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# CHINESE LITERATURE



6

1974

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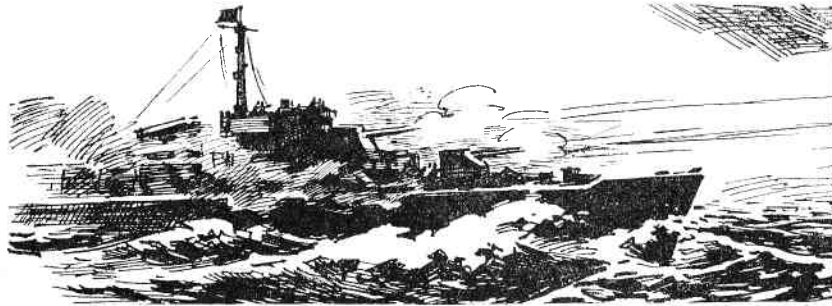
Front Cover: Learning to Serve the People — *Wang Yu-chueh*

*Chang Yung-mei*

## **Battle of the Hsisha Archipelago**

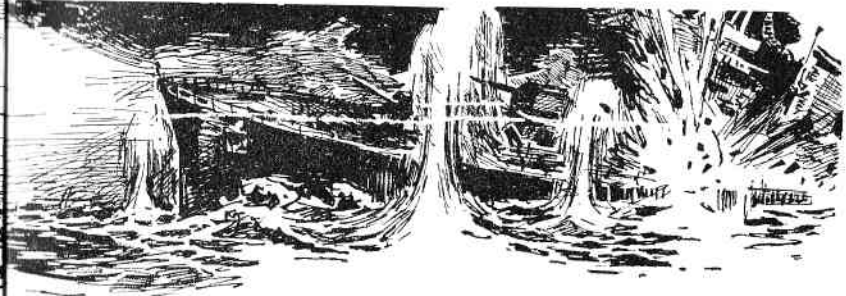
The Hsisha Archipelago consists of the Hsuantch Islands, the Yunglo Islands and other reefs and atolls. Like the Nansha, Chungsha and Tungsha archipelagos in the South China Sea, since ancient times Hsisha has always been Chinese territory; but for many years now the Saigon regime in south Vietnam has attempted to seize both our Hsisha and Nansha archipelagos. Not only have they printed maps illegally claiming Nanwei, Taiping and many other of the Hsisha islands as their own; on January 15, 1974 they sent naval vessels and aircraft to invade our territory and occupied the Yunglo Islands. On January 19 they also attacked Shenhang and other islands, inflicting casualties on our fishermen and militiamen. When their warships opened fire on our gunboats' patrol, our naval vessels, fishermen and local militia fought back in self-defence, meting out to the invaders the punishment they deserved. Chang Yung-mei, who wrote this long poem, went to this archipelago and lived there for some time. He came to know the naval units, fishermen and militia there.

— The Editors



## PRELUDE

Guns thunder,  
Smoke of battle fills the sky,  
Loud roars the South China Sea  
And the eyes of the whole world turn  
To Hsisha — heroic archipelago.  
Above surging waves, through wind and clouds  
Stormy petrels soar to the sky  
Spurred on by high resolve  
On aspiring wings.  
Fly on, stormy petrels!  
Sing on!  
Let us hear how Hsisha's armed forces and civilians  
Swept invaders from our land. . . .



## I. FAIR AND FERTILE HSISHA

Sunlight shimmers on azure waves,  
Wind from the ocean scatters foam on the reefs;  
Golden the sand  
And bright as jade the beach  
Strewn with pearly shells,  
Heaped with guano;  
Wild apple foliage unfurls  
Like big green parasols,  
Antelope shrubs overspread  
The rocks by the roadside;  
All year round wild flowers bloom,  
Red, white, yellow and blue;  
And these islands abound in springs,

A hint of brine in their fresh honeyed sweetness;  
Each drop of this milk of our motherland  
Redoubles her sons' strength. . . .

Hsisha, lovely archipelago,  
You are a handful of pearls  
Scattered over the South China Sea.

In your territorial waters  
Sport shoals of fish  
Leaping for glee through the waves;  
Horse-shoe conch-shells,  
Sea-cucumbers like flower petals,  
Can be seen as through a glass darkly,  
With marine plants stately as pines,  
Or sturdy as willows,  
And bright, many-coloured coral.  
The calm sea,  
A blue velvet canopy,  
Conceals such fabulous treasures. . . .

Hsisha, rich archipelago  
Loved by our people,  
And looked on covetously by the pirates.

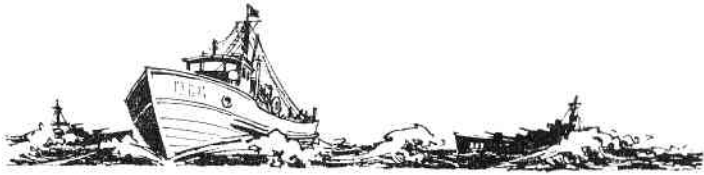
Ah, Hsisha,  
Fair and fertile  
Yet brave and martial  
As the sentry posts  
Guarding these strategic straits,  
You stand sentinel between the clouds and waves.  
From of old these have been our territorial waters,



These islands are covered with our forefathers' footprints;  
Countless generations  
Of fishermen cast their nets here;  
The fleets of countless dynasties  
Moored in these bays;  
Here are old Chinese stone inscriptions,  
Graves of our forbears,  
Antique coins of the Yung-lo Period,  
Ming blue-and-white porcelain,  
A host of cultural relics, historic sites,  
Firm proof of China's sovereignty over these islands.  
These remains conjure up for us  
The camp-fires of our fishermen ancestors,  
The cooking smoke rising in the Han and Tang times,  
The billowing sails of the Ming and Ching Dynasties. . . .

For these "thousand *li* of sands,  
Ten thousand *li* of creeks"  
In old Chinese folk-songs  
Are part and parcel of our motherland.  
Hisisha, Nansha,  
Chungsha, Tungsha . . .  
Are our people's fine fishing-grounds  
And no pirates shall seize them!





## 2. OUR FISHERFOLK FIGHT BACK

Our fishing-crews put out  
To the open sea,  
Skirting the Hsisha islands  
Through wind and waves,  
Casting their nets and lines,  
Catching shellfish and sea-slugs,  
While hard at work ready for combat.

Listen!  
The doleful wail of a ship's siren:  
A south Vietnamese vessel intrudes into our waters!  
These despicable Saigon puppets armed to the teeth,  
With their ludicrous show of force,  
Are mayflies trying to topple a giant tree.  
They are out to find oil, to grab fresh territory,  
To loot our resources  
For their decadent bosses.  
Their propellers churning up the sea  
Seem to stab our fisherfolk's hearts.

Old Captain Ah-sha,  
Tall and stalwart,  
Firm as a rock,  
Hands on his hips  
Keeps close watch on the aggressors.  
As his order rings out: "Warn them off!"  
The signal flag is hoisted to express  
The wrath and might of seven hundred million people.  
"We protest against this encroachment on our waters  
And order you to withdraw!"  
Even a man of iron  
Would quake at this warning;  
The enemy vessel puts about and makes off.

But these crafty scoundrels,  
Shameless and overbearing,  
Signal back a preposterous claim  
That our Hsisha islands are Da Nang;\*  
And brazenly, a second enemy gunboat  
Comes to support the first;  
One blocks our way in front,  
The other tries to ram us from behind  
In a vain attempt to sink our fishing-boat.

Old Captain Ah-sha  
Is the son of poor fisherfolk,  
Whose people braved the storms for generations.  
A local tyrant beat his father to death,  
His mother fled out to sea,

\*An important harbour in Quang Nam, south Vietnam.

And he was born when her boat reached the Hsisha islands,  
Named Ah-sha to recall that debt of blood and tears.  
Then Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party  
Rescued him from the sea of bitterness,  
And a poor fisherman became the captain of a boat;  
Further tempering in the stormy years  
Of the Cultural Revolution  
Made him an intrepid fighter.  
Facing the invaders  
Ah-sha throws back his head.  
“You pirates!  
Scuttle us, would you?  
Let us show you  
The seamanship and guts of the Chinese people!”  
At a sign from him  
The fishing-boat changes course,  
Eludes both enemy vessels  
And with three blasts of its siren sets them trembling.  
The two gunboats narrowly miss  
A head-on collision;  
Backing hard they rock and toss,  
Yapping recriminations  
Like mad dogs.

Gallant fishing-boat!  
It leads the mad bulls by the nose,  
Playing hide-and-seek with them on the high seas,  
Just as our mobile guerrillas  
Led the Japanese a dance in the sorghum fields.





The enemy, one plot foiled, cooks up another:  
The puppet commander dons the uniform  
Of a customs officer  
And brings a gunboat of puppet troops  
Alongside our boat,  
Posing as a "customs" patrol.  
They clamour to come aboard and make a search,  
Laying dirty paws on our bulwarks,  
Ludicrous as the mottle-faced  
Clowns in a circus.

Raising his megaphone to his lips,  
Captain Ah-sha berates them:  
"These are the territorial waters  
Of the Chinese People's Republic,  
Not of your bandit headquarters at Saigon.  
It is you who should be searched!  
Clear off, you gangsters."

Enemy guns are trained on our fishing-boat,  
The brigands brandish their weapons.  
At a signal from Captain Ah-sha  
Our militiamen man their posts,  
All their rifles trained  
On the puppets' hearts.  
"Touch our boat, you devils,  
And we'll hack off your claws!"

On one side, hard-working, honest fishing folk,  
On the other, sea-wolves armed to the teeth:

Head-on confrontation,  
Fingers on the trigger  
Amid the thunder of waves.

Our militia are men of iron,  
Rock-solid as the Liulien Mountains\*  
Confronting raging typhoons;  
And their good old captain,  
A tower of strength,  
Fears not the stormiest seas.  
“Open fire, you dogs,  
And we’ll ram your powder-room!  
The fish will die to break the net:  
We’ll gladly take you to the bottom with us  
To defend our China seas.”

The puppet crews panic,  
Blanching, they shake with fright;  
For the bosses’ blood-stained bank-notes  
Cannot buy courage and strength.  
The people whose cause is just  
Can prop up the sky;  
They have the guts, the resolve  
To make revolution,  
Like Li Yu-ho\*\* who held high his red lantern  
They stand firm in the flames of war.

---

\*In Hainan Island, Kwangtung Province.

\*\*Hero of the modern revolutionary Peking opera *The Red Lantern*, a working class heroic figure whose name is a household word in New China.



### 3. A THRILLING NAVAL BATTLE

Cleaving waves huge as houses,  
Climbing the crests of high billows,  
Ploughing up foam like white pear blossom in front,  
Trailing behind it a myriad snowy ribbons,  
With the glorious banner of the people’s army  
Streaming proudly in the wind,  
All guns at the ready,  
Bravely defending both bulwarks,  
Engines roaring,  
Radar scanning,  
It speeds forward,  
A flotilla of New China’s young navy,  
Battle-ships of the working class!

Riding the raging wind,  
Pursuing the scudding clouds,  
Ploughing through the angry waves,  
The flotilla in strict formation  
Holds steadily on course.

The young flotilla commander  
Buffeted by the wind stands straight as a palm-tree,  
Keen eyes fixed ahead,  
As if able to pierce the far stretching clouds and mist.

This commander, Chung Hai,  
From the River Hsiang's banks in Hunan  
Grew up nurtured by  
The sunshine and dew of Shaoshan.  
It was there  
By the threshing floor and lotus-pond  
Beside Chairman Mao's old home  
That he put on the red scarf of a Young Pioneer;  
And there, by the old peasants' night-school  
Where our great leader battled,  
He pledged his loyalty to the Communist Youth League.  
The wind and waves of the sea,  
Years of naval service,  
Tempered his fighting spirit,  
Making him a man of steel;  
And by tireless study,  
Ceaseless search for the truth,  
He became a member of the Communist Party,  
Dedicated to the service of the world's people.

Now the young commander, emboldened  
By these stirring memories,  
As he watches the bright clouds fleet by  
Has a vision of the green pines  
And red walls of Tien An Men,



Near Chungnanhai\* bathed in sunlight,  
Where our great leader Chairman Mao  
Scanning the far horizon  
Charts our vessels' course  
With the compass  
Of revolutionary truth,  
Encouraging army and people to battle on.

The commander's glance turns to the calendar  
Where Mount Lushan is depicted:  
A cloud-racked sky,  
Pines sturdy and serene,  
All the beauty of perilous heights. . . \*\*  
The gusting wind carries  
A resounding cry to his ears:  
"Drive away the invaders from Hsisha!  
Revolutionary scamen and Communists  
Must give their lives to defend  
Chairman Mao's revolutionary line!"  
Loud the bugle sounds the charge,  
Battle-drums are rolling;  
Songs in praise of our motherland  
Echo to the clouds!  
We can pick up the Kunlun Mountains,

---

\*Chairman Mao's residence in Peking.

\*\*These lines refer to the poem inscribed by Chairman Mao on Li Chin's well-known photograph of the Fairy Cave at Lushan:

**Amid the growing shades of dusk stand sturdy pines,  
Riotous clouds drift past, swift and tranquil.  
Nature has excelled herself in the Fairy Cave,  
On perilous peaks dwells beauty in her infinite variety.**

Step over the South China Sea:  
No obstacle on earth deters our fighters!

Speeding past the Hsuanteh Isles  
Towards the Yunglo Sea,  
He seems to hear  
The fishermen's accusations  
And the angry cries of the seamen:  
"Four more Saigon gunboats  
Have encroached on our waters!"

The commander and political commissar  
Immediately muster their men.  
"The Chinese people are not to be trifled with!  
Our hard-hit fisherfolk look to us for support.  
We demand not one foot of foreign territory,  
Nor will we let brigands seize one inch of our land."  
"Hsisha has belonged to China  
Since time immemorial;  
This is acknowledged by all."  
"Quick! To the rescue of our fishing folk.  
We will give our lives to defend our sovereignty!"

Stern warnings are flashed  
Again and again to the pirates;  
But relying on their greater tonnage  
The Saigon warships  
Persist in their provocation:  
Time and again they try to ram our vessels;  
But for all their savagery and craftiness,

They can only scratch the bulwarks.  
Our commander draws his pistol,  
His eyes flash fire!  
The crew take up shells,  
Their hearts ablaze with hatred,  
Hatred fierce enough to set fire  
To the South China Sea!

But putting away his pistol and breathing hard,  
The commander controls his anger.  
"We must not fire the first shot.  
We'll abide by strict discipline in fighting the brutes."

Calm and unruffled our heroes,  
While all is panic on the enemy ships:  
Their crews grab life-preservers,  
Their officers life-belts,  
As breaking formation they head  
For their harbour, Da Nang.  
"The pirates are fleeing!"  
"No!  
Watch out for new tricks."

Even as this warning is given  
The enemy double back,  
Their warships converging on us,  
All spitting fire.

South China Sea,  
Remember  
The crime of these Saigon puppets!

South China Sea,  
Bear witness  
That it was they who fired the first shot,  
Who opened fire on our ships and on our island!  
These pirates it was who kindled  
The flames of aggressive war.

**We will not attack  
Unless we are attacked;  
If we are attacked,  
We will certainly counter-attack.**  
Goaded beyond endurance our army and people  
Strike back in self-defence.

Belching flames and smoke  
Shells hurtle through the air!  
Great jets of water spring up to the sky  
As, in orderly formation,  
Running the gauntlet of a heavy bombardment,  
Our flotilla speeds into action.

Fire!  
Our artillery roars:  
Avenge our slaughtered Chinese and Vietnamese brothers!  
Fire!  
Our artillery roars:  
Our sovereignty is not to be violated!

Fire!  
Ah-sha brings his fishing-boats to join battle.



By skilful co-ordination  
They draw the enemy's fire  
And inflict casualties on the puppet crew.

Fire!  
Punish the dastardly traitors of Vietnam,  
As the Vietnamese people's forces have punished them.  
Forward!  
Deep the militant friendship  
Between the Vietnamese and Chinese peoples.

Fire! Forward!  
The people's shells seem to have eyes,  
Each shot is dead on target:  
The enemy flagship catches fire,  
Their command is paralysed,  
Their ships lose contact,  
Their whole formation breaks up,  
Each ship dashing for safety.  
Shot and shell rain down  
On the milling troops on deck,  
But where can they hide?  
The sea yawns like an abyss.

Fiercer the fight now,  
Our flagship leading the way,  
Its guns red-hot,  
The shells expanded by heat  
Hard to pull out of the barrels.  
The political commissar of the ship darts forward,

With powerful, callused hands  
He rips out a smoking shell.  
Like men possessed the gunners  
Rush up fresh ammunition and ram it in,  
Their hands a mass of blood-blisters,  
Oblivious of pain,  
Their whole hearts set on defending our great motherland!

But what sound is this?  
Giant waves pound  
The deck of our gallant flagship.  
Clouds gather  
And press in round the tall mast.  
The heroic gunboat is on fire,  
The flames fanned by the roaring wind.  
Chung Hai orders: "Extinguish the fire!"  
The fearless seamen rush forward  
Though acrid smoke blinds them,  
Though flames lick over them,  
Their one thought:  
"Quick!  
Put it out!  
We are ready to give our lives.  
Faster!  
With our sweat and blood  
We will douse the flames!"  
They have ardour enough to drain the sea  
To save their burning ship.

As they fight the flames, ahead  
Looms up enemy Gunboat 10!

