
To and fro our silent shadows glide,
Then through fingers thick and calloused,
With pearly gleam, the milky latex flows.

Drip, drip, the precious liquid fills our bowls,
So milky white, so milky white,

May it flow to our factories in a mighty river,
And there be processed into the finest rubber.

Sunlight gilds the whole plantation,
Tans the eager smiling faces of our youth;
To our motherland's new rubber plantations
Each year, spring and fresh youthful workers come.



Chen Chien-kung

“Iron-Shoulders” Tackles a New Task

Section Chief Ho Chang-mao was worried stiff.

All through Yenling Colliery could be heard the shouting of slogans, the din of gongs and drums. Bucked by the news of the Tenth Party Congress, each section was working out plans to increase production and the miners were itching to plunge into new battles. Just at this time, however, Fourth Section's Party secretary was transferred. Ho as section chief was so frantic that he kept badgering the leadership to assign them a new Party secretary at once.

Then he was notified by the colliery Party committee that his old mate Yuan Chen-feng would be coming the next day to take up this post. Yuan and he had served their apprenticeship under the same master before Liberation. So this good news made Ho grin from ear to ear.

All the miners hereabouts knew of Yuan Chen-feng, “Iron-Shoulders Yuan”. And Ho, of course, had known him from way back. In recent years Yuan had been in charge of a pit a dozen miles away. To have him back as Party secretary of their section would be just grand.

Fairly walking on air, Ho hurried back to his office and put through a call to Yuan. At the sound of Yuan's voice his face lit up and he shouted: "Hey, old mate! All the sections here are getting set for a new contest. Have you figured out a way for us to get off to a flying start?"

Yuan answered: "Don't worry, Tiger. You'll have plenty to get your teeth into, I promise you."

Ho rang off feeling still more jubilant.

The next morning a truck drew up outside with a blast on its horn. Ho ran out shouting: "Old Yuan!" But the driver simply tossed down a small bedding-roll. Ho looked at it blankly and asked: "Why hasn't Old Yuan come?"

"He just told me to bring his luggage," said the driver.

Ho rang up Yuan's office, only to be informed that Yuan had left first thing with his bedding-roll. Strange! Where the devil could he have gone?

Towards dusk it started to drizzle. Wet evenings were always bitterly cold in the mountains. Draping his padded jacket over his shoulders, Ho looked out of the window. Soon pouring rain was pelting against the pane. Where could Old Yuan be all this time? He'd contracted arthritis down in the pit in the old days. If he got caught in this rain his legs would start aching again.

Suddenly the door creaked open. Ho spun round. On the threshold stood a man of medium height, rather lean, with a clean-cut jaw and bushy black eyebrows. His clothes were drenched. Ho bounded forward to pull him into the room. "Old Yuan!" he exclaimed. "Come in and warm up, quick."

Brushing the rain from his face with the back of one hand, Yuan answered slowly: "What do you take me for? I'm not made of straw. A few drops of rain can't hurt me."

"Where have you been?"

"I went to see Master Lu."

Their former master Lu Yu-chiang was more than sixty and had retired four years previously. He lived over a dozen miles away on the other side of the mountain.

Ho filled a basin with hot water, dropped a towel into it, and carried it over to Yuan. "Why go today of all days?" he demanded. "I've pretty well worn out my eyes watching for you."

"I had to see Old Lu. And I've brought you a present from him."

"Fine. But I've something to show you first." With this Ho passed Yuan a handsomely bound album on the cover of which were the words: Fourth Section's Glorious Record.

Yuan leafed through the album. On each page were cuttings from newspapers reporting the achievements of this section, with the dates and page numbers carefully appended.

Pointing to different items in turn, Ho kept up a running commentary. "See that? My idea, carried out by our smart youngsters... In '48, that was, when the two of us were decorated for our support of the front... Here's the '58 honours list with our names on it as advanced workers... And now we've teamed up again. We've made a name in the mine as a go-ahead section. In this coming battle for coal we must hit the headlines again."

Yuan smiled but made no comment. Ho's words had called up so many memories: As boys they had gone down the pit to haul coal together. Having no towels, they had sawed an ox-bone in two and used it to scrape off the sweat and grime on their faces and, to save oil, they had shared one lamp between them. So he had known Ho's character through and through. But these achievements which Ho took such pride in belonged to the past; they could not vouch for the present, much less for the future. Besides, in Yuan's view, Ho set too much store by these past honours. So taking out Old Lu's present and putting it on the desk, he said: "Now see what I've brought you, Old Ho."

The thing was wrapped in a white towel. Ho eagerly undid it. It proved to contain nothing but a lump of coal the size of a man's fist. Ho roared with laughter. "What's the idea? Whole trainloads of this stuff pass my door every day. I thought it was something special."

Yuan drew a pamphlet from his pocket. "Read this, then you'll see the value of this coal."

Rather sceptically Ho glanced through the pamphlet. It was the "Retrenchment Plan for Yenling Colliery" produced under the influence of Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line before the Cultural Revolution. In those days, he remembered, the management had been so profit-orientated that only rich seams were worked, poor seams were abandoned. As a result, no more than forty per cent of the coal in the whole area was mined, after which the pits were pronounced worked out and condemned. Ho and Yuan had been heading Fourth Section at the time. When the pit they were working in was closed down, their old master Lu said nothing but took a lump of good coal from the pit and wrapped it in his towel. This had happened ten years ago.

With a laugh Ho said: "So you sloshed through the rain today just to rake up this ancient history."

"That's right. It needs raking up." Arching his eyebrows Yuan continued grimly: "If not for the Cultural Revolution, in another four years this whole colliery would have closed down. We're both of us Party members. Can we allow sixty per cent of our good coal to be chucked away? This mine wasn't opened till the fifties; how can we let it be closed down in the seventies?"

"What's your idea then?" Ho put down the cigarette he had just taken up.

"We must get permission to re-open those derelict pits."

Ho was staggered. He had been hoping that Yuan would help him select some rich coal seam, then get the whole section to go all out and break new records. Now it seemed that he wanted to pick the bones of some derelict pit instead. Ho spat in disgust. Of course, there is still a good deal of coal in those pits which were closed down, and it should be mined, he thought. . . . But if we did that, we wouldn't fulfil our quota. That would spoil Fourth Section's fine record. With a rueful laugh he said: "Still the same Old Yuan, always putting me on the spot. Well, let's turn in now. We can talk this over tomorrow."

Yuan, however, picked up his satchel from the desk and took out some works by Marx, Lenin and Chairman Mao. Rigging up a newspaper to keep the light off Ho's bed, he urged him: "You turn in first."

In fact, Yuan did not sleep a wink all night. He was aching in every joint, plagued by his arthritis. When the rain stopped and the moon appeared above the western hills, he got painfully out of bed. He wanted to go with Ho to inspect the disused pits and have a good talk; but Ho was still snoring and, remembering that he had not slept too well that night, Yuan quietly tucked in his bedding. By the faint light of the moon, he wrote a message on the blackboard. Then he set off, alone, up the mountain.