Adjusting his helmet Chung Hai  
Shakes his iron fist.  
"Comrades!  
Though our ship is on fire  
We must smash the enemy.  
We have the guts,  
The enemy are cowards.  
We'll go alongside,  
By close combat make their guns useless,  
And by fighting on our own terms  
Win victory!"

Fighters of the working class  
Are of matchless mettle,  
For we fear neither hardship nor death  
And are closely linked with the people.  
This it was that enabled us  
To topple the Three Mountains,\*  
To resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea,  
To win victory at Chenpao Island,\*\*  
And to defend our coast against aggression.

In the flames of war  
Our ship races to meet the test;  
But as it speeds forward  
The driving-engine breaks down.  
"On with the assault!

---

\*Referring to the forces of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism which oppressed the Chinese people.

\*\*Chenpao Island in Aihuei County, Heilungchiang Province, has always been Chinese territory. In March 1969 the Soviet revisionists blatantly attacked this island but were repulsed by our forces and people there.

#### Erratum

On page 21 third line from bottom,  
for "Aihuei County, Heilungchiang  
Province" read "Hulin County, Hei-  
lungkiang Province".



The greater the difficulties,  
The greater our resolution!"

Chung Hai orders:

"Man the helm!"

At once five seamen spring forward,  
Raise the hatch of the helm  
And swift as lightning leap down;  
Together they set their shoulders to the wheel,  
Mastering the mighty ocean,  
Struggling against the swiftly racing tide.

Chung Hai takes his stand on the bridge,  
Speeding his ship to the fray,  
Steady as a mountain.  
Wind and waves  
Make martial music,  
The seamen's battle-cries shake sky and sea.

"Forward,

Firm and brave as the mountain pine!

Forward,

For victory in the revolution

We must scale perilous heights!

Forward,

Cutting through wind and waves!

Forward, forward, for-ward!"

Like a fiery raging dragon

Our flagship closes with the enemy.

Chung Hai roars:

"Now! Hand-grenades!"



He pulls the fuse, swings his arm,  
And hurls a hand-grenade at the enemy!  
Boom!  
The enemy bridge collapses  
In eddying smoke.  
Then our men follow Chung Hai's lead:  
Their hand-grenades whizz  
Through the air  
Exploding on stem and stern,  
To starboard and larboard!  
The pirate's guns are silenced,  
Its mast is snapped and splintered;  
The enemy captain and crew  
Like scalded rats  
Skelter for cover;  
The ugly puppet flag  
Like a dead crow, smoking and singed,  
Flops into the angry waves.

See!  
Three badly mauled enemy vessels are making off,  
Listing and wrapped in smoke.  
Gunboat 10 sinks like a stone —  
More scrap-iron dumped on the bed of the South China Sea!  
The Saigon puppet navy  
Has received its due deserts!  
Our brave flagship extinguishes the flames,  
Repairs the driving-engine  
And, undamaged,  
Puts back in triumph.

Shout for joy, giant waves!  
Sing, stormy petrels!  
Sing this fresh feat of arms by our gallant seamen:  
In less than thirty minutes  
They won victory  
In this battle in self-defence!  
New China's people's navy  
Used no "Komar-class gunboats",  
No "Styx surface-to-surface missiles";  
Outmatched in size and outnumbered,  
It drubbed the strong enemy force  
And in this brief encounter put to shame  
The puppet lackeys and their imperialist bosses.

Shout for joy, giant waves!  
Sing, stormy petrels!  
Sing this fresh feat of arms by our gallant seamen:  
In less than thirty minutes  
They won victory  
In this battle in self-defence!  
The people's navy created  
And directed by Chairman Mao  
Has boldly defeated the enemy in close combat,  
Using hand-grenades against gunboats —  
A new page in the annals  
Of people's war at sea.



#### 4. THE CHINESE FLAG FLIES HIGH OVER HSISHA

In the morning breeze  
Our troopship speeds ahead,  
Its hold packed  
With troops and militia;  
For to free China's treasure islands  
Army and people battle shoulder to shoulder.

A new recruit, Ah-chun,  
A Li youngster from Hainan Island,  
Back against the bulwark,  
Hugs his rifle to him;  
Under brows as arched  
As the Five-Finger Mountain  
His big eyes sparkle like stars  
Ablaze with passion;  
His plump cheeks are ruddy  
As ripe coffee-berries.  
In the Cultural Revolution  
On his left arm Ah-chun wore

A Red Guard's armlet,  
And his hand now gripping the rifle  
Wrote poems and essays to denounce Lin Piao.  
Today, with his hot blood  
He means to write  
A new big-character poster  
On the sky above the Pacific:  
Chinese territory is not to be violated!  
Invaders who play with fire  
Will burn their own fingers!

The sea starts to heave and toss  
And the young recruit  
Begins retching,  
His head swims. . . .  
The political instructor  
Helps him overcome his nausea;  
Ah-chun munches some biscuits,  
Sips a little hot water,  
Then tells his comrades-in-arms:  
"Now I know the sea's temper  
I can lick sea-sickness.  
A tiger from the mountains  
Can turn into a dragon on the sea."

For this new recruit Li Ah-chun  
Is determined to fight in the van  
To free the islands;  
And as the bell's sudden clanging  
Sounds the alert,

Gone is his last trace of nausea.  
At that call to arms  
Our intrepid militia and soldiers  
Spring up gripping their rifles  
And bound to the deck  
As if the companion-way were level ground.

The blue ocean seems swathed in gauze,  
At the horizon shimmer morning clouds,  
While dimly discernible ahead  
Lies a pale grey streak,  
One of the treasure islands,  
A star on the map of our motherland,  
Seized now by the Saigon puppets!

.....

At the thought of those brutes  
Trampling over our coral reefs,  
Ah-chun's heart contracts.  
Striding up to his officer  
He vehemently asks for an assignment:  
"Give me our country's flag!  
As long as I have breath  
I shall plant it on the island  
To bring in the dawn of freedom  
To the whole archipelago!"

The officer claps his hand on Ah-chun's shoulder,  
Stirred by his eagerness.  
Less than a year in the army,  
This young fellow has already won a citation:

One night during a hurricane  
He rescued two children from a raging flood.

Solemnly, the officer hands him the flag;  
Earnestly, he gives him his orders.  
Infinite our Party's trust  
In the new generation raised under the red flag —  
The revolution's future is in their hands!

Our big guns roar,  
Pounding and pulverizing  
The enemy's position,  
As troops and militiamen in rubber boats  
With flying oars pull for the shore.  
Bullets pierce one of the boats,  
Ah-chun leaps into the sea;  
Holding high the flag in one hand,  
He swims with the other arm  
Till the militia's platoon leader overtakes him  
And tows him through the waves.  
They climb the reef,  
Gain the beach,  
Their courage redoubled;  
And when the bugle sounds the charge,  
Waves leap and crash,  
The islands quake,  
While wind gusts through the trees  
Like a myriad galloping horses.

An enemy bullet hits  
The standard-bearer in the arm,



Pain racks him.

The young Li fighter's hot blood  
Drips like red blossoms on the battlefield,  
Bringing spring to this ancient island. . . .

Grasping the flagstick,  
Straining every nerve,  
Spurred on by the banner fluttering overhead,  
Ah-chun presses stubbornly forward.  
"Dear motherland!  
To shed our blood for you,  
To die for you,  
Is our greatest happiness,  
Our greatest glory."

Raising aloft the flag,  
Regardless of danger,  
He races on and on;  
The new recruit holds high his country's flag,  
And his country's flag spurs him on,  
Spurs on all his comrades to storm the enemy post.  
Bathed in the splendour of the flag, Ah-chun  
Races to the gate of the enemy headquarters.  
There they make a human ladder,  
The platoon leader at the base,  
And Ah-chun mounts over his comrades' shoulders  
Up, up to the roof of the fort!  
With one hand the young fighter tears down  
The vile flag of the Saigon puppets,  
With the other he plants firmly on the roof

Our country's five-star red flag!  
The dawn of South China Sea  
Lights up his towering figure,  
The tabs on his collar, the red star on his cap. . . .

Our flag floats in the breeze, the bugle sounds,  
Our heroes mop up the last pockets of resistance.  
Our flag floats now over all the Hsisha islands;  
Militia and army raise their guns  
And cheers rend the air like thunder.  
With one heart they defend these islands,  
United as brothers they build up these islands.

High floats our flag,  
High and proud in the east wind,  
Calling on us to fight on,  
To liberate Taiwan Province.  
Every inch of our land,  
Every drop of our country's water,  
Must be returned  
To our people who have stood up!

High floats our flag,  
Resplendent against the sky,  
Calling on us to continue the revolution,  
Be vanguards in the campaign  
To expose and condemn  
Confucius and Lin Piao,  
Smashing the enemy's dream of restoration.

High floats our flag  
Above the South China Sea,  
Above tiers of pale green,  
Deep blue, orange and crimson.  
See!  
The sun has risen!  
The sun has risen to shine  
On the glorious Hsisha Archipelago,  
Our rampart in the South China Sea.  
Listen!  
Everywhere there is singing —  
Over rivers, lakes and seas,  
Over plains and mountains,  
From Party and government,  
Army, civilians and students,  
From east to west, north to south,  
One mighty chorus:  
"Red in the east rises the sun. . . ."

*Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien  
and Tung Chen-sheng*

Li Cheng

## A Task of Paramount Importance

After a spring shower the sky had cleared. On the bulletin board in front of the plant's auditorium someone had just posted a "Request" neatly written in black ink on red paper. It was an eye-catching sight in the morning sun.

Meng Kai elbowed his way through the crowd before the board and began to read the "Request" in a low voice. Now fifty-six, he was a well-known model worker in the plant, who had some thirty years' experience in welding. Though a member of his workshop's Party committee he hadn't quit his ordinary job.

"A fat lot of use it was my rushing straight back from that job outside," thought Old Meng as he read the "Request". "I've missed the bus — someone else has grabbed this assignment!" He stood on tiptoe to read the signature, but the heads of people in front got in the way. The task asked for was making the No. 1 Equipment — a round steel container three metres in diameter for holding compressed air. The standard of craftsmanship and welding required was high. And Meng Kai, reckoning on his fingers, found that the work would have to be finished within five days. "It takes guts



to tackle a job like this!" he thought. "Welding over thirty steel plates into a globe takes some doing."

Just then a stir ran through the crowd. He looked up and saw a young man with a round face and big eyes mounting the cement platform in front of the bulletin board. The "Request" was blotted out by his broad shoulders.

Meng Kai started. "So that's who it is!"

"Comrades," the young man cried in a ringing voice, indicating the red paper. "The Construction Section has given us this job! We'll try to make a go of it. If we can't we'll ask you for help. But..." He slowed down for emphasis. "But an arrow loosed from the bow never turns back. Five days from now we'll see whether we've pulled it off."

As soon as he finished a hubbub broke out from the crowd.

"You've only just learned how to handle your welding torch, lad," someone yelled. "Mind you don't weld the steel ball into an egg!"

"It'll look bad if you have to put up another 'Request' for help,"

quipped a burly fellow who had been hoping to get the job himself. "Better hand it over to us before it's too late."

The young man on the platform was twenty-year-old Liang Chu, Meng Kai's apprentice, now nearing the end of his three years' apprenticeship. Down fringed his mouth, his cheeks were dimpled, and he had the habit of licking his lips when speaking. Now, his thick brows raised, he darted keen eyes over the crowd while keeping his left hand firmly on the spectacular "Request", as though afraid that it might take wings and fly away together with the task.

The young man's bold initiative set Meng nodding with approval. "Just the job to test him," he said to himself. Then, squeezing out of the crowd, he walked away. After working together for three years, Meng Kai knew his apprentice well. Young Liang dared to use his head and dared to act; he would dare to scale the sky if given a ladder. No difficulties deterred him, and once his mind was made up even nine oxen could not hold him back. Though Meng Kai sometimes had to tell him off, he had a great affection for the youngster.

Now that Liang Chu was about to finish his apprenticeship Meng Kai had been wondering what sort of test to give him. So this "Request" had come just at the right time, for the No. 1 Equipment was really a hard nut to crack. Each joint to be welded was curved, and the welder would have to work from every conceivable angle, on top of which, the time was limited. This certainly was a severe test for an apprentice. Nevertheless, Meng Kai was confident that the youngster could do it if he tried. Walking along the damp road, he recalled a scene from the past.

One winter day heavy snow was falling. As Meng Kai stepped out of the office, the north wind pelted snowflakes down his neck. Turning up the collar of his cotton-padded overcoat, he strode off to the workshop.

After passing the tools room, he caught sight of a man lying on his back in one of the sheds outside the Welding Section, busily welding something. The place caught the full fury of the wind, which had ripped open his coat and was buffeting him with snow. But the man seemed quite oblivious. Keeping a tight grip on the

electrode-holder, he was entirely immersed in his work. "The winter snows freeze off your toes." At this time of year the welders moved into the workshop. Who was this fellow working here in the wind? Did he think himself impervious to frost-bite? Just then the man sat up and removed his helmet. Meng Kai saw with surprise that it was Liang Chu! His cheeks were crimson with cold.

"What on earth are you doing there?" Old Meng demanded.

"Just practising." The boy smiled sheepishly.

"What's the idea?"

"We'll have plenty of welding to do high up in the open. I want to get my hand in."

His heart warming to the lad, Meng stooped to look at his work. It was a spray of plum blossom welded out of scrap. The twigs were sturdy, the flower petals well-rounded. In the howling wind and drifting snow, it stood out in sharp relief on the steel plate.

"Master Meng!" Liang Chu's voice broke Meng's train of thought. "I didn't think you'd make it back today," said the youngster as he caught up. "So I went ahead myself and asked for the job."

Liang Chu had not seen his master for three days, but he did not greet him or ask after his health, knowing that Old Meng had no patience with such formalities. His master's whole energies went into his work. He would surely be pleased with this big job Liang had landed.

Old Meng had turned slowly, as if there were something on his mind, to scrutinize the youngster. Liang knew that no matter how heavy a load his master might be shouldering he always weighed his words before he spoke. So he kept his mouth shut waiting for Old Meng's reaction.

Meng studied Liang's face for a while, then asked, "You've got it?"

"Yes." In his relief Liang blurted out, "It's all up to you now, master."

"Not to me." Meng shook his head. "It's all up to you." He spoke slowly but decidedly.



"What!?" Liang blinked. He couldn't believe his ears and asked, "Up to me?"

"You're finishing your apprenticeship. This will test your ability."

Liang started licking his lips. Then, thinking this childish behaviour, he hastily stopped.

"Can I manage it all on my own?" he asked after a pause.

"Sure. Be bold!"

Encouraged by his master's faith in him, Liang Chu nodded.

## 2

After discussion the Party branch committee approved Meng Kai's proposal to let Liang Chu weld the container on his own. During the lunch-hour, Meng hurried to the plant's library. Though the task had been given to his apprentice, this made the weight on his shoulder feel even heavier. He must study the blueprint and size up the job as if he were doing it himself.

The bright and spacious reading-room was so quiet that you could have heard a pin drop. Meng stopped in the doorway to stamp the mud off his shoes and rub the dirt off his hands before entering.

Quietly he stepped up to the issuing counter and softly told the librarian, "I want the No. 1 Equipment blueprint, lass."

The girl behind the counter looked up from the form she was busily filling in. "Don't you rest at noon, Master Meng?" she asked with a smile.

"I've no time to. Wait till I can't move and then I'll rest."

With a giggle the girl turned to reach a brown paper folder down from a shelf. But when she turned back, there was no one there — nothing but some damp footprints on the floor. Raising her eyebrows she muttered, "Where's he gone?"

"Sorry, lass. I went to wash my hands." Meng hurried back, wiping his hands on his overalls. "Now let me have that blueprint."

The girl brightened up, took a towel from the wash-stand beside her and handed it to Meng. "Liang Chu was here just now. Look!" She pointed out some greasy finger marks on the folder. "After marking the folder with his dirty paws he made little of it by

saying he'll make it up to me with new equipment. You must give him a good talking-to. When it comes to caring for public property, he still has a lot to learn."

The girl looked most indignant, but Meng was glad. "The imp!" he thought. "He beat me to it again." Raising his hands for the girl's inspection, he told her earnestly, "Well, my hands are clean." As he took the blueprint he added, "I'll tell him off when I go back. But the lad may really repay you with some new equipment."

"Master Meng!" The librarian made a face at him. "You always take his side."

Meng found himself a desk, put on his spectacles and began to study the blueprint. He must memorize all the figures, all the angles. It was up to him to be more thorough, more painstaking than his apprentice.

"*Aiya*, Old Meng!" called a husky voice from the door. Squinting from behind his spectacles, Meng saw Old Wang from the Construction Section come panting into the room. He was such a burly fellow that the floor creaked under his weight.

"What's up?" taking off his spectacles, Meng asked softly.

Wang plumped himself down in a chair and rapped the desk with his fingers. "This way of doing things is asking for trouble!" Meng waited for him to elucidate. Noticing how quiet all the other readers were, Old Wang had to lower his voice as he went on, "What a job I had finding you! Are you really going to make Liang Chu responsible for the No. 1 Equipment? Why now of all times? Don't you know the sort of job it is?"

Meng Kai had listened with his eyes still on the blueprint. Now he inquired quietly, "Is that all?"

"All? It's enough to drive anyone frantic! What are you trying to do, leaving such an important job to a beardless boy?"

"Don't scare yourself out of your wits," Meng said with a chuckle. "Go and have a look round on the spot. Why jump to conclusions?"

"What's there to look at? A proper mess this is likely to land us in."

Ignoring these complaints, Meng spread a slip of paper on the desk and said, "Copy down these two figures for me, will you, mate? My eyes are no good."

Sighing, Old Wang took the ball-point pen and wrote down the two figures from the blueprint. Suddenly the truth dawned on him. "Old Meng!" he exclaimed. "So you're studying the No. 1 Equipment blueprint."

Meng opened his spectacles case and put the slip of paper in it with his glasses. This done he folded up the blueprint and asked, "How can a master idle while his apprentice is busy on a job?"

Slapping his thigh, Old Wang chortled, "You old codger!"

### 3

Liang Chu's new task both worried and elated him. Working under supervision, he had done all right by following his master's instructions. But this time he would have to sign his name on the production record like a master worker and be responsible for the equipment, which was state property. So, following his master's example, he went to the work-site to find out how the land lay and checked up on his plan by consulting the blueprint. With three years' practice behind him and the training he had received from Old Meng, the young man was now confident.

Liang Chu slept fitfully the night before going into action. He woke up twice, the first time just after midnight. How slowly the time was going! The second time he woke with a start from his dream and sprang out of bed to check his little alarm clock, suspecting that it had stopped. For a while he watched the second-hand intently, then clapped the clock to his ear to make sure it was ticking. As soon as the east turned light, he threw on his clothes and rushed off to the work-site.

In 1958, the year of the Big Leap Forward, Liang Chu had still been a child, too small to wear the red scarf of a Young Pioneer. But his imagination had been fired by his parents' accounts of stirring scenes and battles. Upon leaving junior middle school, he became

a worker. And at seventeen, he was able to take part in the stupendous Cultural Revolution.

One day shortly after Liang Chu entered the plant, his Youth League branch, together with Master Meng Kai of the Party committee, went to the Monument to the People's Heroes to pay their homage. Meng Kai, one hand on the trunk of a sturdy pine, gazed long and intently at the red flag flying over Tien An Men Square. Liang went up to him quietly and asked, "What are you thinking about, master?"

"See how red that flag is!" said Meng with deep feeling, his eyes still fixed on the flag. "It's red with the blood of hundreds and thousands of martyrs. My son was one of them."

Meng Kai's son, a Communist, had laid down his life in the War of Liberation. Not wanting to distress Old Meng, Liang said no more. But Meng himself continued, "You once asked me why I'm always so full of drive. We must see to it that all that blood wasn't shed in vain. Victory in the revolution was hard come by, yet consolidating and building on that victory is still harder. So we must go all out and battle on. The electrode-holders in our hands are our guns."

That was when Liang began to understand the significance of his work.

The red sun was rising in the east, irradiating the words "**In industry, learn from Taching**" on the red slogan board by the seething work-site.

As young Liang picked up his welding kit, force of habit made him turn to look for his master. But today, he had to do the job by himself. The recollection of Old Meng's faith in him and his encouraging advice "Be bold!" brought him reassurance. Having connected the electric power, he adjusted the current, took up an electrode-rod and started welding. Judging by the flame the current was too strong. He reduced it and went on welding steadily. Swift and sure in his movements, he gave his whole mind to his work.

"You handle that torch just like Old Meng," an old fitter remarked as he passed by. "Keep it up, lad!"

The dazzling electric arc was a pale blue, the smell of burning came from the smoking rod. From a distance, Liang seemed to

be riding blue flashes of lightning; from near at hand, to be driving through mist and cloud. Through the black glass of his helmet, he kept his eyes fixed on the incandescent steel. The bright tip of the rod, like a shooting star, moved up and down the joint. Two elliptical plates of steel were joined by the rod metal into the form of a boat. Young Liang, tightly gripping the holder, looked like a helmsman in full command of his wheel.

Early in the morning, having made his round of the work-site, Old Wang went to see how Liang Chu was getting on. He knew now that Meng Kai would not wash his hands of the job, but he could not help worrying. So he quietly stationed himself behind Liang and screwed up his eyes to watch. Then he nodded with satisfaction. Liang's arm was so steady you could have put a bowl of water on it and the water would not splash out. The electrode-rod no thicker than a chopstick was shortening, yet his hand never faltered. The distance between the rod and the plates remained constant, the flashing line of molten rod metal lengthened fast.

An old hand like Old Wang could tell at a glance, from the way Liang held himself, that he was an expert welder. True, Liang had not acquired this skill easily. When he began welding, Old Meng made him train his wrist by putting half a brick on the back of his outstretched hand. The first time he did this, in less than two minutes, the youngster's hand began trembling and turned numb. He asked to rest for a while. "No," his master insisted. "Keep on!"

So Liang had gone on training until, his elbow bent at a right-angle, he could hold four bricks on the back of his hand and stand perfectly still for half an hour, breathing quite normally.

Old Wang was admiring the smoothness of the welding when to his surprise the youngster abruptly stopped work. He had reached the intersection of two joints. Liang had marked this spot on the blueprint, for it was the first tricky part of the job. Old Wang, unable to keep quiet any longer, asked:

"Which joint will you weld first?"

Liang, turning to see the head of the Construction Section, replied readily, "The left one."

"Which part has to bear the greatest weight?"

"The left part."

"Which will be under the strongest stress?"

"The left one."

"Which point will you start from?"

"This one here."

Since Liang had answered correctly, Old Wang said no more. He was satisfied that the young fellow knew what he was doing.

"No wonder Old Meng isn't worried," he thought. "I was too distrustful and underestimated the youngster. Still, this is just the start. It's too early to draw conclusions."

Seeing that Liang's face was beaded with sweat, Wang handed him a handkerchief and urged, "Take a breather. Don't overdo it!" Then with a long sigh of relief he turned to look at the flags fluttering over the tumultuous work-site.

#### 4

Urgent news spread through the work-site: they were to complete construction ahead of schedule. During the mobilization meeting, Old Meng's thoughts turned to the No. 1 Equipment. Now that the project had been speeded up, there were only two days left for welding it.

Time was short and the task was arduous. Four days' work had to be finished in two days. One faulty weld or intersection that was not leak-proof could ruin the whole equipment. The sky grew dark. Old Meng went back to the work-site and picked his way to the No. 1 Equipment.

In the blueprint this steel container looked like a terrestrial globe. The ellipsoidal sections already welded had the form of a huge iron bowl. Old Meng squatted on the bottom of this bowl which screened the lights on the work-site. Raising his head, he saw that the stars had come out.

Old Meng flashed his torch on the welds and put on his glasses to examine each one carefully, inch by inch. When he came to an intersection he bent over, his face barely an inch from the steel and sweat starting from his grey temples as he inspected the quality of the

work. Presently he straightened up in satisfaction and sat down to mop his forehead, then took from his spectacles' case the slip of paper on which Old Wang had copied down the data for him. After consulting this, he measured the bottom of the bowl. Then he took a bit of chalk from his pocket and drew a "strong welding" mark on the intersection.

This done, Meng Kai put away the chalk and paper and slowly climbed out of the "bowl". Soon after Old Meng left, a young man vaulted into the "bowl" and unrolled a diagram on the bottom of it. By the light of the moon he checked the welding lines to make sure that they accorded with the sketch. The young man was Liang Chu.

It was only after his shift that he had learned of the speed-up. He realized with dismay that his original working plan would have to be scrapped. Staring at the diagram he was like "a tiger biting an iron ball"—not knowing how to get his teeth into it.

After a hasty supper, he raced back to his room to study his work plan again. But he was still at a loss. Then he rolled up the diagram and dashed to the work-site.

Suddenly a "strong welding" mark caught his eye. His face lit up as he stepped forward to have a closer look. He unrolled the diagram again and let out an exclamation of surprise.

"Old Meng did that. He's showing me how to tackle the job." Liang had a mental picture of his master bending over under the moonlight and brushing the sweat from his temples with the back of one hand. . . . Three years ago, the first time Old Meng had drawn a red line on the weld Liang was practising, he told the boy: "This part must be welded again. Make a thorough job of it. Remember, it's state property we're welding." Yes, Old Meng had spared no pains to teach him, eager to hasten the day when his apprentice could work independently and play his part in building socialism. Rolling up the diagram, Liang vaulted out of the bowl and hurried to his master's home.

As Old Meng made his way home by moonlight, he looked at his watch. The short hand pointed to twelve. His house was at the west end of the workers' housing estate. In front of it he had a plot

of string beans. As he skirted the fence he observed with satisfaction that cracks had appeared in the tops of the small mounds of rich black soil—the seedlings were breaking through. Forgetting his tiredness and bending over, he exclaimed: "Ah, they're sprouting." The house was dark as his wife had not yet come back from her night shift at the nursery. Before he could take out his key to open the door he saw a man sitting by the fence, his head on his knees. It was Liang Chu. He was asleep.

"How can you sleep here?" Old Meng woke him up.

Liang, rubbing his eyes, jumped to his feet. "I have changed my working plan. Think it'll do?" he asked, only half awake.

"Come on in before you catch cold." Old Meng opened the door and let him in, saying to himself: "This young fellow uses his head and never lags behind." He wanted to praise him but felt it was not the right time. He should urge him to think everything out in detail. So he asked: "Well, what's your idea?"

They didn't notice when Aunt Meng let herself quietly in. Seeing the old man and the young one deep in discussion, she slipped into the kitchen to cook the dumplings she had prepared at noon. Each time her old man tackled a difficult task she thought it her duty to give him a helping hand.

Outside the window the full moon, round as a disk, climbed over a weeping willow. Hundreds of thousands of silver stars twinkled in the deep-blue sky. A soft spring wind was blowing and the air was warm. One by one, the beans in the front of Old Meng's house sprouted.

## 5

Now that time was so pressing, Old Wang, head of the Construction Section, worked far into the night. By the time he had checked up on the work done and the mechanical equipment he was pretty sure that the project could be finished ahead of schedule. The only thing that really worried him was the No. 1 Equipment. Could Liang Chu complete the job in half the time? His initial doubts which had been allayed assailed him again, and with redoubled

force. He thought: "In view of the urgent situation and to be on the safe side, I must get Old Meng to take over Liang's job." Regardless of the lateness of the hour, he made straight for Meng Kai's house. Old Meng had just seen Liang off and was getting ready for bed when he heard a loud knocking at the door. "Open the door! It's me." He recognized Old Wang's voice. How many times at night he had opened the door for this old comrade-in-arms who was just as devoted to his job as Meng himself.

"We're speeding up construction," Wang boomed as he stepped in.

"I know."

"How about the No. 1 Equipment?"

"It'll have to be finished ahead of time too, of course."

"Who's doing the welding?"

"Liang Chu."

Finding Old Meng so calm, Wang came straight to the point: "Comrade, the No. 1 Equipment is crucial. You can't use it to test or train that apprentice of yours."

"What?" Old Meng's eyebrows shot up. Very soon, however, he calmed down and asked quietly: "Then what's your idea?"

"We're responsible to the state. I want you to take over Liang's job." Although he knew that Meng was worked up, Wang did not mince words.

Looking him straight in the eyes, Meng Kai retorted: "Old Wang, I can take over Liang's job, but who's to take over from us when we're past working?"

"Past working?" Impatiently, Old Wang brushed this aside. "A crisis like this, man, is no time to be thinking so far ahead."

Old Meng pushed the window open. The magnificent scene of the work-site at night was before him. For a moment he drank it in. Then smoothing his gray hair, he explained to Old Wang: "No, mate, we must think ahead."

"Right now, the main thing is to get that equipment finished and make sure that it's first-rate. This project is of paramount importance, not only now but for a hundred years to come."

Narrowing his eyes, Meng Kai nodded. "Sure, there's nothing I'd like better than to go on welding till we've reached communism. But there's a natural law which rules that out. So we must train the younger generation and give them a free hand in their work. *This* is of paramount importance for hundreds of years to come."

"I don't deny that. But just now we're too pressed for time. . . ."

"They'll be working under still greater pressure in future. Let them temper themselves in the storm and shoulder heavy loads."

"This task is too urgent, man. Can't you understand?"

"I know the task is urgent." Pointing to the twinkling lights on the work-site, Meng Kai went on: "Originally that was a cemetery but now factories have shot up like bamboo shoots after a spring rain; and we shall have bigger and better plants here in the future. So we should go all out and train thousands of young welders. This is our most urgent task. It can't be delayed."

"All right," said Wang. "I've paid too little attention to that problem. Young Liang is shaping up well. But we can't just pile a heavy load on him — at the critical moment we must help him out."

Old Meng broke into laughter and cried: "Now we see eye to eye." Taking out a diagram and notebook from a drawer he continued: "Liang and I have just been discussing his plan for finishing the job ahead of schedule. The young fellow has worked it out in detail. And we'd like your advice."

The diagram was covered with marks of all sorts. Wang picked it up and examined it thoughtfully. "Do the joints need strong welding?" he asked.

"Yes." Old Meng nodded.

"Was that your idea?"

"Liang spotted most of the problems. See those red marks? He figured out what needed doing in those places. In fact, he hit on nine out of ten of my ideas."

Old Wang nodded. "Has he worked out the different steps?"

"Here." Meng Kai passed him the notebook. As Wang leafed through it, a different scene flashed to his mind: The reading-

room where Old Meng had pored over the blueprint. There was no need to read the notes. He said huskily, "You keep going non-stop, never rest, eh?"

Meng Kai grinned. "Well, what about you? This isn't the time to rest."

Old Wang nodded again. "That's right. Wait till these youngsters are ready to take over from us, then we can have a good rest."

Old Meng cut in, "No, we'll have less time to rest then. We should keep going till our last breath."

Old Wang flung an arm round Meng's broad shoulders. "You see further than I do, mate!"

## 6

The welding of the No. 1 Equipment had reached the final stage. An iron ball three metres in diameter had taken shape under Liang's welding-torch. Like the buildings on the work-site, it seemed to have sprung from the ground. It attracted the attention of all passers-by.

The sunset dyeing half the sky red set the iron ball glittering as Liang picked up the last steel plate — a square one. Fitting this in place was a trick, key operation and one, moreover, that would test his standard of workmanship on the whole job.

Old Meng and Wang came together to the work-site. They took up a stand behind Liang but he didn't see them. He had hooked the ring on the steel plate on to a crane. Eyes screwed up, he was slowly lowering the plate to the square hole waiting for it. . . .

Now, the welding torch gripped in one hand, with the other Liang released the chain of the crane. Flames leapt and sputtered. The plate, neither too large nor too small, was accurately fitted into the square hole, making a monolithic ball of steel.

"Ahh. . . ." Old Meng, who had been holding his breath, breathed freely again as he turned to leave.

Old Wang caught him by the arm and said jubilantly: "A skilful master trains good apprentices. We can give him full marks for this test."

"Full marks? Life is only just beginning to test him."

Old Wang grinned. "The second stage of the project is starting. These youngsters can shoulder new tasks."

"New tasks for *them*?" Old Meng winked. "Beardless boys — how can you trust them?"

Rubbing the back of his head, Old Wang bellowed with laughter. "I trust them absolutely when they have a master like you. What can do more lasting good, what is finer than this — training successors for the revolution?"

*Illustrated by Wang Hui*



## A Ball of Fire

A meeting was in full swing when Party Secretary Lo of the Coal-Mining Bureau came to Colliery No. 5. The subject under discussion was: Who should be sent to help Colliery No. 9 to master the method of reducing coal dust by the infusion of water? This method, approved by the bureau, had first been adopted by Colliery No. 5. It was up to them, therefore, to help other mines to master it.

Old Lo's brows knitted as he glanced through the list of names under consideration. "All men?" he inquired with a smile. "What about your Ball of Fire?"

There was laughter at that. Someone answered: "Ball of Fire knows her job all right. But it would be rather awkward for a woman to go all on her own to another mine. Besides..."

"Besides what?" Lo laughed. "Remember our bureau's first big-character poster? Didn't she put it up all on her own just under my window? If she hadn't started that fire, the flames of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution wouldn't have blazed up so fast and vigorously in our bureau."

The meeting room at once became lively.

"Old Lo's right. Ball of Fire would certainly make a hit."

"She's just the person for the job, I agree."

.....

Lo listened carefully, smiling, but refrained from mentioning the main consideration he had in mind. The fact was that the women cadres in Colliery No. 9 were not pulling their weight. He wanted Ball of Fire to galvanize them into action.

Finally the meeting adopted the resolution: Ku Tien-chu, head of the Women's Water Infusion Brigade and a Party member, is to go for one month to assist Colliery No. 9.

### 1

Early the next morning a young couple, both in miners' outfits, arrived at the bus station. The husband was Shih Chiang. The wife, no other than Ku Tien-chu, the Ball of Fire who was to go to Colliery No. 9. A bedding-roll on his shoulder, Shih Chiang kept warning her, "You don't know the set-up there, Tien-chu, so don't set the place on fire. Do a good job, that's all that matters."

"Still harping on that?" his wife shot back. "Stop nagging! Anyway, what do you suppose my job is?"

With a good-natured laugh her husband said, "All right, then, I'll keep quiet."

A truck approached. Tien-chu waved to it and shouted, "Stop, Young Chul!" As the vehicle braked to a stop in front of her, she took the bedding-roll from her husband and threw it on to the truck, then opened the cabin door and climbed in. Sticking her head out of the window she said:

"I've cut out some rompers for the kid. They're on the chest by the bedroom door. Run them up on the sewing-machine when you have time, will you? So long."

With a cheerful blast of its horn, the truck started off.

The young driver was grinning broadly. "What do you find so funny, you imp?" Tien-chu demanded.

"I'm used to wives seeing their husbands off. But with you it's the other way round."

"What's so strange about that?"