Yuan's cloth shoes were soon wet through from stepping in puddles; stabs of pain shot through his knees; however, he trudged on regardless, in his mind a picture of Ho's anxious face. Old Ho had changed in the few years since they last worked together. Prestige had proved a millstone round his neck, immobilizing this tough, husky miner. Lost in thought, Yuan passed Centipede Chasm, climbed Grey Rock Slope and reached the foot of Cloudy Cliff. This craggy cliff had very few footholds or handholds. Climbing it was hazardous at the best of times, much more so now that it was slippery after rain. But the only way to get a bird's-eye view of the whole area was to climb to the top. With a smile Yuan told himself: To capture a tiger-cub you must enter the tiger's lair. He tightened his belt and climbed further up until he had a good view of the hills and valleys below.

The panorama of the whole mining region lay stretched before him in the pale light of dawn. Wisps of distant smoke and the echoes of distant sirens brought gladness to his heart. He had gazed at this mountain landscape innumerable times. Having tasted all the bitterness of the old society, it filled him with happiness and pride to see this mining region blossom out after Liberation like a withered tree reviving in spring. . . .

When Ho woke up, he set off in search of Yuan. The sun was just coming out when he caught him up. Yuan, his muddy clothes gilded by the golden sunlight, was poring over a geological chart. Ho panted up to him and proposed: "All right. Let's go back and ask the Party committee's permission to re-open the old pits. Then no one can accuse us of winning our reputation the easy way."

This sudden enthusiasm tickled Yuan, who said: "Look here, let's wait until you're really convinced. We can talk it over. I don't want to force your hand."

Ho made a sweeping gesture. "I thought it over all last night," he said. "I know the best place to start: just below Grey Rock Slope. You can take my word for it, there's good coal there."

At this Yuan laughed up his sleeve: No wonder you're so bucked, champing on the bit — it's because you think you're on to a good thing. He asked: "Is Grey Rock Slope all that good? I doubt it."

"I had another look at it just now," Ho chortled. "It has the richest unworked seams of all the derelict pits."

"It's a pity it's so small."

"Small? It's quite big enough for us to fulfil our year's quota easily."

Yuan laughed outright. "Suppose it is, mate; what about next year? What about the colliery as a whole?"

Ho grinned and brushed the question aside. "Never mind that. To fulfil this year's quota in one of the condemned pits is quite good enough. Do we have to think years ahead?"

Yuan chose a dry spot and sat down. Taking out his tobacco pouch, he started rolling a cigarette. "Look over there." He jerked his head. "What do you think of the starting place I've picked?"

"Where?"

"Black Eagle Gully." Yuan struck a match and lit his cigarette.

"Black Eagle Gully?" Ho gaped. He took a few steps forward, then pointing down the mountain bellowed: "Can't you see all the faults and all the cleavage there, man?"

"Sure, I see them."

"Freshets flow down that gully. There may be seepage. Don't you see that?"

"Of course." Yuan went on placidly smoking his cigarette. Ho mopped his perspiring face. "So you know there's the danger of seepage and caving in. Re-opening closed pits is tricky enough without tackling the worst of the lot. Tell me, what made you pick Black Eagle Gully?"



"Falls of ground and seepage are just what we should tackle."

"Are you set on slowing us up?"

"Don't worry. We'll fulfil our quota. That's our first duty if we want to debunk the old revisionist line and get these disused pits back into production. But we're not doing this for the sake of being commended, we're doing it so as to bring the old pits back to life."

"Bring them back to life?"

Yuan nodded and passed him the geological map. All the freshet channels and geological faults north, south, east and west were clearly marked with red pencil.

"See how tricky this terrain is," said Yuan. "If we can crack the hardest nut, Black Eagle Gully, and find out a way to lick seepage and subsidence, we'll have the initiative in our hands when we take on the whole area. In addition to fulfilling our quota, we'll be bringing our whole colliery back to life."

Yuan's far-sightedness and selflessness opened up a new vista for Ho. Taking the mud-stained map in his hands, he glanced at his old mate's greying temples and lined forehead. "You're still young at heart, Iron-Shoulders!" he exclaimed.

The news that Fourth Section was going to re-open old pits stirred the whole colliery.

There was talk of nothing else in the miners' hostel. They let their tea and food grow cold and littered the floor with cigarette butts. A dozen or so old hands and youngsters had squatted down, arguing hotly, and were making sketches in chalk on the cement floor. The argument had raged all morning until Yuan urged everyone to go and have lunch. But now, bringing back their rice-bowls, they were hard at it again.

The debate was at its liveliest when Ho arrived and joined in. Though his brows were still knitted, his pessimism was gone. In fact, he could hardly get over all the support and encouragement they had received from the leadership, the miners and other outfits.

"Old Ho," cried Yuan, "they've put forward a dozen plans for getting coal, thought up dozens of difficulties to overcome, and work-

ed out at least a hundred ways to cope. It's true that when men pull together they can move mountains! Suppose the two of us call on Old Lu again and hear what he has to suggest. . . ."

"Here I am!" A booming voice cut short his words. And there was Old Lu in the doorway, beaming, a safety helmet over his grizzled hair, his clean-shaven face ruddy with health. He had come fully equipped with lamp, overalls, boots and canteen.

"Master Lu!" Yuan strode forward to take the old man's things, asking cheerfully: "Are you moving?"

"You could call it that. I'm coming back to the front."

As Yuan remained silent, too moved to speak, the old miner pulled himself up and slapped his chest. "Well? Do you think me too old?"

"That's just fine," said Yuan. "You're taken on as our adviser!"

Ho, striding swiftly back to his office, passed blackboards covered with pledges and challenges written by the miners and letters of support from other sections. He turned, both hands on his hips, and called back to Yuan who was following more slowly: "It only dawned on me today that I'm a conservative numskull. Suppose we put up a pledge this evening, guaranteeing to get cracking straight after New Year — get off to a flying start. Let the whole mine know our good news!"

"You call that good news? I don't think it's good enough."

"What other bright ideas have you?" asked Ho eagerly.

"Bright ideas only come from the masses. Let's spend the evening listening to their proposals."

Late that night, Yuan came back from the miners' hostel by moonlight. The young workers had suggested various ways of making the best use of manpower and equipment so as to achieve a big leap in production. Many problems which had been weighing on his mind were now solved. Though he was walking slowly, his blood was racing.

Soon after he reached the office he heard Ho's steps outside. Yuan threw open the door and told him: "Old Ho, those youngsters have made a smashing, really daring, proposal."

"What is it?"

Yuan pulled over a chair for Ho. "It's this: Don't be in a hurry to get coal the first month, but concentrate on opening up the work face."

Ho's jaw dropped. He thought this over, then objected: "We've decided to re-open the old pits, and we've picked the hardest of the lot — Black Eagle Gully. It's quite a job we're tackling. If we can get off to a flying start, so much the better. Why delay?"

"If we're in such a hurry to get coal that we concentrate all our men on one small work face, that'll be a big waste of manpower. Instead of aiming at quick results we should take a comprehensive, long-term view..."

Yuan's eyes gleamed under the lamplight. Well-reasoned arguments poured from his lips like a brook tumbling down the mountain. Ho, rubbing his sweaty hands, felt as refreshed as after a drink of clear spring water in summer. The railway outside the window was brightly lit up. Swift as wind, like golden serpents winding through the mountains, glided mine-cars loaded with coal. And Ho's eyes flashed like the sparks on the overhead cables as he watched the coal speeding past. He realized that Yuan never thought of personal kudos: all he thought of was shouldering heavier and heavier loads. Scratching his bearded chin, with a sheepish smile he admitted: "I guess this idea of building up prestige has been my trouble all along. I couldn't see any further than our Fourth Section."

Early the next morning, whistle blasts and the tramp of feet awoke the slumbering hills and ushered in a new day. The first trainload of miners rolled off towards Black Eagle Gully. Yuan and Ho, watching the rails golden in the sunlight and the rows of bright miners' lanterns close behind them, turned to each other with smiles of satisfaction. The train whistled and gathered speed, charging up slope after slope; and soon, the air above Black Eagle shaft swirled with smoke and sparks and was rent by huge explosions, proclaiming the start of a new life for the old pit.

Illustrated by Kao Chuan

Hidden Beauties

That year spring came rather early. Less than two months after mid-winter the weather turned warm. The wind was balmy and the thaw complete.

One morning early, to the rhythmic clatter of hoofs, a horse-drawn cart loaded with fresh vegetables rolled along a highway south of Peking. Behind the carter sat two men. One, in his fifties, named Chi Chang-kuan, was the Party secretary of Yellow-flower Ridge Brigade. A square-jowled man with sharp eyes beneath bushy brows, his blue padded jacket was unbuttoned, exposing his tanned chest. The other, Tsou Fang, was the newly-elected deputy leader of the brigade. He was a brawny youngster, broad-shouldered and ruddy-faced. He appeared excited as he gazed into the distance towards the capital, shrouded in mist, hazily silhouetted against the opaque sky.

"Old Party secretary, we're nearly there, aren't we?" asked Tsou.

"First turn after the next crossing," answered Chi.

The carter's red-tasselled whip cracked again as the cart, having passed a cross-road, turned to head for the heart of the city. Slowly



it lumbered through a busy shopping district and finally halted before the doors of a food market. Already lined-up beside the pavement were carts from several other brigades, and the market assistants were helping drivers and vegetable-growers to unload their hampers. The arrival of the cart from Yellow-flower Ridge immediately attracted attention, for its load was certainly eye-arresting. There were red tomatoes and green cucumbers straight from the hothouse, plump cauliflowers and fresh young spinach from the open-air hot-beds. Even the turnips were of three varieties: Ivory White, Red Globe and Hidden Beauty, the last famed for the rosy flesh inside its thin jade-green skin. A crowd soon clustered round the cart to look at these choice out-of-season vegetables; there were many comments and cries of admiration.

"Look, how crisp and fresh they are!" said one.

"What a wonderful variety of vegetables for this time of year!" echoed another. "This must have taken some doing."

These remarks delighted the carter. "Hear that?" he whispered to the Party secretary and Tsou. "Our first spring load is making quite a hit."

"Don't be so cock-sure," answered Chi, shaking his head.

"We mustn't let such praise go to our heads," remarked Tsou who was helping the driver unload the cart. "We must hear what the customers have to say to know whether they're really satisfied or not."

Chi nodded approval. "You're right. But we won't learn much if we ask them point-blank. We must watch and use our brains. We must correct shortcomings they point out and also figure out for ourselves if we've failed in some way or other that they overlook. . . ."

While they were chatting, Young Sung, who served at the vegetable counter, came gaily tripping up behind them. She was a tall, slender girl with beautiful expressive eyes, still wearing her hair in long braids. Glancing at the newly-arrived hampers, then at the back of the Party secretary, with arms akimbo she raised her voice to say, "When I see these tender greens and flaming scarlets, I know they've come from Yellow-flower Ridge."

At this Chi spun round. "Ah, so it's you!"

Briskly tossing back her plaits, Young Sung clasped the old man by the hand and said warmly, "Old Party secretary, don't go back yet. Help me to fix up the shelves and serve, will you?"

"To be frank, we came along just for that very purpose," answered Chi.

"Skip it!" Young Sung winked at Young Tsou. "You haven't come to help *me*. All you're interested in is our customers. . . ."

"I'll kill two birds with one stone," replied Chi. "Aren't city people and country folk all one big family?"

This warm exchange between the Party secretary and the young woman amused Tsou Fang. Inside the market he noticed that some of the shelves behind the counters were still empty, so he took up a hamper of Hidden Beauty turnips and dumped them onto one of the shelves. Young Sung, who did not know him, simply nodded. But when Tsou returned with a hamper of white turnips and unloaded them in the same way, the girl frowned.

"Hey, gently there!" she cried. "Ivory Whites are more tender than Hidden Beauties and easily damaged. They sell for a higher price too."

Tsou was flummoxed. He knew quite well that the girl was right and he shouldn't have handled the turnips so roughly. To excuse himself, however, he said sheepishly, "This is the first time I've come here to help with sales. . . ."

"Maybe," said the girl. "But you're not a new hand at market-gardening or handling vegetables. And you know the prices of different varieties, don't you?"

A bit embarrassed, the young man simply stood there not knowing what to say till Chi came to his rescue. "Tsou Fang, Young Sung here's a good-natured girl and very frank; she only thinks of protecting her customers." Then he turned to the girl and added, "You mean well, but you haven't hit the nail on the head. Our best things don't always fetch the highest price. We don't know yet which turnips the customers will consider the best value for their money, do we?"

Young Sung smiled ruefully and cast a disarming glance at Tsou Fang, who just nodded.

The Party secretary started then to arrange the different turnips on the shelves in geometrical designs of green and red against a white background. This he did with neatness and speed. Young Sung beamed and handed him a knife, saying: "Old Party secretary, carve a few flowers out of turnips to make a fine display for our customers, will you?" Without a word Chi took up a Hidden Beauty and deftly peeled thin layer after layer till instead of a turnip he held up a full-blown red peony. It was amazingly life-like. He did the same with some others till the shelves were gaily decorated with flowers.

"Old Party secretary," cried Young Sung, clapping. "You really have clever hands!"

"Cut it out!" Chi looked critically at the shelves. "Before the market opens, there's still time for you people to tell us how to improve our work." So saying, he went off with Young Sung to ask the other salesmen for their suggestions.