"Well, let me tell you something really strange. When I passed by Colliery No. 9 last month, a woman asked me for a lift to the station. She'd just got in when up dashed a hulking fellow in his forties, straight from the pit — he hadn't washed or changed. He grabbed hold of her to haul her out and roared, 'A whole eight years I've been deputy brigade leader, yet I don't get above myself the way you do. You're only a team leader, but you gad about to see over other mines. Who's going to look after the kid while you're away? Don't you know I've work to do?' You should have seen the way he stormed at her!"

"And then?" demanded Tien-chu.

"His wife wasn't the timid type either. She shouted back, 'We'll go to the leadership and have it out there.'" The young driver raised his voice indignantly. "Fancy such male chauvinism, such feudal ideas, all this time after the Cultural Revolution."

"That's not surprising. The old backward way of thinking is too deep-rooted to be eradicated overnight. Who was that man, by the way?"

"Yuan Shan. He's just been appointed head of the Water Infusion Brigade."

Breathing hard, Tien-chu thought this over. Then, her long eyelashes fluttering, she said crisply, "Step on the gas, Young Chu!"

## 2

Ku Tien-chu took a liking to Colliery No. 9 from the start. Its tall chimney-stacks, speeding mine-cars and jovial miners, even the air there, all reminded her of her own colliery and warmed her heart. In her elation, she decided to report in at once to the colliery's Party Secretary Wang.

Meanwhile, in a workshed at the head of a shaft, some miners were holding a meeting before their shift started. They were the recently organized Water Infusion Brigade, made up of able young fellows from various coal-cutting brigades. And the brigade leader? He





was Yuan Shan, who had dragged his wife down from the truck: a man of iron and a very devil for work.

The fact that the coal dust was still above norm and that their colliery was the only one under the bureau not to have mastered the new dust-reducing technique made Yuan Shan, as brigade leader, hot under the collar. Hiding his anxiety, he raised his fist and boomed at his young crew, "We can make it, I know we can, comrades. Success comes with hard work. Let's all pitch in. Are we down-hearted?"

"No!" the young fellows shouted.

"Nothing can stop us, Old Yuan," cried Leng-pao, a stocky youngster. Having a ready tongue, he was often the spokesman for his mates. Wagging his cropped head he suggested, "Didn't the last miners' bulletin have a write-up about a woman known as Ball of Fire who's a dab hand at water infusion? Why not ask her over to give us a few tips?"

Yuan Shan glared at him. "Don't be so spineless. What could we learn from a woman?"

The door opened at this point to admit a woman miner with glowing cheeks. She had a satchel over her left shoulder, a small bedding-roll in her right hand; and her helmet, tilted back, showed her glossy black hair. Smiling, with a twinkle in her eyes, she asked, "Have I come to the right place, comrades?"

The men stared at this woman with her unmistakable air of competence. All seemed to have lost their voices. Finally, his eyes popping, Yuan Shan asked dubiously, "Who are you looking for?"

Tien-chu laughed outright. "For you. You're Comrade Yuan, aren't you?" As if feeling quite at home, she put her bedding-roll on a chair and continued, "Let me introduce myself. I'm Ku Tien-chu from Colliery No. 5...."

Leng-pao jumped up and grasped her hand. "So you're the Ball of Fire!"

Tien-chu smiled. "I do have a temper, I admit. You must help me overcome it."

In a flash, the young men clustered round her to fire questions at her. After a while Leng-pao looked around and inquired, "Where's Old Yuan?" He had disappeared.

"He's cooling off in the opposite workshed," replied Tien-chu casually. For while chatting with the young men she had carefully observed Yuan Shan's reactions. Taken aback at first, he had watched them from the corners of his eyes; then, his fury mounting, he had turned and stormed out.

Someone was on the phone in the opposite shed. They all recognized Yuan's booming voice. "... It's not that I look down on her, Old Wang. But ours is an important job, and we've reached a critical stage. If... I guarantee we'll learn the technique in three days. If we don't, Old Wang, you can dismiss me.... What? Why not?..."

The meaning of this one-sided conversation was clear. The men glanced apologetically at Tien-chu.

"Old Yuan really is the limit," grumbled Leng-pao. He added soothingly, "Don't take it to heart, Comrade Ku. He's worried stiff over this new technique."

Quite unruffled, Tien-chu answered gravely, "No, that's not it. He's obsessed by the Confucian idea that 'men are superior and women inferior.'" With that she marched over to the opposite workshed.

Yuan Shan was still arguing over the phone when he felt a gust of fresh air. He raised his head to see Ku Tien-chu standing before him, her long eyebrows raised, a determined look in her eyes. Quietly but solemnly she asked, "Nearly finished, Comrade Yuan? When you're through, please don't ring off."

Dumb with astonishment, Yuan put down the receiver. Tien-chu promptly picked it up and said, "Is that you, Old Wang? This is Tien-chu speaking. I went to your office just now but you weren't there. Did you see my note?... Good.... Don't worry. I promise the Party committee I won't fall down on my job." Returning the receiver to its cradle, she saw that Yuan Shan had gone. She sat down and did her best to get her stormy emotions under control. On the opposite wall was a portrait of Chairman Mao. His kindly smile immediately gave her fresh strength and she smiled contentedly.

When she returned to the other shed it, too, was empty. A makeshift bed stood by the east wall. Having dusted it, she walked over

to fetch her satchel and bedding. She found a note under them addressed to her:

Dear Comrade Ku,  
We're all very glad you've come. We're at Working Face 5403.  
Leng-pao

Her eyes shining, Tien-chu almost cried out with joy. As she picked up a towel and turned to leave, Party Secretary Wang walked in.

"What? Going to the pit so soon after being snubbed?" he teased.

"Yes. I'm going to ask for another snub." She laughed.

But Wang took a seat and told her seriously, "It's our fault that the women here aren't playing a bigger role in our colliery. We're delighted that you've been sent here. Don't be afraid to stir things up. Fire away! You have the support of our colliery Party committee."

"I'm a new Party member and a new cadre," she answered, deeply stirred. "I want the Party to put me to the test."

### 3

With a blast on its whistle the little train raced off. On it sat Ku Tien-chu, wearing a wicker helmet, waders and a wide belt. The white towel round her neck set off her rosy cheeks, her brilliant black eyes and her dazzling cap-lamp.

When she reached Working Face 5403, dozens of pairs of eyes — friendly, astonished, sceptical and challenging — all turned to stare at her. In addition to the Water Infusion Brigade, another brigade of miners was working there.

Leng-pao, overjoyed by her arrival, at once announced loudly, "Look, everyone! This is Comrade Ku, the Ball of Fire from Colliery No. 5."

Tien-chu smiled at them all and said coolly, "You don't often see women at the working face, eh? But you'll soon get used to the sight. Let's get to work." Walking up to Yuan Shan she asked him matter-of-factly, "How goes it, Old Yuan?"

Yuan snorted. "Not so hot. We've drilled a hole. But you may not pass it." He pursed his lips.

Ignoring this dig, Tien-chu took off her cap-lamp to have a careful look round. Then using Leng-pao's pick she tested the walls and roof like an old hand before walking over to the hole they had drilled and shining her lamp on it. Next, holding the lamp wire between her teeth like a veteran miner, she rammed the hole with a rod. Finally, straightening up, she said firmly, "No, this won't do. It's not up to standard."

Stealing a glance at Yuan Shan, Leng-pao asked, "What's wrong with it, Comrade Ku?"

"Holes drilled for water infusion have their own specifications. This one is too low, for a start. We can't use old methods for a new technique. Besides, the angle is wrong. It should be at a right angle to the working face. Another thing: no holes should be drilled within ten metres of the entrance. These are things other collieries have learned through practice. We should make good use of their experience."

Yuan Shan's face was burning. Tien-chu's efficient style of work had not escaped him; and she obviously knew what she was talking about. He had learned not a little from her. Yet in his heart something still rankled. He said sarcastically, "Well, suppose *Comrade Ku* tells us what to do?"

Tien-chu knew that this was a challenge. Pushing back her helmet a little she said curtly, "We'll drill another hole." She fixed the lamp on her helmet, tightened her belt and stepped up to the electric drill.

Leng-pao protested, "That's too heavy. Let me help you."

But Yuan Shan brusquely ordered him out of the way.

"I can manage it, Leng-pao," said Tien-chu with a smile. "Just give me some moral support."

Then Leng-pao, smiling knowingly, backed away.

A hush fell. The atmosphere became as tense as on the eve of a decisive battle. But Tien-chu calmly pushed back the hair from her forehead and deftly adjusted the electric cable. She inserted the bit in the drill and raised this lightly chest-high, the bit directed at the drilling point. Then she switched on the power. The drill,

firmly clasped in her hands with her whole weight behind it, bored steadily into the working face. As the bit revolved, powdered coal cascaded down. In less than a minute a fine hole was completed. Having put the drill lightly down, neither flushed nor out of breath in the very least, Tien-chu turned and shouted, "Now for the water infusion!"

Spontaneous applause broke out. Yuan Shan had been watching raptly. Now, startled into action, he dashed over grinning to grab the hydraulic nozzle.

An old miner joked, "Next item on the programme: Brigade Leader Yuan Shan will perform on behalf of the men."

A roar of laughter went up and all eyes turned to Yuan as, in silence, he raised the nozzle and turned it on. Tien-chu, hurrying to his side, spotted the figure "7" on the meter.

"Not so high to start with, Old Yuan," she cried warningly.

Without a word Yuan reduced the pressure to "6".

"No, that's still too high."

The needle crept down to "5".

"That's still too much. For the first two minutes the pressure shouldn't exceed '3', otherwise there may be a fall of rocks. Reduce it, quick."

But the needle remained at "5". Yuan felt as if all his blood had rushed to his head. His cheeks were burning with fury. He, who had always been the one to give orders, was now being ordered about by this young woman, and in front of so many people. What a loss of face! His mates must be jeering at him behind his back. This was more than he could take.

"Get away, you!" he bellowed. "This is *our* way of working."

But Yuan had met his match in Tien-chu. She retorted, "No way's allowed that harms the revolution and production."

Yuan Shan was ready to burst with rage when suddenly the working face started cracking, and lumps of coal showered down — sure sign of a rock fall.

At the top of her voice Tien-chu shouted, "Run for it, comrades!" She shoved Yuan so hard that he staggered back several steps. Then she leapt away herself. Even as she did so, the man-high working

face collapsed with a deafening crash and a terrific blast. But through the smothering coal dust, her calm voice could be heard giving directions: "Old Yuan, send men to get props for the roof, and check for gas seepage. Leng-pao, help me salvage the equipment... Safety first, comrades! . . ."

The tense battle was over. Mopping their sweat the miners sat around Tien-chu discussing the accident. It was lunch time and food was brought from the canteen. Yuan Shan, the first to get a lunch-box, took Leng-pao aside.

"Give her my lunch," he said in a low voice. "She hasn't got her meal tickets yet."

Seeing what was happening, Tien-chu got an empty lunch-box and divided the food Leng-pao handed her into two equal portions. She took one to Yuan Shan and said with a smile:

"The man watches while the woman eats: is that your way of working too, Old Yuan? Come, we'll share it. Men and women are equal. After the meal we can get cracking again."

The miners, hearing this, nearly choked with laughter.

#### 4

Ten days passed. The report on coal samples showed that the coal had been thoroughly moistened by the water infusion and the coal dust at the working face was well below norm. At last Colliery No. 9 had mastered the new technique. Yuan Shan felt as if he were walking on air; his face glowed with self-confidence. A big change had taken place in his brigade as well. They had started systematic political study, organized a mass criticism group, and were having lectures on water infusion. The young miners were fairly bursting with energy, and a socialist emulation movement was in full swing. Elated by all these changes, Yuan Shan admired Ku Tien-chu from the bottom of his heart. With her red-hot enthusiasm, she was a real Ball of Fire. She kept on the go all day long: studying, taking part in meetings, and going down the shaft where she could turn her hand to any work. And in addition to being so competent, she never lost her head. That was really something. How come she knew so much while he, after

all these years in a leading position, could only say to his men, "Comrades, let's pitch in. We must fulfil our quota." Leng-pao and the others, who had formerly followed him around, now listened eagerly to Tien-chu's talks on coal dust: the method of dust reduction, coal dust explosions and dispersion, and the use in certain countries of deep drilling for water infusion. He was ashamed now of the way he had cold-shouldered her in the workshed. He had done some serious thinking the night before. Now that he had such a capable person to help him run the brigade, he must give her full scope to put everything in order.

As Yuan Shan approached the workshed he heard voices and laughter inside. Through the window he saw a group of women, including his wife, listening to Leng-pao's jokes. Ever since Ku Tien-chu's arrival, the women had been flocking to this workshed in their spare time. Sitting on a desk, his cropped head wagging, Leng-pao was giving a lively account of something.

"Don't laugh, the best part is still to come.... He refused to reduce the pressure, to show himself a real he-man. But when the coal wall suddenly started cracking, Old Yuan turned pale with fright and stammered, 'Quick! Tell me what to do, woman expert!' Comrade Tien-chu promptly stepped over and propped up the wall with her shoulder. It was child's play to her...."

"Propped up the wall? Is that possible?" asked Shih Hsueh-mei dubiously.

"Certainly! Women can prop up half the sky!"

"What a liar you are!" the women scolded, laughing.

Yuan Shan, who had been listening outside, now went in with a long face and asked his wife, "Must you come here every day to fool around? Where's Tien-chu?"

"Go away. Why should I tell you?" Hsueh-mei turned away coldly amid general laughter.

Putting up a bold front, he said, "When you see her, invite her over to supper tonight. I've something important to talk over with her. Since you've nothing to do now, you'd better go home to see about the meal." With that he left.

Tien-chu and Hsueh-mei chatted as they made dumplings.

"Look at your hands, sister," remarked Hsueh-mei. "They're ingrained with coal dust like an old miner's."

"Yours aren't much better, sister-in-law." Tien-chu chuckled. "I took on a turner's job in our colliery repair shop at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. When my hands started getting callused, my husband teased me. Now my skin's as rough as his; but ever since the Cultural Revolution smashed old superstitions and we women began going down the pits, he no longer dares say anything."

Hsueh-mei brought out another bowl of stuffing. "My old man can't forget that he's a brigade leader. He keeps throwing his weight about and lording it over me, though I help out in the pit whenever they have a drive to boost production. I know quite a bit about the work down there now. Sometimes I can't help lashing out at him, 'What's so wonderful about being a brigade leader? I could do the job too if I gave my mind to it.'"

"That's true. Hasn't Chairman Mao said: Whatever men can do, women can do too? My experience in the last few years has taught me that I've nothing to be afraid of in my work if I carry out Chairman Mao's instructions, follow the correct line and unite with the masses."

"You're right. With you here as an example, we'll go ahead with our plan. If he tries to stop me, I'll give it to him hot!"

"You mustn't be too hard on Brother Yuan. He started work in the pit at nine and went through hell before Liberation. So if he has the old feudal contempt for women, it's up to us to help him change his way of thinking."

Hsueh-mei nodded in agreement, then asked, "By the way, what did Old Lo call you up about just now?"

"To ask about our political study these days. He was very bucked when I told him that we wives of miners are organizing our own water infusion brigade to work in the pit. He said: Go ahead and don't be afraid. All that's new in socialism has to be fought for. We must fight against Lin Piao's revisionist line, against Confucianism which

preaches a restoration of the old order, and against the force of old habits. He wants us to take an active part in revolutionary mass criticism and to unite with the men..."

Footsteps were heard on the stairs. "Here he comes," said Hsueh-mei. "I'll go and cook the dumplings."

Yuan Shan strode in in high spirits. Rubbing his brawny hands and beaming, he found his voice at last. "We haven't had a good talk since you came, Comrade Tien-chu. And I haven't looked after you properly."

"You've looked after me very well, even giving your lunch to me," Tien-chu teased.

Yuan flushed and made haste to change the subject. "I heard from Old Wang that the Water Jet 322 you use in Colliery No. 5 is a new product and a very good one."

Realizing that it would be wrong to go on teasing this open-hearted man, she told him, "It was made by our Women's Water Infusion Brigade. We find it extremely handy."

"You don't say!" Yuan was astounded.

"Don't you read the papers?"

"Well, yes... But not too carefully. I didn't have much schooling and I've a poor memory." Sweating in exasperation and afraid of further disconcerting questions, he changed the subject again. "Well, I've been told by Old Wang that you want to start a training class on water infusion?"

"Yes, if you've no objection?" Tien-chu laughed.

"Oh, I've no objection. Whatever you say goes," Yuan answered quickly.

Tien-chu went on calmly. "All right, I'll fire away then. But first I must make it clear that this isn't *my* plan. It's a plan worked out by all the women in Colliery No. 9."

Yuan's eyes twinkled. She's being modest again, he thought.

"A training class is certainly needed," Tien-chu went on. "But we mustn't take our trainees from the coal-cutting brigades. We must find them elsewhere."

"What?" Yuan Shan jumped up like a jack-in-the-box. "Don't pull my leg! Where else can we find them?"

Hsueh-mei came in at this moment with a big plate of steaming dumplings. Tien-chu pointed at her. "Look here, right before your eyes. You have several thousand wives of miners in your colliery, Old Yuan. Potentially, all fine workers. Don't be blind to the treasures around you!"

Yuan simply stared, the cords on his neck distended. At last he blurted out, "So this is your plan."

"*Our* plan," Tien-chu amended firmly. "And that's not all. Hsueh-mei is to head this Women's Water Infusion Brigade and you're to be its adviser. This plan has been submitted to the Party committee for approval. And we hope you..."