As soon as the market opened it was thronged with people. And customers paused before the vegetable stalls to admire the attractive, colourful display, especially the turnip flowers. Chi was briskly and methodically selecting and weighing different vegetables for housewives and other buyers while taking every chance to chat with them. Eager to help, Tsou Fang looked round and decided he would sell turnips, which seemed comparatively easy to handle. So he went behind the turnip counter and began shouting a costermonger's cry:

Red Globe goes well with any dish,
Hidden Beauty is as sweet as you could wish,
Ivory White makes an excellent soup,
Come buy! I'll serve from any group.

People began to flock to his counter, some choosing one kind or another and still more buying some of all three. Tsou Fang was kept so busy that his forehead was soon beaded with sweat.

Towards noon a middle-aged woman came hurrying in. When she saw the turnip-peonies she smiled and pushed her big basket towards Tsou, saying: "Comrade, I want a full basket of Hidden Beauties."

"Right you are," said Tsou. He was just turning round when he felt a firm hand on his arm and Chi told him, "Look at your shelves."

Tsou was dumbfounded to find that there were only a few Hidden Beauties left. The Red Globes were nearly all gone too, but there were still plenty of Ivory Whites.

"Will Ivory White do? ..." he asked, scratching his head.

"You must be a new hand here," said the woman with a friendly smile. "I'm an old customer and I always buy Hidden Beauties. These turnips are not only good to eat but they help cure coughs and colds."

"I'm afraid we've run out..." said Tsou.

Chi quickly cut in. "The trouble is we didn't sow enough last summer, so we're short of supply. If you'll give us your address we'll get in some more and send them to your home."

"Oh, I wouldn't dream of troubling you," said the woman. "Thank you all the same." Saying this, she turned and disappeared into the crowd.

When Tsou Fang took a side-ways look at Chi he saw that the Party secretary, usually so unruffled, was knitting his brows as he gazed at the heaps of unsold Ivory Whites.

"I can run after her and get her address," proposed Tsou.

Chi shook his head. "No, that's not what's worrying me. It's easy to satisfy one customer, but our market-garden has got to serve the needs of thousands of families. Well, it's about time to go home."

Chi went over to Young Sung to say good-bye. Before he left, however, he picked up one of each of the three kinds of turnips.

"So you're not leaving empty-handed?" teased the girl, winking at her companions.

"No, I've got what I came for," answered Chi, indicating the three turnips.

"Just what do you mean?" asked Young Sung. But old Chi had already left.

That same evening a meeting of the brigade cadres was held in the Yellow-flower Ridge Brigade office. Going over to the light, sec-

retary Chi unwrapped the three turnips he had brought back and asked, "Which of these three do you all like best?"

The others sensed that there was something behind this simple question, but they weren't sure what it was.

"It goes without saying, Hidden Beauty for eating raw and Red Globe for cooking," someone spoke up.

"What about Ivory White?"

"It's not so popular hereabouts," another replied.

"In that case," Chi asked, his face serious, "why did we sow more Ivory White and less Hidden Beauty last summer?"

This started a keen discussion.

Tsou Fang, who had plenty to say after returning from the market, could no longer hold back. He sprang to his feet and cried, "I'll tell you! It's because there was a struggle over two ways of thinking about our last production plan. In the spring some comrades came back from town saying that Ivory White sold for a higher price than Hidden Beauty. They advised our brigade leader to grow more Ivory Whites and less Hidden Beauties, so that the income of the brigade and our members would increase and both would benefit. So, that's what we did! But it's crystal clear that we were fooled by the old idea of 'putting profit first.'" As Tsou Fang stopped for breath he eyed a comrade sitting beside the table, but since the man kept his head lowered the young deputy leader could not see his expression very clearly.

Tsou Fang's explanation came like a thunder-clap; instantly the atmosphere in the room grew tense. At a sign from Chi, Tsou sat down. Then, scanning all those present in turn, the old Party secretary said: "Tsou Fang's right. Hidden Beauty is only a turnip, but it should serve as a link between the hearts of us peasants and the city workers. We market-gardeners should maintain an ample supply of fresh vegetables for people in the city. If we don't, we poor and lower-middle peasants are failing in our duty." The room was quiet except for the puffings of a few pipes. After a pause Chi demanded, "Now, comrades, what shall our plan be for next year?"

The man who had been keeping his head lowered gradually braced himself. His quivering lips betrayed his agitation. Finally he stam-

mered out, "From ... from ... from now on we should grow more Hidden Beauties, that's all."

There was no need to say more. The meeting broke up in laughter.

As the Party secretary opened the door he was met by a gust of cool refreshing air for, without his knowing, the first spring rain had started. "Fine, fine, the rain's come right on time!" one man called out as he left.

Good spring rains, one after another, brought plenty of moisture to the far-stretching fields, promoting the seedlings' growth. The busy summer came and went. At the end of the golden autumn, Yellow-flower Ridge Brigade harvested a good crop of Hidden Beauty turnips. Every villager took pride in their success. For since altering their production plan they had taken the greatest care of the fields, giving them sufficient water and fertilizer, and this year's Hidden Beauties were unusually fine — big, crisp and thin-skinned, the flesh inside a glowing red.

One evening before the first cold wave set in, a meeting was held to discuss the storing of the turnips. In a couple of months the Hidden Beauties, so well liked in the city, should be in plentiful supply at the market and the brigade's sales quota should be overfulfilled. A division of labour was decided upon. The Party secretary was in charge of transporting the turnips back from the field while Tsou Fang was to lead the young villagers in digging storage pits.

By dawn the following morning all the brigade members, in high spirits because of the bumper crop, had turned out ready for work. Above, the deep autumn sky was a cloudless blue, as translucent as the waters of a great lake. The leaves of the maples, nipped by frost, were fiery crimson. A whole caravan of carriers, with baskets on shoulder-poles, shuttled up and down the paths between the fields. The air was filled with the good tang of up-turned earth. Taking a vigorous lead was Chi Chang-kuan whose carrying-pole bent like a crescent moon under its heavy loads. He swung along quickly yet steadily, his heels kicking up little puffs of dust behind.

After a while Tsou came running over, shovel in hand and flushed by strenuous digging.

"Old Party secretary, we're all ready," he called out to Chi. "How many pits d'you think we'll need to dig?"

Chi lowered his load before answering: "Judging from our crop, I think, we'll need at least ten."

"We'll have our hands full then," said Tsou. "But if our two groups team up well and go all out, we can finish the job today." He left on the run.

"Don't be in too much of a hurry," Chi cried after him. "Storing turnips needs special care. Dump the dry surface earth south of the pits and the damp earth on the north. Mind you shovel some damp earth on top of each layer of turnips. And remember we often have a mild spell in November. Turnips won't keep in warm weather, so see to it that they're well covered and won't spoil."