"Hope what?" Yuan bellowed, his face livid, his eyes bulging.

Far from shrinking, Tien-chu said with shining eyes, "We hope you'll join us in fighting against the reactionary Confucian ideas that 'men are superior, women inferior' and 'women must submit to men', and against Lin Piao's stupid claim that 'women are backward'. We want you to take the lead in supporting this new brigade, and not to obstruct it."

Red in the face and speechless, Yuan Shan sank, panting, on a chair.

With deep class feeling in her eyes Tien-chu looked at this man at once so stubborn and straight. "Our plan may not be well thought out and we didn't have time to talk it over with you beforehand," she said. After a pause she continued persuasively, "But what's wrong with organizing a Women's Water Infusion Brigade? That way you can train new personnel without taking any men away from coal-cutting. Aren't you always urging the comrades to produce more and better coal for socialism?"

By now Yuan Shan seemed calmer. Glancing out at the lighted windows of the miners' houses she went on, "The Cultural Revolution enabled the housewives in Colliery No. 9 to join in various battles. Now that the workers, peasants and soldiers of the whole country are debunking Lin Piao and Confucius, the women's revolutionary spirit is even keener. They don't want to sit idle; they aim high. Apart from infusing water, they mean to charge on to the ideological field and win victory in the campaign to repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius. That ought to please you, Old Yuan. You ought to encourage them, unite with them and fight with them!"

Yuan Shan had been sitting there woodenly, clenching and unclenching his fist in the throes of a mental conflict. Now he stood up abruptly, announcing, "All right, I'm going to see Old Wang. . . ." The next moment he was gone.

A draught ruffled the hair on Tien-chu's forehead. Smoothing it slowly she said with a smile to Hsueh-mei, "I think we've pulled it off."

Hsueh-mei laughed as she handed her a pair of chopsticks. "Let's eat, sister," she answered. "When we've stoked up, we can lambaste him harder."

"It's not him we want to lambaste but Lin Piao and Confucius. All of us have a lesson to learn from this campaign. Let's stoke up, then join in the battle!"

## 6

Yuan Shan came home at midnight. His wife was out and the child was asleep. His dumplings had been kept warm on the kitchen stove. After eating his fill he turned in, but he could not sleep. Old Wang's last words to him were still ringing in his ears. "The Party committee has discussed and approved their revolutionary action. It's a big thing, Old Yuan, for our women to go down the pit and form a water infusion brigade. This is one of the fine fruits of the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, a new socialist event. You must back them up like a true revolutionary. Thousands of women like Tien-chu and your wife are maturing in this fight. Can't you see the immense significance of that?"

When he went to work the next morning Yuan Shan found to his surprise that the walls, trees and telegraph poles were covered with red and green posters. Above the door of the miners' club hung bunting inscribed with large red characters: **"Times have changed, and today men and women are equal. Whatever men comrades can accomplish, women comrades can too."**

It came home to him all of a sudden that the training class for the Women's Water Infusion Brigade was starting that day. Party Secretary Wang had told him the night before to be there on time.

But it had slipped his mind. As he strode towards the workshed he saw a group of people craning their necks to look at a new bulletin. It was one put out by the new women's brigade under the general heading *Battlefield for Denouncing Lin Piao and Confucius*. And the illustration above it showed a sprightly woman in complete miner's outfit, her eyes keen and lively, her right hand raised as if announcing something. The more he looked at her, the more he was reminded of Ku Tien-chu. The first article of the bulletin was entitled: "Women Are Vanguard in Debunking Lin Piao and Confucius." The opening paragraph ran:

"Who created the world? The masses. But some people denied this. Who were they? They were the exploiting classes — landlords and capitalists — and reactionaries like Confucius, Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao. Who slandered the working women? Lin Piao and Confucius who ranted, 'Women and inferiors are the hardest to keep in their place. . . .'"

"How's that for an opening shot?" asked someone behind him.

"Fine! Well fired!" The answer came from Yuan Shan's heart.

"See who wrote it?"

Looking at the end of the article, Yuan Shan saw the firmly written signature: Shih Hsueh-mei. He read the other contributions too, each one better than the last, all written by the ordinary women whom he saw every day. Rubbing his neck he laughed. "Goodness! We've got a hundred fire-brands in our mine."

"But the last is the most fiery of the lot." The man next to him pointed at an article by Ku Tien-chu entitled "Carry On the Revolution! Combat Retrogression!" It started:

"This movement to repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius is a test for all of us. In this great struggle, we must consolidate and develop the fruits of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution; and support and promote the growth of new socialist things. We must take a firm stand and charge on. . . ."

His fist clenched, Yuan Shan felt strength welling up in him.

Leng-pao fought his way into the crowd like a tiger and pulled Yuan Shan away. "My dear adviser, they're all lined up over there. Hurry! The leading comrades from the bureau and the colliery have all arrived." As he spoke he dragged Yuan Shan off towards the shaft.

"Where are we going?" Yuan inquired. "Is the opening ceremony taking place at the entrance of the shaft?"

"Miners can't achieve anything away from the shaft," Leng-pao answered. "The training class is to be opened down in the pit. And that's where the lessons will be given."

The workshed had been transformed too. Above its door now hung an eye-catching placard: Office of the Women's Water Infusion Brigade. Beneath this stood Old Lo, Old Wang, Tien-chu and some others. Forty or fifty members of the first training class were lined up opposite them in two rows, all in smart miners' outfits. The men around them were clapping and shouting slogans. When the women saw Yuan Shan they began clapping too. In embarrassment he walked up to the two Party secretaries and wrung their hands. As he shook Tien-chu's hand he said in a voice none too steady:

"I vow to carry on the revolution! To combat retrogression! Yes, I'll always follow Chairman Mao to make revolution. You've burned up the old ideas in my head like a real Ball of Fire. I'm a changed man — I'll show you that in deeds, not words."

Before Tien-chu could answer, Old Lo pointed ahead. "Look, Old Yuan. There's your Ball of Fire brigade leader!"

An electric locomotive festooned with red and green drove up. As the women jumped on, Shih Hsueh-mei, standing smartly on the first tub, shot a radiant smile at her husband.

"Comrade Tien-chu's leaving us." Leng-pao prodded Yuan Shan. "Why don't you say good-bye?"

Yuan Shan turned in consternation and stared speechlessly at Tien-chu. The bell rang for the train to start. Tien-chu gripped his hand.

"Get on the train now, Old Yuan. We'll meet again," she said.

Somehow or other, Yuan Shan found himself on the train, still staring at Tien-chu. With her keen eyes, her smiling face, and the dash and verve of a woman steeled in the storms of the Cultural Revolution, she seemed to be growing in stature every minute. Suddenly, hot tears blurred his vision while in his heart a fire seemed to be leaping and blazing.

*Illustrated by Chen Yen-ning*

## Master Ching-shan

It had never occurred to me that, after finishing senior middle school, I should be assigned to work in Yenling Colliery. Since childhood my favourite hobby had been painting. And some artists had urged me to keep it up because I showed real promise. So I had spent all my spare time bent over my easel, never dreaming that my job would be with coal! Still, the Party called on us to go and receive education from the working class in the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment and it was in the mines that our industrial proletariat had arisen, so I ought to go there to be tempered. Besides, they told me that life there was really exciting, and I should be able to find plenty of subjects to paint. For these various reasons, I made no objection to going.

I was enchanted by my first sight of the colliery: cascades of jet-black coal, tubs shuttling swiftly to and fro on the tracks and, especially, the miners, so impressive in their helmets and high boots. I felt as if I had stepped into a scroll-painting.

One day I was sent for by the head of the personnel department. Sure that he would be assigning me to a post, I hurried to his office with my luggage and easel.

"You've had time to look round now, Little Chou," he began. "What sort of work would you like?"

"Drilling rock," I replied without hesitation. For the drilling work had struck me as a truly magnificent sight.

"Those teams all have their full complement. I'm sending you to the pump station," he said.

What!? Climb over the Tahan Mountain and go to watch a pump on the bank of the Yungting River? That was surely a job for the old or infirm. I had expected to do more important work in some stirring field of action.

I frowned and fingered my easel. The department head saw how I felt and said with a smile, "Don't look down on the job. As Master Ching-shan says: the water from that pump station is the lifeblood of our whole colliery. It's vital."

"Who's Master Ching-shan?"

"Teng Ching-shan, an old Communist who was demobbed from the army after being wounded. Apprenticed to him, you're bound to make good progress."

As we were talking, Master Ching-shan came in. Although in his sixties he carried himself like a soldier. He had sunburnt cheeks and glowing eyes, and was wearing a big straw hat and faded blue overalls. On his back was a wicker crate. Another in his hand was no doubt for me.

I greeted him respectfully, then said, "I'm Chou Yuan. I count on you to teach me my job."

"I'm Teng Ching-shan — Green Mountain Teng," he told me. "Some people say that's too youthful a name for me. See!" He took off his hat. "My hair is already white. I've been waiting for some youngsters like you to come and take over my job."

I could not help smiling.

"Little Chou," he continued, "minding pumps calls for patience and attention to detail. Can you sit still for eight hours at a stretch?"

"Do you take me for a monkey?" I retorted. "I've sometimes sat still for as long as sixteen hours."

"Master Ching-shan," the department head put in with a twinkle, "Little Chou here is a painter. When he makes a portrait he has the patience to paint in every eyelash. He can sit still, don't worry."

"Don't you take it so seriously, I was only joking." Master Ching-shan smiled and gave me a slap on the back which made me wince. Then he slung the second crate over my shoulder. I turned and saw that it was a new wicker crate varnished inside and out with tung oil. I admired the craftsmanship in it.

Adjusting the straps I said, "This suits me fine."

"Of course," chuckled the department head. "Master Ching-shan made it."

Master Ching-shan put my bedding-roll in the crate and we set off together.

## 2

It was an early summer morning. Sunlight gilded the mining district. A breeze ruffled the willows and set the poplars rustling.

My master trudged ahead of me with my suitcase on his crate. The case, full of books, was a heavy load for a man of his age. I caught up with him and said, "Let me carry that case."

Master Ching-shan cast me a glance, then pointed at his feet. "Look, with these shoes — thick soles and canvas uppers — I can take a little slope like this in my stride." Laughing, he swung easily along the track leading to the Tahan Mountain.

The muffled explosions from the pits below were music in his ears. When tubs brimming with coal shot out from the pitheads and passed us, he gazed after them as though seeing off good friends. Suddenly, from a workshop east of the track, we heard the roar of an air-compressor. His face lit up and he beckoned to me, then bent forward, grinning, to press his ear to the water-pipe by the roadside.

"Listen, Little Chou!" he cried. "The Dragon King is gulping down water again."

"What Dragon King?"



"Our drilling teams." He straightened up, brushing the earth from his hands. "As soon as the pneumatic machine starts up, water has to be supplied to work the drills. We have five teams, see, and we have to provide them all with water from our station."

Before I could make any comment Master Ching-shan pointed at a crane ahead, its movements directed by the blasts of a whistle. "Look, Little Chou, they're building a coal-washing plant. Once that goes into operation, how can we meet its demands with the few pumps we have now? More youngsters like you will have to come here in future to run a new lot of pumps. Ah, we'll let the plant drink its fill from the Yungting River."

Once on the subject of water, he would go on and on like a running tap. When we passed the workers' hostels, he noticed some children playing with water there. He turned the taps off tightly and told them kindly, "Before Liberation we had no tap-water here. Your parents had to collect rain-water in vats, or bring it here from miles away on the back of donkeys. Water was more precious than gold. Now this mine and pump station belong to us. You can drink all the clear river water you like, but don't waste it. Understand?"

"Yes, we understand, grandad." With this the children skipped off.

Further on, he pointed out some fresh green terraced fields of the Tachai type. "There was drought here nine years out of ten in the past," he told me. "Now the commune has its own pumps too; but in time of serious drought, our station still helps them out. This is an important way, you see, of consolidating the worker-peasant alliance. . . ."

It was beginning to dawn on me what a vital role our pump station played.

Lost in thought, I failed to notice when we started up a broad loess track like a yellow silk streamer winding up the mountain. At a fork in this track stood a finger-post on which was written: Emerald Cloud Pump Station, 15 km.

Some distance away a long water-pipe, half hidden by bushes, snaked up the undulating mountain toward the skyline.

Master Ching-shan stopped here to ask me which way I preferred to take: the main track or the path.

Before I could answer, a cart pulled up behind us. The driver jumped down and greeted my master. "Well, mate, would you like a lift?"

To me, the cart was a welcome sight. For by now the sun had risen above the mountain, and a hot climb with that heavy crate on my back would certainly tire me out. I was just about to take off my crate when my master said to the driver:

"No, get on with your own work, comrade. I want to show my new apprentice this way."

"Well, if you're keen on mountaineering, so long!" Chuckling, the driver cracked his whip and his chestnut horse started off, while we struck through a thicket of dates towards the water-pipe.

So the "path" was not a short cut as I had imagined, but only this water-pipe. What an idea! Fancy turning down a lift and abandoning the main track to climb up along the pipe with such a weight on our backs! He ascended nimbly, holding on to the pipe, but I soon fell far behind. Shading my eyes from the sun, I noticed narrow steps through the undergrowth on each side of the pipe. Evidently this "path" was my master's beaten track. I saw him squat down at a joint in the pipe and turn up the earth under it with a spanner to examine some screws. After that he got up and went on. A few scores of yards further on he once more squatted down to investigate. It seemed to me this was how he meant to conduct me all the way up to the top. Looking over my shoulder I saw carts running on the broad, even track. On the pipe at my feet I detected drops of sweat. I was deeply moved by Master Ching-shan's spirit. When I looked up again, he had vanished from sight over the ridge. I hitched up my crate, mopped my face and put on a spurt.

At last I panted to the top. I had expected that it would be cool there; but there was no wind at all. On the contrary, the sun blazed down mercilessly. Master Ching-shan was squatting by his load raking together lumps of coal with his hands and putting it handful

by handful into his crate. The reason why he had climbed so fast was so as to have time to collect this coal, I supposed.

When I reached him, he propped his loaded crate against a tree and made me sit down beside him. Then he fished out his tobacco pouch and a slip of paper.

"Have a smoke?" he asked.

"I don't smoke, thanks."

Rolling a cigarette with his powerful callused hands, he asked again, "Did I walk you off your legs?"

"I'm young and fit. I'll feel fine after a night's sleep. But you ought to take better care of yourself, master."

"Me?" He laughed. "This won't hurt me."

"However tough you are, you shouldn't overdo it," I argued. "Why take this path every time? You didn't find a single screw loose. Why go to so much trouble?"

The smile left Master Ching-shan's face. He threw his burnt-out match to the ground, then slapped me lightly on the shoulder.

"Not a single screw was loose. So much the better, Little Chou. I sleep sounder after making the round like this. One leaky joint would waste tons of water a day. You must see to it that every screw here is tight. It's no joking matter."

Naturally I didn't yet know what my work would involve, but his warning made me feel both excited and tense. I nodded. Running the pump station properly was evidently not a cushy job.

After smoking, he stood up and pointed at a village in the shade of green trees below. "It's not far now, Little Chou," he said. "Once we're home you can have a good drink and cool off."

### 3

Master Ching-shan led me to the quiet, solitary village.

At the entrance stood three sturdy green pines, like giants guarding that enchanting place. Under them was a granite monument six feet high, the vermilion colouring of its inscription blurred with time. Only a red star at the top and the final row of characters stood out clearly. The latter read: The People's Government of Emerald

Cloud Township, Eighth District, Wanping County. It was a historical relic of the local people's revolutionary struggle.

I followed my master into a small, neat courtyard. On the north was a three-roomed stone cottage with a slate roof. West of this stood a walnut tree under which chicks were cheeping and pecking. The most striking thing was a great pile of coal in the east corner. Setting down my load in the shade, I unbuttoned my jacket and breathed a sigh of relief.

The cottage door creaked. Out came a woman of about the same age as my master. His wife, I guessed. After eyeing me she exclaimed with concern, "*Ai*, why exhaust the youngster like this?" She fetched me a basin to wash in, and made tea. Then she went up to Master Ching-shan and softly scolded, "Did you make the lad climb the water-pipe, old man? Couldn't you have given it a miss just for once?"

"No, I couldn't," he replied deliberately, unloading his coal on the pile. "There are 366 days this year. We can't miss out a single one."

"Couldn't you have been a little more flexible *today*?" she insisted, her lips pursed, her eyes on me.

"Today? To get my apprentice off to a good start, I showed him the way today. He'll soon find the long climb so easy that no wind or rain will stop him..."

"All right, all right... you pig-headed old man." His wife laughed.

Now my master slung his crate over his shoulder again, saying to me, "Just take it easy, lad." He turned to leave.

"Just a minute," she reminded him. "Clear away the ashes, will you?"

He went over to the ash heap in one corner and shovelled the ash spade by spade into his crate, stopping from time to time to pick out cinders.

A cup of tea in my hand, I went into the yard to look at the huge pile of coal there. Glancing at the cinders, I thought: how thrifty he is! With all that coal there, he still saves every cinder. When he left I said to his wife, "I'd no idea that my master was such a good housekeeper too."

"He?" She looked blank. Then she caught my meaning and smiled. "He doesn't often come home. When he does, he tries to bring as much coal as he can." Claspng her hands at her breast she laughed heartily.

#### 4

The pumping station was in lovely surroundings. Clear water set off the purple mountains and the azure sky; while the pumping house itself, with its grey roof and red walls, stood embowered by lilac bushes and fragrant cedrela trees. It seemed that Master Ching-shan understood the art of landscape gardening, for all was so beautifully laid out, so fresh and bright, that one could not but fall in love with the place at first sight.