"Don't you worry," Tsou shouted as he ran. "Our Hidden Beauties are better than ever this year. I'll take extra care. There'll be no surface cuts, no hollow centres, no early sprouting. When they go to market for the Spring Festival I guarantee our city folk will be pleased." With that he hurried off to join the other young villagers digging pits.

In the afternoon the weather suddenly changed. Great grey cloud galleons gathered in the north; a mist hovered over the fields. Tsou Fang took an anxious look at the sky and muttered: "When the sky turns white and grey, rain or wind is on the way..."

Scarcely had he finished reciting this old folk saying when a voice accosted him crisply from behind, "Comrade, is your Party secretary anywhere around?"

Tsou turned to see Young Sung the salesgirl wheeling a bicycle along the edge of a field.

"Oh, it's you! What have you come here for?" asked Tsou.

"Can't I come if I want to?" retorted the girl tilting her head. "It's just impossible to reach you people on the phone. I rang you up several times but nobody answered. So here I am..."

"We're still harvesting. We can't spare anybody to sit in the office and wait for phone calls," Tsou said with a grin, indicating his shovel.

"The management committee of our market wants your Party secretary to come for an important discussion."

Tsou turned to a young man next to him. "Take this comrade along to find Old Chi, will you? But get back as quick as you can."

As the two of them were leaving, Tsou called out to the girl, "I'm too busy now. But come back and have a chat some other time, eh?"

"Who has any time for chatting?" Young Sung shouted back. "But we've arranged our work at the market so that we can come out to give you a hand with the harvesting the day after tomorrow." Tossing her plaits over her shoulders, she went off laughing.

Tsou and his men plunged back into the pits and continued with their work. All were soaked with sweat but not for a minute did they stop until finally all the Hidden Beauties, thousands of cabbages of them, had been properly stored and covered. When the job was completed Tsou jumped out of the last pit and turned a somersault. He was met by a high northwest wind sweeping over the fields. Mopping his face, he yelled to his companions, "Let the wind blow all it wants! Our turnips are safe!"

They were picking up their shovels ready to go home when a youngster called out: "Look, who's that coming over here?" They saw it was the Party secretary striding along towards them on the dusty road. There were signs of anxiety on the face of the old man who was usually so calm and steady.

Tsou went in high spirits to meet him. "Old Party secretary, what's up?" he asked. "Don't you worry about the turnips." He pointed to the well-covered pits and added, "You can see for yourself, all the turnips are safely in..."

Chi walked towards the pits, his bushy brows contracted. "Sure you haven't done the job too quickly?" he asked.

This unexpected answer made the men put down their spades to gather around the Party secretary, who read bewilderment in all their eyes.

Chi glanced quickly at the youngsters around him. From their sweaty mud-streaked faces he knew how hard they had worked to

complete the job before dark. He was very touched. At the same time the realization of his heavy responsibility weighed on his mind.

"I've just come back from town. Quite a few factories and neighbourhood committees have put in requests for Hidden Beauties right now. We can't stick to our old way of doing things. In this new situation we must change our plans."

"How many cabbages do they want?" someone asked anxiously.

"All that we have in stock," answered Chi briskly.

"Why the hell didn't they let us know earlier?" another young fellow blurted out, stamping a foot in annoyance. "We've just finished storing our turnips, the whole lot. All that digging for nothing!"

Tsou Fang, squatting on the ground, was very put out. The young fellow had spared no pains to guarantee a steady supply of good vegetables to the Peking market. What worried him now, however, was not the waste of labour but something else. After a short silence he sprang to his feet and hurled a question at the Party secretary. "We've checked up on our plan every month and every day to guarantee an even and balanced supply of vegetables to the market. Now, they're asking us to sell our whole stock of Hidden Beauties all at once. What shall we do to ensure supplies when next Spring Festival comes?"

Chi smiled. "Keeping our Hidden Beauties stored away doesn't necessarily guarantee a balanced supply."

"Why not?" someone asked.

"Because the demands for certain vegetables are bound to change," Chi announced. "As the revolution forges ahead, our people's living standards improve. That puts an ever greater demand on us market-gardeners. So this sudden change is all to the good for us..."

"Good for us?" someone exclaimed. "How?"

"We've a fine crop of Hidden Beauties. To refuse to sell them now that they're wanted would be wrong and the turnips would become a liability. With such a liability how could we forge ahead?" Chi's eyes flashed with determination; his enthusiasm was contagious. In ringing tones he went on, "Our vegetable fields are limited to a few hundred *mu* but there's no limit to our task of serving the people. Let's market our Hidden Beauties now and sow more at the same time in hot-beds, to increase our marketable varieties -- that way we'll

achieve a new balance on a new basis. In fact, this winter we'll not only grow as many turnips as we are going to sell now, we'll be able to offer the people of Peking a bigger variety of vegetables for the Spring Festival!"

A stir had gone through the listening crowd. As Chi finished speaking youngsters rolled up their sleeves and old peasants nodded. Tsou Fang waved his strong arm and yelled, "It's settled then, eh? Let's cart all our Hidden Beauties to the city tonight."

The purple veil of evening draped the fields. The whole village turned out in high spirits to see off the cavalcade of carts piled high with Hidden Beauties. The highway was straight and wide, the fields on either side stretching into the distance were soon lost in the shades of night.

Through the darkness the carts rolled on till before them, like stars, appeared clusters of city lights.

Illustrated by Sun Tzu-hsi



The Hearts of Yenan's Sons and Daughters Turn to Chairman Mao
by the Art Group of Shensi Province



Moving Mountains

by Wang Ying-chun and Yang Li-chou

Making Knots

by Chang Wen-jui ▶





A Great Wall of Green Forests

by Kuan Shan-yueh



Fruit from the People

by Tang Ta-hsi

Learning to Plant Land Mines

by Shan Yin-kuei





She Craves not Spring for Herself Alone

by Kuan Shan-yueh

Exhibitions

Chi Cheng

New Developments in Traditional Chinese Painting

Artists of the traditional school of Chinese painting dip a brush, either wet or dry, into water colours and ink mixed to the requisite consistency, and paint on fine white Hsuancheng paper made in the south of Anhwei Province. This school of painting has its distinctive styles and techniques. The main categories of subjects are human figures, landscapes, flowers and birds. These may be portrayed in a meticulous or free style, or a combination of both. Over the centuries, this school of painting has enlarged the range of its content and evolved many varieties of brushwork.

The 168 traditional-style paintings exhibited in the Peking Art Gallery early last winter reveal further innovations and developments in this school. The varied themes vividly mirror our present-day life in socialist China, while the characters depicted reflect the spirit of our new age. There are also improvements in form and technique.

The expression of the spirit of our age in these exhibits was achieved largely by projecting the heroic images of the workers, peasants and soldiers who are the creators of history. In feudal China paintings, whether of human figures, landscapes or flowers and birds, reflected the life, views and sentiments of the feudal ruling class but ignored the major role of the labouring masses. This distortion of history has been corrected in modern Chinese paintings of the traditional school. The fundamental change apparent in this exhibition was that the themes of most paintings were working people going all out in socialist revolution and socialist construction under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao.