However, after only three days at the station I became weary of the dull routine there. I had nothing to do but press electric buttons, check the meters and put down "normal" in the record book. A high school graduate like myself could hardly learn anything from this. How I envied the fiery, splendid life of the drilling teams! But every time I mentioned this, Master Ching-shan criticized me. It was no use hankering after a transfer, he said, because, with my attitude, I could not become a good drillman even if I were given the job. But no matter what he said, I considered this gully was no place for a hero to display his prowess.

One day at noon Master Ching-shan and I had lunch in the dormitory. To my surprise, when I finished my bowl of noodles, his still remained untouched. Chopsticks in hand, he was listening intently to the monotonous whirring of the pump. I was mystified.

When I took over the night shift, he handed me the record book and said, "Read my notes. Call me at once if you spot anything wrong." He straightened the cushion on the armchair for me, then left with both hands clasped behind his back.

The night was still. Stars twinkled outside the windows, and the only sound indoors was the whirr of the pump. Leaning back in the armchair, I leafed casually through the record book. The

entry for the previous day read: "The mine reports fluctuation in the volume of water delivered. Keep the pump under careful observation." The signatory was Master Ching-shan. And overleaf he had written, "The pump has worked normally today. We must be more *alert*." The word "alert" was heavily underlined.

I threw a glance at the meters. Perfectly normal. Then closing my eyes I thought: "Why idle away the whole night?" I tore a blank sheet off the record book, laid it on top of the book, and picked up my pencil wondering what to draw. . . . I had it! A bird's-eye view of Yenling Colliery would make a magnificent picture and might come in useful some day. So, eagerly, I began to make a rough draft.

The pump was whirring, the transformer humming and the water plashing. But the moment I put pencil to paper I became deaf to these familiar sounds. . . .

Suddenly the door was flung open and Master Ching-shan stormed in. Rushing to the switch-board he turned off the current. Then he switched on the spare pump and rounded on me. "Drawing. . . drawing!" he thundered at me.

Taken aback I asked sheepishly, "What's wrong?"

"What's wrong?" he countered, his chest heaving. Snatching my sketch he pointed at the meter. "Can't you see? No water's coming up."

"Surely not?" I protested half incredulously.

"I heard it. This is no joke, believe me. But you. . . ." The veins on his temples were throbbing, his eyes were blazing with anger. He spread out the crumpled-up sheet which he had snatched from me and cast a glance at it. I thought he would tear it up. But he folded it lightly and thrust it into his pocket. Looking at me he sighed, then turned and strode out.

I hurried after him. There by the filter pool he had already stripped off his coat, ready to get into the water. Only then did I realize that something must have gone wrong with the suction head of the pump. Thoroughly ashamed of myself, I tugged his arm and pleaded, "Let me do that, master."

"Go and fetch a rope from the dormitory," he ordered. Waving me away, he plunged into the pool.

I raced to the dormitory. As I untied the rope serving as a clothes-line over Master Ching-shan's bed, I noticed that his quilt was neatly folded. The scene of my master listening so intently that he forgot to eat flashed back to my mind. Warmth surged through my veins. It was now four o'clock in the morning. Obviously he had been sitting up all night!

When I ran back to the pool Master Ching-shan was squatting there with the suction head hoisted on his shoulder. I promptly jumped in and tied the rope around it. It was covered with limpets and weeds but, pulling and heaving, we managed to haul it ashore.

Master Ching-shan unclamped his lips then to order me, "Fetch a spanner to dismantle it."

The stars vanished as the first ray of dawn appeared. Shafts of sunlight fell on my master's wet back and silvery hair. His lips set, he turned the spanner, his breath coming short and fast. Suddenly two bullet-scars as big as coins on his right shoulder caught the morning sunshine. That was the part of his shoulder on which he had just hoisted the suction head, the part rubbed all the year round by the strap of his crate.

## 5

After my shift Master Ching-shan told me, "Come to my home after you've had a sleep, lad." He then left with his empty crate.

Lying in bed I dozed for two hours but then could sleep no more. That was only natural. The accident had resulted from my drawing while on duty; so the whole responsibility was mine. Now my master wanted to see me. What for, if not to haul me over the coals? With a heavy heart I went to Master Ching-shan's home.

"Silly lad," his wife hailed me. "Why stand at the gate like that? Come on in."

"Is my master still asleep?" I asked, stepping into the courtyard. "I'd better wait here for a while."

"He's just got up and gone out with his crate," she answered, chuckling.

"What?" My eyes turned to the heap of coal at the east corner of the courtyard. Strange! It had certainly dwindled considerably and a spade lay beside it. Scratching my head I asked, "So this coal isn't for yourselves?"

She laughed even more heartily. "This is good coal, loosened by wind and rain. We begrudge burning it, so we send it to the loading plant. Every little piece we can save for the country helps."

I stared at the rugged mountain path under the scorching sun, recalling how carefully Master Ching-shan had collected cinders from their ash heap. It seemed to me that a lump of coal was really more precious than gold, and that Master Ching-shan's loyal heart was beyond price.

Meanwhile his wife had squatted down to pick up cinders. Knocking the ashes off them with a small iron hook she said softly, "Take these cinders for example. We should make the fullest use of them, whether for iron smelting or for cooking."

I flushed up to my ears as I wondered whether this was aimed at me. "Have you a crate to spare, aunt?" I asked hastily. "I want to make a few trips too."

"Nothing doing! You were on duty last night. Besides, my old mate has a big job he wants you to do." She pushed me into the house.

On the table facing the door lay a large white sheet of paper. Next to the wood-chopper put on it to serve as a paper-weight was a new sharpened pencil. What did Master Ching-shan want of me? Then my heart missed a beat, for the rough draft I had made the previous night of the bird's-eye view of Yenling Colliery had been smoothed out and spread on the right corner of the table. No doubt about it, the big job Master Ching-shan had for me was to write a self-criticism.

My mind was still in a whirl when my master returned. Flapping the coal-dust off his coat with a towel, he grinned at me. "Little Chou, I've a favour to ask you."

"A favour?" I was puzzled.

Indicating the sketch he asked, "Isn't this our Yenling Colliery? I think it's fine. I want you to paint one for me."

I was delighted beyond measure. Master Ching-shan took up the sketch and, after scrutinizing it, went on, "I know nothing about painting, but I'd like to make a few suggestions. See whether I'm right or not."

This was the first time my master had expressed any interest in art. Indicating the left corner of the sketch he began, "Put in our pumping station here, and the piping too. How about that?"

He handed it back to me adding, "Without our pumping station the whole mine would be parched with thirst and unable to produce even one ton of coal. To my mind, with our station in, this picture would have much more point."

Well, I could at least try this. I sketched in the pumping station by the Yungting River and some winding piping joining the station and the mine. I found that integrating the bustling mine with the racing river and the towering mountains resulted in a better composition, as well as a more successful blend of scenery and sentiment.

"Any more tips, master?" I urged. "Let's hear them, quick."

Moving a finger from the upper left corner to the lower right he said, "You've forgotten something else important — the railway."

After adding a fine track slanting across the sketch I nearly leapt up with joy. "Marvellous!" I exclaimed. "That makes the whole picture much better."

"In what way?" Master Ching-shan chuckled.

I gave several reasons based on aesthetics, but he shook his head vigorously.

"Why? Aren't I right?" I asked helplessly.

"Yes, but this is too one-sided."

"Then what makes it better?"

"Tell me what we produce coal for?" he asked, his eyes flashing. "For the iron and steel industry; for the chemical industry and to build up our national defence. This railway not only ships coal out — with the coal goes our love for our country."

With a lump in my throat I stared at the sketch until, in my mind's eye, it turned into a magnificent, original painting, so vast that it

reached right to the ends of the earth. Everywhere there were heat and light supplied by our miners: didn't they reflect our miners' loyal hearts? This grand vista of the communist ideal could not be sketched without the callused hands and painstaking efforts of veterans like Master Ching-shan.

I left my master's home at dusk. The crimson sunset tinted the tree-tops, the rocks and the western sky. The granite tablet under the lofty pines at the entrance of the village seemed invested with a new dignity and splendour. I stepped forward to pore over the inscription, and tears of emotion started to my eyes. For this revolutionary relic recorded a heroic battle in Emerald Cloud Township thirty years ago. And among the list of heroes one name leapt to meet my eye: Teng Ching-shan.

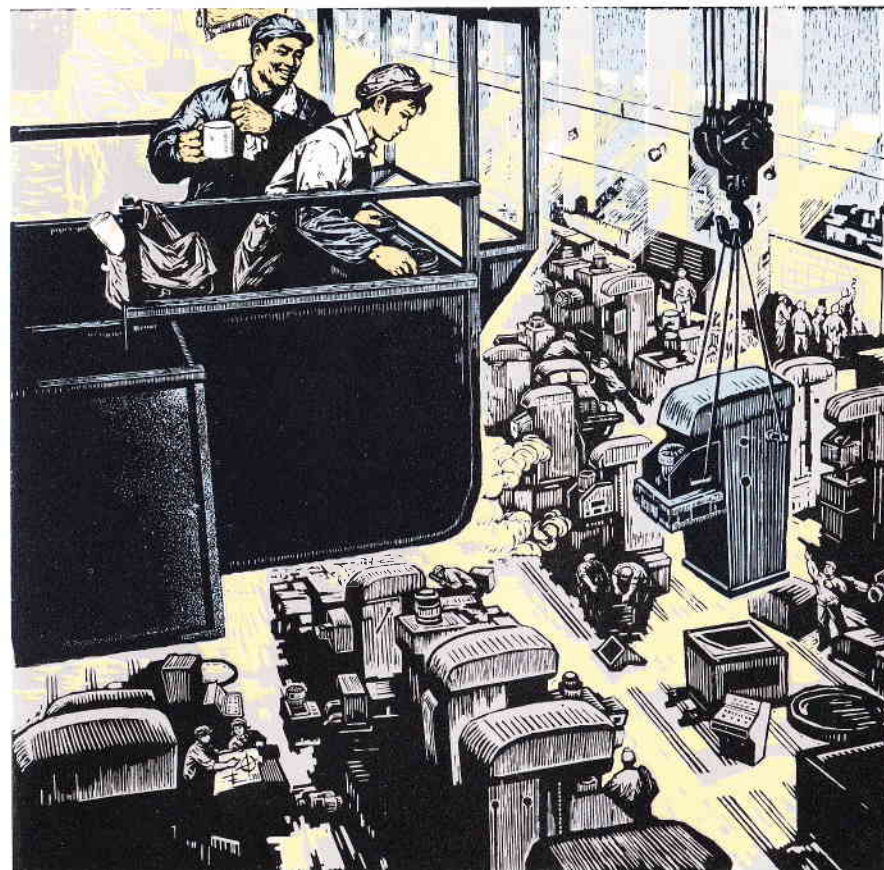
On May 10, 1942, the Japanese invaders occupying Yuehchia were led by a traitor to surround Emerald Cloud Township. The 13th Regiment of the Eighth Route Army fought a fierce battle with the enemy for five hours in order to cover the villagers' withdrawal to the mountain. The 8th Company, acting as the covering force, after successfully completing their mission broke through tight enemy encirclement and withdrew to the top of the mountain. From that vantage point they discovered that some of the villagers had taken the wrong path and were still within the enemy cordon. The vicious invaders had started fires, intending to burn down the villages. Flames spread through the forest, gunfire shook the valley. With the yell "Charge!" the heroic fighters of the 8th Company rushed back into the encirclement, braving showers of bullets and a sea of flame. They succeeded in rescuing more than two hundred villagers. To commemorate this heroic exploit which revealed our army's whole-hearted devotion to the people, the people's government of Emerald Cloud Township had erected this tablet as "a lasting memorial".

As I fingered the vigorous calligraphy of the inscription, my thoughts roamed as far and wide as the great mountain range. When I first came here I had been dissatisfied with the limited scope of my post. Now it dawned on me what a wide prospect Master Ching-shan had opened up in my heart. I asked myself: Can I measure up

to those heroes? Can I do as Master Ching-shan does — serve the people all my life at a commonplace post, like coal diffusing light and heat until it burns itself out?

Back in my room I set up my easel, determined to make a portrait of Master Ching-shan: his homely, honest face, especially his eyes fired by high ideals; his wrinkles carved by years of fighting; and his hands that had gripped a gun and now gathered coal. On second thoughts, however, I knew that what was more important was to follow his example in a practical, down-to-earth way and, with my own hard work, to help realize the grand prospect of communism.

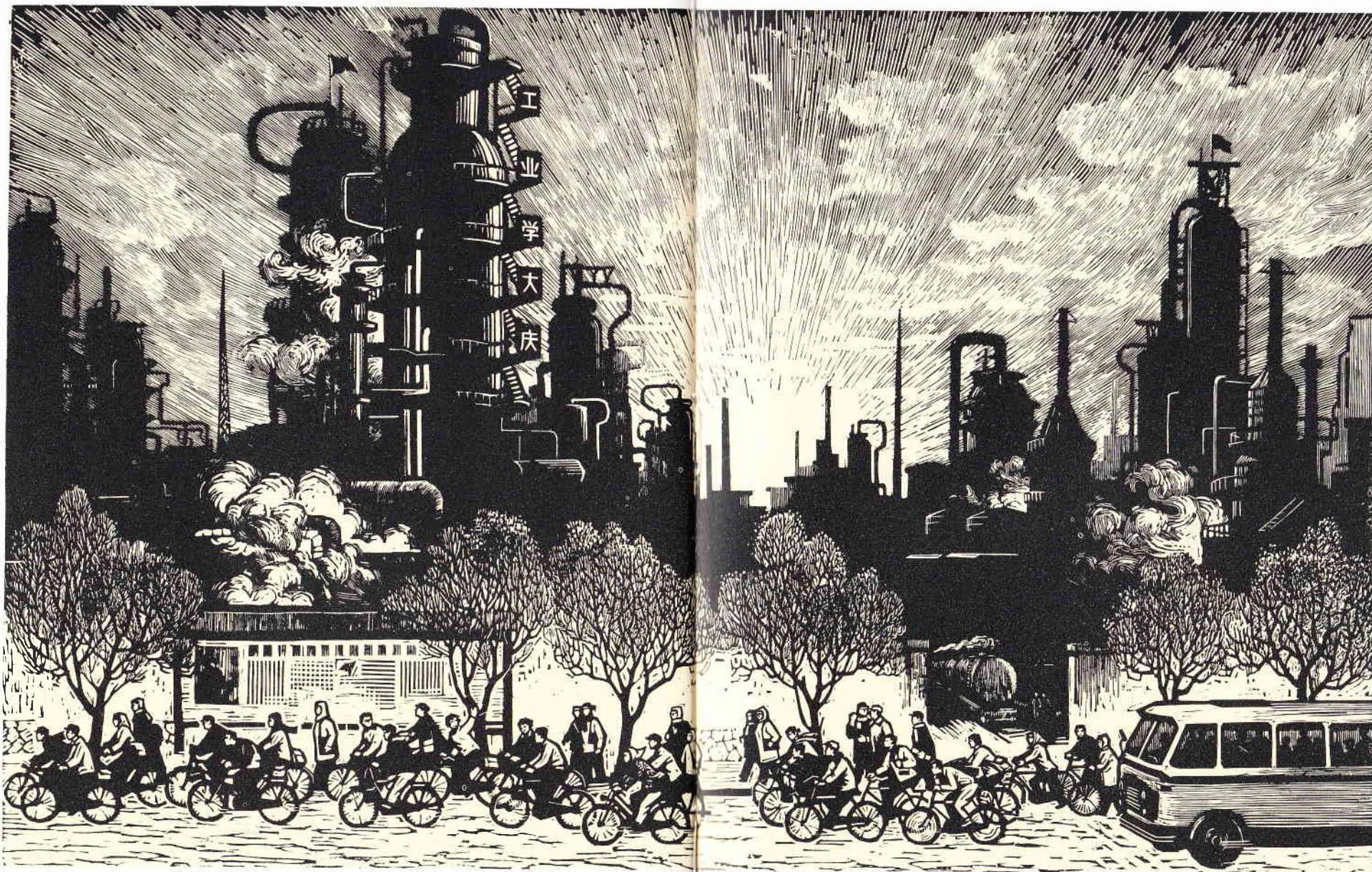
*Illustrated by Liang Yen*



The Rising Generation

by Jen Shang-yung

## **Selected Works of Luta Amateur Artists**



The Refinery in Morning Sunlight

by Sui Kuei-min



New Grain by Liu Pin



Industrial Products for the Countryside by Lin Yueh





## Notes on Art

Chang Tien-fang

## Amateur Artists of a Coastal City

Morning sunlight lights up the huge derrick of the oil refinery as another busy day begins. Workers go cheerfully to work, on foot and bicycle or by bus, while a train-load of oil tanks rolls slowly into the refinery. This is the scene depicted in the woodcut *The Refinery in Morning Sunlight*, one of the works by amateur artists in the city of Luta. The presentation, clear and powerful as a clarion call, conjures up the vitality of our petroleum industry built up entirely by our own efforts.

Lushun and Talien form the dual coastal city of Luta in Liaotung Peninsula in China's northeast. Here, guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line on literature and art, more and more amateur artists are producing works which have all the freshness and vigour depicted in this woodcut. Many worker-artists steeled by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution show deep proletarian class feeling in their revolutionary struggles and are using their brushes and knives to portray the life and struggles of the working class.

The coloured woodcut *Creating New Things All the Time* shows the towering hull of a ship being built and the cranes overhead. The

platform is brightly lit, sparks are flying under the hands of heroic welders, and an old worker in the middle is calmly yet eagerly directing operations. This is a scene of enthusiasm and verve. Though it is night time, the colours are vivid and bright. And this depiction of a shipyard conveys the might of the working class, the masters of history. The coloured woodcuts *Spanning Hills and Streams* and *New Grain* also reflect the vigorous growth of production in Luta. The first shows bridge builders ingeniously devising means to build a bridge across two hills and a stream, revealing their magnificent spirit. The second presents the exuberant scene of granary workers storing the new grain. Grain is cascading into one of the bins being erected, behind which stand orderly rows of filled bins, the whole composition evoking a splendid harvest.

One major theme chosen by these amateur worker-artists is the new things emerging in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The coloured woodcut *Industrial Products for the Countryside* shows how our socialist factories serve the needs of our agriculture. The workers here are jubilantly unloading trucks of equipment needed for water-conservancy and agriculture, while commune officers, villagers and their children warmly welcome this support. This picture manifests the solidarity between our workers and peasants and how, together, they are the makers of history.

*The Rising Generation*, a coloured woodcut, and *High Expectations* in black and white disclose how our younger generation is educated by veteran workers and old revolutionaries. The young crane operator in the first is concentrating hard on her job, while the old hand at her side watches with an approving smile. In the second a veteran cadre is urging his daughter, who is leaving for the countryside, to learn from the peasants there. He tells her of the past revolutionary tradition and the need to carry the revolution forward. And from the girl's expression it is clear that she has made up her mind to strike root in the countryside and continue the revolution all her life.

There are at present more than twenty groups of amateur artists in Luta, and more than three hundred workers regularly take part in amateur art activities organized by the factories and the municipality. This is five times the number so engaged before the Cultural

Revolution. Most of these spare-time artists are young workers who only took up art work after the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. The workshops have special corners where works of art can be shown and every factory has its own artists. Their works, exhibited in their own plants, are often reproduced by newspapers and magazines as well. Some have also been displayed in municipal, provincial and national exhibitions. These budding artists are provided with good facilities to study art and do original work either in their club-rooms or in special studios. All the expenses incurred are met by their organizations.

Han Chi-lan, the woman who made the coloured woodblock *We Love Tien An Men in Peking*, joined the Talien Locomotive Works in 1958. Moved by the stirring scenes in the factory, she tried to depict them in art, but lost heart when her first few attempts ended in failure. Then a veteran worker-artist described to her the bitterness of life in the old society and encouraged her to paint good pictures for the revolution. He told her: "I've always wanted to paint. In the old days I worked in an oil-mill. I worked hard, yet my boss often beat and cursed me. I wanted to paint pictures of that cruel old society, but I couldn't even feed or clothe myself properly then, so how could I afford to buy paints, brushes and paper? I scrounged through rubbish heaps for torn sheets of paper and brushes that had been thrown away, and used to paint by dim lamp-light in the evenings. When my boss caught me at it he bawled me out. How could millhands like us ever hope to paint? he ranted. Now we workers have become the masters of our own fate. If we want to paint, the leadership gives us help. So it's up to us to make a good job of depicting our new society and the new spirit of our times." The factory management let Han Chi-lan take part in art activities in the municipality which raised her ideological and technical level. Although now the mother of two children, she has kept up her amateur art work for many years. *We Love Tien An Men in Peking* is one of her recent works. It shows two little girls, one clapping her hands, the other dancing, as the song *We Love Tien An Men in Peking* is broadcast. We sense the children's heartfelt love for our

great leader Chairman Mao and their longing to see Tien An Men Square in our capital.

The amateur art activities of these Luta workers are closely linked with the socialist revolution and production and serve their needs. As soon as the movement to repudiate Confucius and Lin Piao unfolded, these worker-artists immediately produced a host of cartoons and posters for this struggle. They also put on exhibitions, using their art to laud the splendid achievements of the Cultural Revolution and the subsequent fine new socialist developments.

One outstanding feature of the amateur art work done in Luta is the popularity of woodcuts. As our great writer Lu Hsun said: "In a revolutionary period, the woodcut is the most useful art form; even when time presses it can be quickly cut." Hu Chuan-chih who made the woodcut *New Locomotives Are Produced* said: "We make woodcuts for the struggle, for the revolution." Refuting the traitor Lin Piao's slander of our industry, on the base of his own knowledge of the rapid growth of locomotive production he made the sketch for this woodcut at night and very quickly finished cutting it. The composition is fresh, the strokes are concise, and the use of light and shade is well balanced, so that this work successfully conveys the vigorous growth of our locomotive industry.

Most of Luta's amateur artists are good workers too. With their jobs as their base, their orientation is towards the grass-root level. This is their point of departure in their art. And by taking their workshops as their school and base they have produced many fine works of art. Thus *New Grain* and *The Rising Generation* are all based on incidents in different places of work. *New Grain* was produced by a young worker in Luta's No.1 Granary Depot. The stirring harvest scene gave him the inspiration for a picture, and with the help of other granary workers he very rapidly produced this woodcut. In connection with it he says: "My work-site is like a big school: it provides excellent conditions for creative work. Our life and struggles as workers have enriched my art and encouraged me to go forward."

Chairman Mao has pointed out: "Our specialists in the fine arts should pay attention to the fine arts of the masses", "on the one

hand, they should help and guide the popularizers, and on the other, they should learn from these comrades. . . ." Our amateur worker-artists co-operate with professional artists: this is one of the fine results of the Cultural Revolution. Spare-time artists and professionals often study together and learn from each other, and this has further promoted the growth of art activities in Luta.

The traditional-style painting *The Line Is Repaired*\* was painted by Luan Wan-chu, an electrician in the T'alien Railway Bureau. While working as a maintenance man he made a sketch for this picture; and since he was not adept enough with the techniques of traditional ink and colour painting, he asked help from a professional artist Wen Chung-sheng. After discussing and studying the necessary brushwork techniques, Luan produced this painting of a plucky girl electrician. The subject is down-to-earth, the composition has originality, and the use of ink is satisfactory. The train speeding through the snowy countryside provides an effective background to bring out the noble image of the girl; thus the theme is clearly projected.

Lu Hsun predicted: "The bright days to come will prove that we are not only the preservers of our art heritage but also pioneers and builders." Now his prophecy has come true. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution opened up immense possibilities for the art work of workers, peasants and soldiers. And the workers' spare-time art in Luta is blossoming out in the sunlight of socialism.

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\*See *Chinese Literature* No. 7, 1972.

*Shih Hua-tsu*

## Confucius, "Sage" of All Reactionary Classes in China

The reactionary ruling classes in different periods of Chinese history have bestowed on Confucius such resounding titles as the "king of culture" and the "greatest sage master". In this way they have tricked many people into regarding him as a real Chinese sage. Actually, however, he was only the "sage" of the reactionary ruling classes.

All double-dealers in Chinese history and all ringleaders of opportunist lines within the Chinese Communist Party have revered Confucius. The bourgeois careerist, conspirator, double-dealer, renegade and traitor Lin Piao was no exception. Lin Piao was a bona-fide disciple of Confucius.

Now let us tear off Confucius' mask and show his true features.

Confucius (551-479 B.C.) was born into an aristocratic slave-owning family on the decline. He lived in a period of radical change when China was passing from slave society to feudal society, but he took as his lifelong objective the restoration of the slave system of the Western Chou Dynasty (circa 1100-770 B.C.). To this end he for-

mulated the reactionary programme: "Restrain oneself and restore the rites." He clamoured for the revival of the extinct slave states, the restoration of the hereditary privileges of the moribund slave-owning aristocracy, and the recall to office of those nobles who had lost power. In a word, he wanted to turn back the wheel of history. He opposed progress, reform and slave revolts.

When he was twenty-six or twenty-seven, Confucius held two minor posts in the State of Lu, once as the man in charge of livestock, once as an accountant. Later, he began teaching in the hope of training "talents" for the restoration of the old order, expanding his reactionary influence, and carrying out his reactionary programme. When he was about thirty, he started a private school. His aims as elucidated to his disciples were: to have absolute faith in the need for restoring the ways of the Chou Dynasty, to study hard, and to keep the slave system intact even at the cost of one's life. One of his conditions for taking a disciple was that he receive ten pieces of cured meat by way of a fee. How could any slave buy so much meat? It is evident that almost all his disciples came from noble families.

Confucius summed up the mental outlook of the slave-owning aristocracy as *jen* (human-heartedness or benevolence). This is the core of his ideological system. His disciple Yen Yuan once asked the meaning of "human-heartedness". The reply was that it meant practising self-restraint so as to make one's speech and behaviour conform with the rites of the Chou Dynasty. If this was done, Confucius asserted, all under heaven would submit to one's benevolent rule. So the "human-heartedness" Confucius preached was aimed at restoring the reactionary rule of the slave system.

Confucius said: Only superior men (i.e. nobles) can be human-hearted, not inferior men (i.e. slaves). It is clear therefore that the "human-heartedness" he advocated did not extend to slaves. He was trying to win over the slave-owners and freemen within the ruling clans to suppress slave uprisings.

When Confucius was thirty-four, Duke Chao of the State of Lu, in collusion with other slave-owning aristocrats, attempted to crush the rising feudal forces represented by the House of Chisun. Defeated in battle, Duke Chao fled to the State of Chi. Confucius went

there too with several of his disciples. Learning that Duke Ching of Chi was also threatened by the emerging landlord class, Confucius urged him to send a punitive expedition against those forces that rejected the rites of the Chou Dynasty, in order to restore the "golden age" of the early Western Chou Dynasty. He told the duke: If a prince acted like a prince, a subject like a subject, a father like a father and a son like a son, each keeping to his own place in the hierarchy, the slave system could be saved.

At about that time, a high official in the State of Tsin had a tripod cast with laws inscribed on it so that everyone could read them. This represented a change in the superstructure brought about by the change in the economic base, a victory for the rising feudal forces and a defeat for the slave-owning aristocrats. This measure, progressive at the time, infuriated Confucius. Taking one of his disciples by the hand, he wailed: In the time of the Duke of Chou, the rites did not extend to inferior men while punishments could not be imposed on nobles. Now that the State of Tsin has thrown overboard the system handed down by its ancestors and gone so far as to make public the penal code, the slaves will learn about it, won't they, from the tripod? They won't obey the orders of the nobles, will they? In that case, how can there be any semblance of order marked by the distinction between the noble and the inferior? I can see that the State of Tsin is about to perish. This jeremiad shows Confucius up as a diehard who stubbornly upheld the "rule by the rites" of the slave system.

At the age of fifty-two, Confucius became acting prime minister in the State of Lu. At that time a certain Shaocheng Mao taught and advocated reforms there. Confucius, a hypocrite who was always holding forth about "human-heartedness", had this noted reformist executed on trumped-up charges. However, Confucius did not hold power for long: after three months he was dismissed.

In the years that followed, Confucius and his disciples wandered from place to place peddling his reactionary political ideas. But times had changed and history was marching forward. He met with opposition wherever he went and was declared *persona non grata*

by the rulers of certain states. While in the State of Wei, he got people to recommend him several times to the duke; but the duke ignored him. When he went to the State of Chu, Prince Chao of Chu at first intended to give him a post, but his chief minister Tzu Hsi cautioned him: Confucius wants to follow in the steps of the Duke of Chou. The fief given us by the House of Chou covered an area of a mere fifty *li*. If you take him into your service, your descendants will have no peace. So Prince Chao gave up the idea of employing Confucius.

During his lifetime, Confucius was treated with contempt by the common people. A warden of the city gate in the State of Lu described him as a man who kept trying to do what he knew was impossible. Someone in the State of Cheng commented that he looked like a homeless cur.

One day during his travels, one of Confucius' disciples Tzu Lu fell behind. He asked an old man carrying a bamboo basket: "Have you seen my master?" The old man replied: "Your master? You mean that man whose four limbs never toil and who can't tell the difference between the five grains?"

Confucius despised manual labour and regarded the toiling masses as inferior; and the working people throughout the centuries have looked down upon him, ridiculed him and opposed him.

Once, a big slave revolt led by Liuhsia Chih broke out in the border region between Chi and Lu, striking fear into the rulers of several states. Gnashing his teeth, Confucius determined to lure this rebel leader to destruction and undermine the revolt. With two of his disciples he went to see Liuhsia Chih and craftily promised him: If you lay down your arms and disband your men, I will get you a large city and you can become a baron, enjoying unlimited wealth. Liuhsia Chih knew that Confucius was a diehard set on restoring the old order. He angrily refuted his reactionary programme, exposed the despotism of the slave-owning aristocracy and the iniquities of the slave system. He denounced Confucius as a hypocrite, a parasite who stirred up trouble with his mischievous tongue, a brigand and tyrant who oppressed the people and whose goal in life was wealth and high position. Confucius was dumbfounded and

driven out. He returned crest-fallen to his carriage, his face ashen, so intimidated that three times he let fall the reins from his trembling hands before finally he reached home.

Confucius met with setbacks wherever he went during his fourteen years of wandering from state to state. His perverse political views and reactionary proposals were rejected. In the end he returned in dejection to Lu, his native state, where he confided to his disciple Tzu Lu: "Formerly I always saw the Duke of Chou in my dreams, but now I have not seen him for several years. Maybe this is because I am growing old or Heaven has ordained that my ambition should not be realized."

Then, under the pretext of compiling a history of the State of Lu, he set about making a chronological record of the "crimes" of the rulers, nobles and the rising feudal forces in various states who had abandoned the rites of the Chou Dynasty. He hoped to settle scores some day with these "rebellious ministers and impious sons". This vicious record was known as the *Spring-and-Autumn Annals*.

As an idealist, Confucius believed in the "will of Heaven" and held that the slave-owners had received a "mandate from Heaven" to rule over their slaves. This concept formed the theoretical basis for his attempt at restoring the slave system.

Towards the end of Confucius' life Duke Chien of Chi, who represented the slave-owning aristocracy, plotted with the forces of reaction to wipe out Chen Heng, a representative of the emerging landlord class. In the ensuing battle Duke Chien was killed by Chen Heng's troops. When the news reached the State of Lu, Confucius, then seventy-one, rose from his sick-bed and went to see Duke Ai of Lu, urging that troops be dispatched to suppress Chen Heng. But the duke judged that his forces were inadequate even for his own defence, and he turned down Confucius' proposal. Soon afterwards, Confucius died in despair at the age of seventy-three, still mourning for the moribund slave-owning class.

After his death, the struggle between the Legalist School representing the rising landlord class and the Confucian School representing the decadent slave-owning aristocracy continued for several centuries from the latter part of the Spring-and-Autumn Period (770-475 B.C.)

until China was unified by Chin Shih Huang (259-210 B.C.), the first emperor of the Chin Dynasty. By the time of the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 24), when the threat of a restoration of the slave system had passed, the landlord class gradually changed from a real tiger into a paper tiger. Then the feudal landlord class modified the doctrines of Confucius, making them the dominant ideology to serve the feudal system. All other schools of thought were outlawed; Confucianism became the sole orthodoxy.

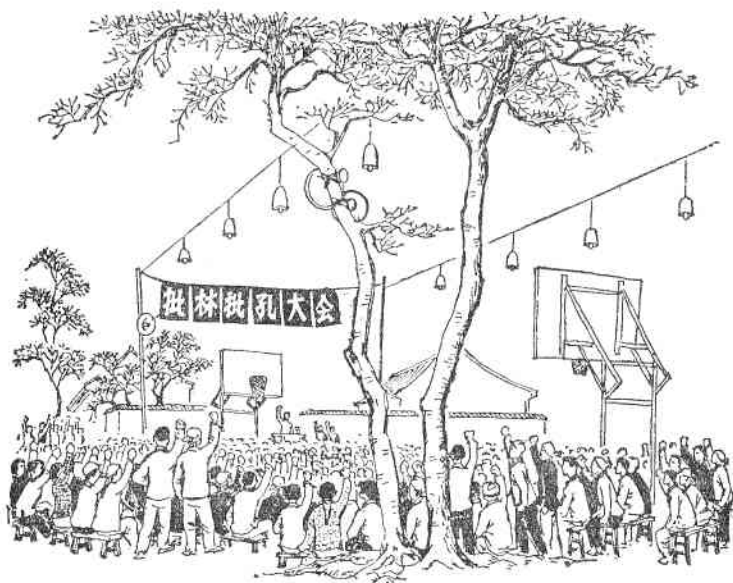
Since then, for the last two thousand years, Confucius has been exalted as a "sage" by the reactionary ruling classes. In modern times, the traitor Chiang Kai-shek reveres Confucius. So do the imperialists and the Soviet revisionists. In his futile attempt to effect a capitalist restoration, Liu Shao-chi extolled Confucius. Lin Piao, too, clamoured for "restraining oneself and restoring the rites" to bring about a restoration of capitalism. He called on his followers to "succeed or die to preserve virtue". However, the reactionary classes cannot avert their doom by invoking the spectre of Confucius.

At present, a mass campaign to repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius is developing in depth in China. The debunking of Confucius is an important component in the debunking of Lin Piao. Confucius must be refuted if a thoroughgoing repudiation is to be made of Lin Piao. Only by criticizing the reactionary doctrines of Confucianism are people coming to see more clearly the counter-revolutionary crimes of Lin Piao and his clique in their attempts at a capitalist restoration and retrogression and the ultra-Rightist nature of Lin Piao's revisionist line. This will enable them to dig up the roots of Lin Piao's reactionary ideas and eradicate the influence of the reactionary thinking of Lin Piao and Confucius. All this will help consolidate and expand the immense achievements of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and further our socialist cause.