For example, *The Hearts of Yenan's Sons and Daughters Turn to Chairman Mao* shows poor and lower-middle peasants from this old revolutionary base who have joyfully brought dates and other local products to Chairman Mao in Peking. It reflects the intimate relationship between the masses and their leader, their love and concern for each other. *Studying Hard* shows village cadres making a careful study of the works of Marx, Lenin and Chairman Mao. *The Workers of Taching Defy the Winter* gives a spirited portrayal of oil workers defying the elements to drill for oil in a snowstorm. *Moving Mountains* is a tribute to the poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai who never cease leveling hills to make new fields in the spirit of continuous revolution. Other works show the indomitable resolve of our soldiers and militia to defend our country and the emergence of a new generation of revolutionaries. Because of the specific backgrounds against which these characters are set, they reveal the special features of our age and the spirit of these people. It is clear that the revolutionization of the traditional school of painting and the reflection of the spirit of the age are achieved primarily by the choice of themes and the main concepts underlying these themes.

However, this does not mean that the choice of a good subject will enable an artist to produce a work of great educational significance. The ideological level of a work of art depends on whether the artist can view the subject from the standpoint of class struggle, the struggle between the two lines in our socialist period, and whether he can successfully create the image of a worker-peasant-soldier hero.

The best works in this exhibition reveal one feature in common: the artist has a deep understanding of real life. An example of this, apart from those just mentioned, is *Volunteer Worker*. This painting of a retired miner who voluntarily takes up the job of repairing bicycles for the men in the pit shows his nobility of spirit, his desire to serve the people in his old age. *Planning for a Still Better Harvest* shows peasants and local cadres on a threshing ground heaped with sacks of grain. Not content with the fine crops reaped for several years running, they are discussing how to achieve an even higher yield next year. This makes a stronger impact than mere praise of a good harvest. *A Young Eagle Spreads Its Wings* has an ancient fort in the background, evoking the Chinese people's long revolutionary tradition, and thereby heightening the significance of the girl drilling with a sword. Such meaningful surroundings add depth to the themes and enhance the central figures. These works are the result of keen observation of real life, which enables artists to see great significance in everyday scenes.

These fundamental changes in subject matter and themes inevitably bring about a revolutionization of artistic form. The artists, guided by the principle that a work of art should have its origin in real life but be higher than real life, have evolved new means of expression from the life of the masses to depict heroic workers, peasants and soldiers, and have thus enriched and developed the artistic conventions of traditional style painting. This school lays emphasis on depicting the spirit. *Applying to Join the Party** is a good example of this. The surroundings presented here are very simple, but the image of the girl applying to join the Party is vividly projected. Her eyes, in particular, sparkling with resolution and revolutionary ideals, succeed in conveying the noble Communist spirit of a successor to the revolution.

And now a word about innovations in brushwork. The figures in traditional paintings were usually depicted by line drawing, but in the recent works exhibited "wrinkles" are successfully used to paint figures. Thus *Fruit From the People* presents a woman stand-

*See front cover of this issue.

ing by the road and offering apples to passing PLA men. Her padded jacket is realistically portrayed, for in addition to drawing the outline the artist has used the "wrinkles" employed in landscape painting and by light strokes with a dry brush has conjured up the texture of the cloth, heightening the simplicity and realism of the woman's image.

Apart from the traditional technique of outline drawing and the application of colours in the depiction of human figures, we find some paintings in the meticulous style and others modelled on bright New-Year pictures. *Making Knots*, for example, which presents a woman weaver perfecting her skill in knotting late at night, shows fine discrimination in its use of such traditional features as vivid colouring and the meticulous handling of details. Although it is night, the artist has not made the background dark but has suggested the lateness of the hour by means of the electric light and the sense of quiet which pervades the whole scene. To emphasize the central figure, he has made a careful choice of the objects by her: the padded jacket draped over her shoulders, the alarm clock and thread on the desk. . . . These bring out her diligence and revolutionary enthusiasm. Above all, her hands and the look of concentration on her face accentuate her fine spirit, her high demands on herself and her responsible attitude towards work.

The Hearts of Yenan's Sons and Daughters Turn to Chairman Mao, already mentioned in another context, has the same vivid colouring and attention to detail. In addition it has drawn on the buoyant ingenuous folk style of Chinese New-Year pictures to bring out the theme, showing how close our great leader is to the revolutionary people and how dearly they love Chairman Mao.

Certain new landscape paintings of our beautiful motherland also show innovations. *A Great Wall of Green Forests* presents the forest belts along the coast which protect the crops from wind and provide cover for the militia keeping watch for an enemy attack. *Morning on Lake Taibu* is a scene of fresh green paddy fields, rows of new factories and high voltage pylons. Skilfully interwoven with the lake scenery, these convey the new spirit of our socialist motherland. And the better to depict life today, the artist has improved on

such traditional techniques as "wrinkles", "dots" and colour washes to conjure up a sense of distance, the season of the year and the fitful weather. The composition is well constructed and balanced, while the effective use made of perspective and empty spaces imparts a sense of great depth.

Some of our new artists have not only inherited and further developed traditional Chinese techniques, but have also adopted western methods of handling light and shade and creating three-dimensional effects. *A Young Eagle Spreads Its Wings* is a case in point. Here the three-dimensional effect and the morning sunlight add vigour to the image of the young swordswoman and suggest the immense vitality of our new age.

The new flower paintings also express a feeling quite different from the ivory-tower aloofness of traditional flower paintings. *She Craves not Spring for Herself Alone*, a painting of plum-blossom inspired by a line of poetry by Chairman Mao, makes the magnificent plum-blossom symbolize the revolutionary spirit of our people. *Cucumbers in All Seasons* is not just a still-life. It shows luscious cucumbers growing in hothouses on the outskirts of a city and commune members delivering cartloads of cucumbers through the whirling snow. This is thus a tribute to the commune's aid to the cities.

This exhibition showed the new successes scored by our professional painters and amateur artists from the ranks of workers, peasants and soldiers who have joined forces to instil fresh life into traditional Chinese painting.

Kuan Shan-yueh

An Old Hand Finds a New Path

Chinese painting has a history of over two thousand years, spanning many dynasties and displaying distinctive features in each period. Since our present socialist age is fundamentally different from all preceding periods, our art should embody the spirit of this great age. As an old hand on the art front, I want to blaze a new trail to serve our workers, peasants and soldiers.

I specialize in landscapes and flower-and-bird paintings. In the years when a revisionist line dominated our art, I produced much work devoid of new content. But during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution we debunked this revisionist line, and the revolutionary line on art advocated by Chairman Mao gave new life to our traditional school of painting, helping me to regain my revolutionary youth and fervour. I started trying in my painting to depict the transformation of our land since the Cultural Revolution.

My home is in the south, in Kwangtung Province by the sea. This part of the coast is exposed to typhoons and hurricanes which in the

Kuan Shan-yueh, an artist of the traditional school, is sixty-three this year.

old days caused many casualties and laid waste the countryside. After Liberation, Chairman Mao called on us to carry out afforestation throughout the country; so while the men went out to sea to fish, the women by the coast planted trees to make forest belts. In many parts of the south, joint-firs were planted. Before the Cultural Revolution I did some sketching in these districts and could see the difference between the new and the old society. However, at that time I was preoccupied with traditional techniques and felt that though such forest belts were impressive they would appear monotonous in a landscape; I therefore deliberately avoided this subject. Recently, guided by Chairman Mao's line on art, I raised my political consciousness and made up my mind to take this afforestation as the theme of a traditional-style painting, to reveal the splendour of our socialist period.

In 1972 I went to an afforestation district and lived for some time in a sentry post with the local militia. They treated me as one of themselves, showed me round and told me much about their life and ideals. Careful observation brought me fresh understanding. By climbing the hills in the mornings and evenings I gained a deeper insight into the beauty of the forest belts and the sea here, and became eager to paint them. Whenever I had time, I tried my hand at expressing the special features of the joint-firs, the raging sea and the soughing pines. Since this was a front-line outpost, the class struggle was so sharp that it was impossible to depict any part of that coastal region as a tranquil beauty spot.

Later I visited another district to find out more about the work done by the local women. I sought out some women activists who had given the lead in afforestation and now held responsible posts in the county administration or forest nurseries. They told me some stirring stories. When they first tried to plant joint-firs there, because the seedlings were hard to raise they grew them in bamboo baskets filled with compost, transplanting them to the beach after they were some two feet high. They had to walk for miles to fetch water for these saplings; but as a result of their care the joint-firs grew well. In this way they showed how this region could be afforested.

My deepened understanding of the significance of afforestation increased my confidence in handling this theme. I called my landscape *A Great Wall of Green Forests*. This extensive forest belt, which can stand up to sandstorms and hurricanes and which serves as cover in the fight against the class enemy, is truly a wall of iron.

To convey the idea that this forest belt is by no means tranquil and the class struggle is still acute, I painted in some militiamen. The space they occupy is small, but it holds a prominent position. I depicted a high wind, surging billows and tossing firs; but to bring out the tenacity of the firs, making them true to life yet higher than actual life, I deliberately made the tree-tops less pliant than in fact they are.

To suggest the luxuriant green of these trees, I used malachite. Since this traditional pigment is opaque and refractory, I applied it in layers as in oil-painting to create an effect of depth. Under a direct light the trees would look flat, so I painted the first row in sunlight, the second in shadow, indicating that clouds were barring the sun and that the forest belt was made up of many rows of trees. In painting the sea, I also drew on techniques from western painting to integrate it with the forest belt. On the whole, however, I retained the special features of traditional Chinese painting.

These are some new departures I made in *A Great Wall of Green Forests*. In my painting of plum-blossom *She Craves not Spring for Herself Alone* I also introduced some innovations.

I have always liked to paint plum-blossom and did many such paintings before Liberation, trying to recapture the spirit of the Sung-dynasty poem:

Sparse twigs aslant shallow water.

Secret fragrance floats in the dusk under the moon.

My white plum-blossom with shadows cast by the moonlight conveyed a sense of detached, aloof enjoyment. In 1960 I painted a picture based on Chairman Mao's poem *Plum Blossoms Welcome the Whirling Snow*, but I failed to bring out its spirit because I devoted my main attention to form.

My paintings of plum-blossom today should be different from those I did before the Cultural Revolution. *She Craves for Spring not for Herself Alone* is also based on a poem by Chairman Mao. My first idea was to project a single spray of blossom; then it struck me that the plum-blossom flowers early to proclaim the approach of spring, not to vie with other spring flowers; so I adopted certain techniques of landscape painting to show a mass of magnificent blooms evoking a scene of splendid blossom-time and a sense of prosperity.

Landscapes and paintings of flowers and birds also have a class content, which is expressed by the artists according to their different class stands. When I painted plum-blossom in the old society I expressed the feelings of the feudal literati. Today I want these paintings to express the feelings of the working people.

Learning from Tachai to Paint Tachai

Tachai has been the scene of fierce struggles between the bourgeois and the proletarian lines. The celebrated three battles of Wolf Lair show how fearlessly the Tachai people have fought against heaven and earth and against the class enemy. They turned this mountain gully, formerly overrun every year by freshets, into a series of terraced fields with over one metre of friable fertile soil. The villagers call these "spongy fields" and have harvested more than one thousand cattles of grain per *mu* on them year after year. Early last year, when I went back to Tachai with some other painters, we found that within the space of little more than a year further changes had taken place. And when I saw the Tachai peasants demolishing some of their "spongy fields" I thought it a great pity.

However after inquiry I learned the reason. Headed by Comrade Chen Yung-kuei, the local Party branch had made a new ten-year plan. This calls for a fourth battle of Wolf Lair, to link up all the small terraced fields into one large plot, a "man-made plain" to

Wang Ying-chun is a young woman painter in the Shansi Palace of Culture.

open up the way here for the complete mechanization of agriculture, the benefits of which will be reaped the same year. In their words: Tinkering and patching won't do in socialist construction. The Tachai people's lack of complacency and their determination to carry on the revolution taught us a profound lesson, making us more eager than ever to express their fine spirit in art.

Our first choice of a theme was the courage with which they persevere in levelling mountains, for this embodied the concept of continuing the revolution during the socialist period. So we made a draft of Chen Yung-kuei directing a bulldozer. However, the machine was so big and the human figure so small that this did not do justice to the hero. We made sketches from various angles but all to no avail: the problem remained unsolved.

Then during a meeting Chen Yung-kuei made this statement: "Some people say that the secret of Tachai's success boils down to one word — work. True, this is our one and only discovery. Taking life easy won't transform the land: the only way is by hard work." This put us on the right track. Our previous drafts had been no good because we had failed to study the Tachai people's aspirations and actions from the standpoint of the Party's line. The Tachai people's drive manifests the spirit of our general line for building socialism by going all out to get greater, quicker, better and more economical results. This was the spirit we had to convey, this indomitable defiance of heaven and earth. We decided to continue our study on the spot and to work with and learn from the poor and lower-middle peasants until we could paint with the spirit of Tachai.

Still, the question remained, how should we depict their tremendous drive? Should we emphasize the machines or the people of Tachai?

Tachai now has many machines: cableways to transport material up the hills, tractors, trucks and other equipment which save them much heavy labour. However, their possession of machines has not made them throw away their shoulder-poles and picks. Although mechanizing their agriculture they say: We mustn't abandon our tradition of hard struggle. We decided, therefore, that our painting should present the new look of this socialist village with its rumbling

machines, but should present even more vividly Tachai's revolutionary spirit of self-reliance, hard work and scientific farming, showing that mechanization is dependent on the revolutionization of people's minds. Accordingly, in our new draft of *Moving Mountains* we sketched peasants levelling a hillside in a snowstorm with a bulldozer behind them.

Levelling earth, unless correctly handled, can easily turn out a dull stereotyped picture. Chairman Mao has called on us to transform China in the spirit of the Foolish Old Man who moved mountains. We must keep on making revolution if we want to transform nature and build communism. Hence it is necessary to move mountains. Living with these poor and lower-middle peasants we grasped their heroism and better understood both the purpose and significance of shifting such great masses of stone and earth. This understanding helped us to expand the language of art as by degrees a scene took shape in our minds: Chen Yung-kuei, representing the people of Tachai, a mattock in his hands, wearing a homespun jacket, is defying wind and snow as he kicks aside a slab of frozen earth. His fearless stance and expression reveal the proud pioneering spirit of Tachai. While in the village we completed this preliminary sketch.

But though we had the draft, the painting of the picture still presented problems. No ready-made techniques appropriate to our modern subject-matter existed in traditional figure painting. How should we depict a modern hero? How should we depict his padded homespun jacket and the soil after its transformation? The thought of the Tachai people's perseverance in the four battles of Wolf Lair gave us the courage to tackle these difficulties. Adhering to the principle that the form must be subservient to the content, we experimented with certain techniques of traditional landscape painting to serve our purpose.

Our experience in painting *Moving Mountains* has brought home to us that a correct understanding of life and the courage to create new art are only attainable under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Since the source of all art is the life of the masses, our paintings cannot have a profound ideological content or depict

heroes inspired by socialist ideals if we shut ourselves up in our studios. We must go to the midst of the people for long periods, unconditionally and whole-heartedly, to completely transform our own thoughts and feelings by taking part in revolutionary struggles. Only then can we create works of art which will serve the needs of the workers, peasants and soldiers, serve the needs of proletarian politics.



Sinkiang Song and Dance Troupe in Shanghai

Towards the end of last year the Sinkiang Song and Dance Troupe enchanted Shanghai audiences with their performance of a new full-length song and dance drama *The People's Commune Is Fine* in *mukkam* style.

The *mukkam*, a traditional form of symphonic music long popular among the Uighur people in Sinkiang, consists of twelve movements with a great variety of melodies. In line with Chairman Mao's principle of "making the past serve the present" and "weeding through the old to bring forth the new", the literary and art workers of Sinkiang have been reforming the *mukkam* since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. *The People's Commune Is Fine* testifies to their success.

This new opera shows how Turdi, a commune Party secretary and Hsiao Li, a deputy secretary, lead the people of various nationalities in Sinkiang to build up new socialist villages through self-reliance and hard struggle. The rich *mukkam* melodies increase the zest with which these fraternal nationalities, led by the Party and Chairman Mao, are shown building a happy life.

Liberated Serfs Sing and Dance

On threshing grounds, fields and pasturelands in the Lhasa River Valley in Tibet, the spare-time propaganda troupe of Tui Lungteching

County performs songs and dances of its own composing to the liberated serfs.

This troupe, formed during the Cultural Revolution, is made up of sons and daughters of former serfs. Revelling in their new freedom, they take keen part in their spare time in cultural activities, composing items and putting on shows which praise Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and their new life under socialism. After helping other commune members dig a ditch, Tserlitanzen made a new folk song:

Resounding blasts shake the snowy mountains,
Startling the frozen lake from its deep slumber;
Like a silver *bata* its water flows into our hearts
From which float songs in praise of Chairman Mao.

This reflects the determination of former serfs to transform nature under the leadership of the Party and Chairman Mao. *The East Wind Blows over the Pastureland*, a song and dance act created by Bajju and others, depicts herdsmen with thriving cattle and sheep in the rich pasturelands of a Tibetan commune transformed during the movement to learn from Tachai. *Liberated Serfs Rejoice*, by Niencha, with its gay dances and enchanting music sings of:

Hundreds of serfs now masters of their fate
And happiness too great to be expressed.

All these items, reminiscent of the best Tibetan folk music and imbued with a new revolutionary spirit, express the joy of the liberated serfs.

Cultural Activities of National Minorities in Yunnan

Situated in China's southwest border region, Juili County in Yunnan is inhabited by people of the Tai, Chingpo, Penglung and Lisu nationalities, all of whom have their own traditional music, musical instruments, folk dances and folk songs. Some have their own dramas too.

Recently, the spare-time cultural activities of the minority peoples in Juili County have been going with a swing. More than 130 spare-

time propaganda groups have been set up. These revise old literary and art items as well as creating and performing many new ones. For example, the popular Tai *Peacock Dance* was formerly a mere imitation of the peacock's movements which, though beautiful, lacked strength. A young Tai commune member, with the help of the leadership as well as professional dancers, revised the dance. By substituting colourful local dress for costumes imitating peacocks' plumage, and by retaining the most effective movements while adding verve to those which were weaker, he succeeded in making the dance convey the Tai people's love for the Party and Chairman Mao. The new *Peacock Dance* is a firm favourite with the local people.

Veteran singers and dancers are also producing more original work. Chuanghsiang, a well-known 65-year-old Tai singer, has composed many songs since 1971, including *Singing of Chairman Mao*, *Peking*, *Grand City of the Sun*, and *Prosperous Juili*. The old artiste Manchi has collaborated with some youngsters in the writing and performing of such dramas as *The Road to Capitalism Is a Blind Alley* and *Capturing the Enemy in the Borderland* which have also been well received by Tai audiences.

The ranks of Juili County's spare-time writers and composers, most of whom are folk singers, now number more than fifty. They are producing new items all the time based on the new people and events in that locality.

Exhibition of Modern Romanian Paintings

An Exhibition of Modern Romanian Paintings opened at the Peking Art Gallery at the beginning of December last year.

On display were sixty-six paintings, both oil and acrylic, done by Romanian artists in recent years. They covered a wide range of themes handled in a great variety of styles.

Many works in the exhibition eulogized the fighting spirit of the Romanian people when they took part in the struggle to overthrow the reactionary rule of the bourgeoisie and landlords and to win national liberation.

Turkish Musicians Give Premiere in Peking

Well-known Turkish violinist Suna Kan and pianist Gualy Ugurata gave their premiere at the Nationalities Palace of Culture in Peking on December 17 last year.

They presented a suite by the famous Turkish composer Adnan Saygun, the Chinese compositions *The Days of Emancipation* and *Wild Lilies Bloom Red As Flame* and violin and piano sonatas by composers of other countries.



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Fertilizer for the Fields (scissor cut)

by Wang Wei-pao



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