# Sketches of Scenes Criticizing Lin Piao and Confucius



Mass criticism at the steel plant ▶  
by Tsao Fang-po



Studying material for criticism during a break ▶  
by Chang Lin (Husien peasant artist)

◀ Mass criticism meeting  
by Lu Chih-kuei (Husien peasant artist)





Textile workers repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius by Chen Yeh



PLA men repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius by Chiao Pao-hua



Putting up a wall newspaper by Fan Chih-hua



We are the masters of the docks by Shih Yin-chao



## Why Are We Denouncing Confucius in China?

Initiated and led by our great leader Chairman Mao, a tremendous mass movement to denounce Lin Piao and Confucius is unfolding vigorously throughout China.

Confucius, reactionary thinker of the moribund slave-owning class more than two millennia ago, has long since turned to dust. Why then are we still denouncing him today? Why do we link the denunciation of Lin Piao with that of Confucius?

As Lenin has said: **“When the old society perishes, its corpse cannot be nailed up in a coffin and lowered into the grave. It disintegrates in our midst; the corpse rots and infects us.”** For more than two thousand years, the putrid corpse of Confucius has been used by reactionaries in China and abroad and, during the last few decades, by various leaders of opportunist lines in the Chinese Communist Party, as a means to deceive the people and oppose revolution. Chairman Mao has said: **“Everything reactionary is the same; if you don’t hit it, it won’t fall. This is also like sweeping the floor; as a rule, where the broom does not reach, the dust will**

**not vanish of itself.”** So a thorough repudiation of Confucius and his reactionary ideas, the eradication of all Confucianist poison, is an essential part of our present task of deepening the socialist revolution in the superstructure of our society.

The reactionary essence of Confucianism suits the needs of all reactionary classes which oppose progress and advocate retrogression, which oppose reform and advocate conservatism, which oppose revolution and want a return to the past. The teachings of Confucius originally served the needs of those eager to revive the moribund slave system and turn back the wheel of history. A century after his death, his grandson’s disciple Mencius (circa 390-305 B.C.) took over and further developed Confucius’ teachings. Subsequently, the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius were amplified and modified by the reactionary ruling classes of different periods. Thus Tung Chung-shu (179-104 B.C.), minister of Emperor Wu (157-87 B.C.) of Han, stressed the reactionary Confucian concepts that the sovereign’s power is ordained by Heaven; that human beings belong to different types, the high being wise and the low stupid; that there is an immutable relationship between ruling and ruled, between sovereign and subject, between father and son, and between husband and wife... By degrees these doctrines became spiritual fetters used by the reactionary feudal landlord class to enslave the masses, ideological weapons to oppose reform and revolution.

In the last hundred years, the retrograde Confucian ethical system formed a “Holy Alliance” with the colonialist concepts of the imperialists and was utilized by imperialism and all Chinese reactionaries to oppose the people’s revolution, above all to oppose the Chinese proletariat and Marxism-Leninism. Thus the fascist despot and traitor Chiang Kai-shek in his frenzied attempts to destroy the Communists made a great show of worshipping Confucius and paying homage to him as a sage.

After the establishment of our People’s Republic in 1949, revisionist ring-leaders in our Party such as Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao also vainly hoped to use the spectre of Confucius to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat and bring back capitalism. In short, all Chinese reactionaries who want to put the clock back use the doctrines of Con-

Confucius and Mencius as their weapon to oppose the masses and the revolution.

Confucius was a hypocrite, a political swindler and a double-faced schemer. For ever talking about honesty, he was actually the greatest liar of all times. While lauding "benevolent government" to the skies, he in fact murdered people. While posing as one who cared nothing for wealth and rank, he lived a decadent life of luxury. The doctrines of Confucius and Mencius are false teachings to deceive the masses. They harp on humanity, justice and morality, but in fact serve oppression and exploitation. They advocate love for mankind, but actually aim at enabling men to eat men. They feign concern for the welfare of the people, but in reality consider the masses as the enemy and provide ways for the reactionary ruling classes to enslave the people. As great Lu Hsun said: "Confucius devised outstanding methods of governing the state, but these were thought up to rule the people for the sake of those in authority; there was nothing of any value to the people."

The bourgeois careerist, conspirator, double-dealer, renegade and traitor Lin Piao was a frenzied advocate of Confucianism, the core of which is the maxim "restrain oneself and return to the rites". For him, this meant overthrowing the dictatorship of the proletariat and restoring capitalism. He itched to carry out Confucius' reactionary political programme: "Revive states that are extinct, restore hereditary families that have lost their positions, and recall to office those who have fallen into obscurity." He wanted to "liberate politically" all those suppressed by our dictatorship of the proletariat, to bring the landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and Rightists back to power, to restore the reactionary rule of the landlords and comprador-capitalists in China, turning our country into a colony for the Soviet social-imperialists. This is the class content of Lin Piao's would-be "return to the rites", the true essence of his counter-revolutionary revisionist line. He, too, made a vain attempt to turn back the wheel of history. In Lin Piao's ideological and organizational line he peddled the Confucian theory of "the will of Heaven", the notion that some men are born wise, that the higher-

ups are intelligent and the common people stupid, that one should recoil in order to advance, and so forth. This whole reactionary code of conduct had the criminal aim of restoring the old order. Thus Confucianism is an important source of Lin Piao's revisionist line.

Lin Piao was a double-dealer who mouthed pious sentiments while doing the most dastardly deeds — this too, he learned directly from Confucius. Therefore, to deepen the movement to debunk Lin Piao we must also debunk Confucius. The denunciation of Confucius is an important integral part of the denunciation of Lin Piao. Only by showing Confucius up can we reveal the ultra-Rightist essence of Lin Piao's counter-revolutionary revisionist line, dig up the root of Lin Piao's reactionary thought, and eradicate the reactionary ideological influence of both Lin Piao and Confucius. The struggle between our Party and Lin Piao on the question of Confucius is actually a struggle between two classes and two opposite lines in our socialist period, between progress and retrogression, between revolution and counter-revolution. This struggle is far from concluded.

Confucius failed to save Lin Piao. After betraying the Party this traitor has perished. However, the revisionist line which Lin Piao tried to carry out and the Confucianism which he preached must still be thoroughly repudiated. The reactionary forces within and without China which he represented will also never stop their attack on our proletariat. All diehards at home and abroad, including the Soviet revisionists, the Chiang Kai-shek clique and a handful of unremoulded landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and Rightists and counter-revolutionary revisionists in China, are just like Lin Piao and his clique and are still using Confucian ideas to attack the Cultural Revolution. The present movement will fully confirm that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was **"absolutely necessary and most timely for consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, preventing capitalist restoration and building socialism"**. Hence it is vital for us to carry on this movement to denounce Lin Piao and Confucius in order to persist in the great struggle to prevent revisionism, to carry out Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line, to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and to continue our revolution.

Confucianism, the dominant ideology for several thousand years in old China, has exercised an enormous influence on many aspects of Chinese social life. Even after the proletariat took power, revisionist elements within the Party used traditional concepts of the exploiting classes — contempt for manual labour, contempt for women, workers and peasants, aversion to new socialist phenomena and new forces, veneration for foreign and ancient things — to oppose Marxism-Leninism and poison the minds of the people. Marx and Engels have pointed out: **“The communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations; no wonder that its development involves the most radical rupture with traditional ideas.”** In order, then, to continue the revolution and to build socialism and communism, in the ideological field we must make the most radical rupture with such traditional ideas as the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, completely sweeping away their pernicious influence in the present movement.

If we look at the class struggle on a world scale, the worship of Confucius by certain Chinese reactionaries is often bound up with their betrayal of their country to the imperialists. This is true of all such notorious traitors in modern Chinese history as Yuan Shih-kai, Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei. It is true of the renegade and traitor Lin Piao. Similarly, the aggressive plots of foreign reactionaries are often bound up with the cult of Confucius. This was true in the case of the Japanese imperialists in the past; it is true today of the Soviet revisionists. This is because the retrogression and return to the old order advocated by Confucianism, its delusion that the common people are stupid, its “doctrine of the Mean” and so forth, all suit the needs of foreign diehards who want to deceive and benumb the Chinese people in order to turn China into their colony. They suit their need to slander New China, to slander communism and the Chinese people, their need to preserve their tottering rule, to stem the advance of the irresistible revolutionary tide of history. Lu Hsun once wrote: “I think if foreigners come to conquer China . . . they will venerate Confucius even more.”

Hence the denunciation of Lin Piao and Confucius is an exposure and criticism of Lin Piao and his clique who tried to surrender to

the Soviet revisionists and make them their masters; it is also an exposure and criticism of the Soviet revisionists’ wild dream of making China their colony. It is a powerful blow against all imperialists, revisionists and other counter-revolutionaries.

This deepening of the movement to denounce Lin Piao and Confucius fully demonstrates that in the class struggle and the struggle between two lines in China and abroad, we are firmly on the side of the revolutionary peoples of the world. We firmly support the revolutionary struggle of all oppressed peoples and oppressed nations and will carry on to the end the fight against imperialism, revisionism and other reactionaries.

## Why This Hullabaloo from the Soviet Revisionist Clique?

Recently the Soviet revisionist renegade clique have ordered their hack writers to churn out a mass of articles and have set their propaganda machine into motion in vicious attacks on our movement to denounce Lin Piao and Confucius. On the one hand, they fervidly praise Confucianism as a “superior compendium of solely valuable wisdom accumulated for centuries”; on the other, they shamelessly vilify our current repudiation of Lin Piao and Confucius as a vandalistic assault on our “cultural treasures”, and vainly try to summon back from the dead the spirit of Confucius and his faithful disciples in the Lin Piao anti-Party clique.

Such abusive attacks from the Soviet revisionists are in no way new. When our people launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, they also attacked it, claiming, “It has nothing in common with either revolution or culture.” According to them, our attitude towards our cultural heritage was “anarchistic, nihilistic and perverted”, and we were for “primitivism pure and simple”.... Such counter-revolutionary slanders were too numerous to quote. This was in line with the hullabaloo they are now raising, alleging that our cam-

paign to denounce Confucius and Lin Piao is to destroy our “cultural treasures”. However, all these renegades’ attempts to confuse right and wrong and to deceive people by distorting and defaming this great revolutionary movement are utterly useless and doomed to certain failure.

The Chinese people have a long history. In several thousand years of cultural development we created a splendid ancient culture. However, Marxists hold that **“a given culture is the ideological reflection of the politics and economics of a given society”**. Ever since human society split up into opposing classes there has never been a unified culture “for the whole people”, but only class culture. There is the culture of the slave-owners, feudal and semi-feudal culture, imperialist and comprador-bourgeois culture, as well as the culture of the masses of the people. There are good things as well as bad things. Chairman Mao has taught us that **“to study the development of this old culture, to reject its feudal dross and assimilate its democratic essence is a necessary condition for developing our new national culture and increasing our national self-confidence, but we should never swallow anything and everything uncritically”**. Since the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese people have been making a critical study of our ancient culture so as to assimilate what is best in it. This is well known to the people of the world. The diatribes of the Soviet renegades cannot distort the facts.

Confucius was a spokesman for the moribund slave-owning class, a stubborn defender of the slave system. His corrupt, reactionary doctrine, Confucianism, first reflected the interests of the slave-owners. Later it was developed by the ruling classes of different periods to serve as an ideological weapon for all reactionaries to oppress and enslave the Chinese people. The core of this ideology, *jen* (benevolence or human-heartedness), reflected needs and wishes of the slave-owning class. Confucius claimed that “the human-hearted ruler loves the people”, and the Soviet revisionists are now blethering that this was true “humanism”, “a most noble, virtually unattainable ideal”. However, a large body of historical facts proves that these are deceitful lies. For example, when revolting slaves in the State of Cheng were cruelly suppressed and massacred by the slave-owners, Confucius

voiced approval; and in the three months when he was acting prime minister in the State of Lu, he had Shaocheng Mao killed for advocating reforms. This goes to show that what Confucius practised was nothing but despotic rule; what traces were there of "benevolence" or "humanism"? This fully exposes the reactionary nature of his doctrine of *jen*.

We must thoroughly debunk the reactionary culture represented by Confucius and overthrow it once and for all. Chairman Mao in his glorious work *On New Democracy* long ago pointed out explicitly: **"China also has a semi-feudal culture which reflects her semi-feudal politics and economy, and whose exponents include all those who advocate the worship of Confucius, the study of the Confucian canon, the old ethical code and the old ideas in opposition to the new culture and new ideas."** And **"this kind of reactionary culture serves the imperialists and the feudal class and must be swept away."** Unless we overthrow the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius which have fettered the spirit of our labouring people for thousands of years, the masses will not be ideologically liberated. Unless we make a thorough criticism of such reactionary culture, our proletarian revolution will not be truly victorious.

We must discover our new world in the course of debunking the old world, create our new culture in the course of criticizing the old culture. This is the glorious task which history has entrusted to our working class and labouring people. Just as in our Cultural Revolution, the aim of the present movement to denounce Lin Piao and Confucius is to repudiate all that is feudal, bourgeois or revisionist in the ideological field, to reform our education, art and literature, and to transform those parts of the superstructure which no longer suit our socialist economic base, so as to prevent a capitalist restoration and ensure that socialist China will never change her colour. The Soviet revisionists, however, consider these ulcers of ours as their treasure and fulsomely praise Confucianism. As Lu Hsun once said: "Regarding the imperialists and us, excepting those who are their slaves, all our interests are diametrically opposed."

This being the case, the Cultural Revolution and the movement to denounce Lin Piao and Confucius are hated and feared by the Soviet

revisionists. Since they have no way to obstruct the revolutionary upsurge of the Chinese people, they fall back on slander and rumour mongering to confuse the issue. One of their hack writers Yevtushenko has yelped hysterically that in China "literature is dying out... dying out..." Such raving is ridiculous in the extreme. Like a blind man he has completely failed to see that since the Cultural Revolution literature and art have flourished in socialist China like a hundred flowers in bloom. The revolutionary model theatrical works born and perfected in the fierce struggles between two opposing classes and two opposing lines are examples of our fine achievements in revolutionizing our literature and art. These revolutionary operas and ballets are strongly militant, imbued with the revolutionary heroism of the proletariat. They are excellent examples of art serving the working people, serving the dictatorship of the proletariat. They are glittering pearls in the treasury of proletarian art, a truly precious cultural legacy in the history of art. They have made the most radical rupture with the old cultural traditions; for whereas for centuries history was distorted by making emperors, princes, generals and ministers, talented scholars and fine young ladies dominate the stage, today this distortion of history has been set right. This not only has great significance today, but will have profound historical significance.

Inspired by these model operas and ballets, mass movements to create revolutionary literature and art are going ahead full swing, a proletarian contingent of writers and artists is growing up, and fine works in various art forms are daily emerging. The recent appearance of new feature films in colour signalizes another success in our proletarian revolution in art and literature. Early this year the North China Theatrical Festival held in Peking showed what had been achieved in dramatic reform in different provinces and localities, marking fresh victories in our revolution in art. In short, just like other fronts, the whole literary and art front is doing extremely well — our art and literature are flourishing. It is true that works with a feudal, bourgeois or revisionist content produced under the domination of the revisionist black line have received mortal blows from the mighty on-rushing tide of the Cultural Revolution. The Soviet revisionists may bemoan

this fact, but this cannot sully the splendour of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in literature and art.

We should point out, moreover, that the people who are really causing revolutionary literature and art to disappear are no other than the Soviet revisionists themselves. They are the diehard defenders of the old culture and old ideology of the exploiters. In order to restore capitalism, they have done their utmost to destroy socialist ideology and socialist culture, blatantly advocating militarism and national chauvinism, making literature and art a tool for their social-imperialism. The ideological and cultural fields controlled by the Soviet revisionists have become a hotchpotch of the poisonous weeds of feudalism, capitalism and revisionism. The Pan-Slavism of the old tsars as well as the social-imperialism of the new tsars, the pernicious doctrines of Confucius and Mencius as well as the "Western culture" now so much in vogue, religious fanaticism as well as decadent pornography ... all flourish together there. In a word, they are using all varieties of ideology and culture of the exploiting classes to poison and corrupt the minds of the Soviet people, establishing a fascist dictatorship in ideology.

Lu Hsun once said: "I think if foreigners come to conquer China ... they will venerate Confucius even more." The Soviet revisionists are doing their utmost to use the corpse of Confucius and to defend his reactionary school of thought in order to slander China and if possible subjugate China. They connived and plotted with Lin Piao's clique. They viciously attacked the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the vain hope of restoring capitalism in China and turning our country into a colony for the new tsars. Such attempts are, of course, bound to fail. The heroic Chinese people are vigorously advancing along the revolutionary line of Chairman Mao. Since ancient times all who plotted counter-revolutionary retrogression, all who tried to turn back the wheel of history, have come to a bad end. More than two thousand years ago, Confucius first tried to restore the old order and came to a sad end. Now Lin Piao and his clique, the disciples of Confucius and arch-spies of the Soviet revisionists, have also been completely destroyed. And the fate in store for these Soviet gentlemen will not be any better. In the end they are bound to meet with complete defeat.

## On Antonioni's Self-Defence

Antonioni's anti-China film *China* is being indignantly denounced by the Chinese people. The people in many other countries, including Italy, have also condemned his shameless attack on New China.

So M. Antonioni hastily put up a "defence" and asserted: "Upon my conscience I have not vilified China or distorted its reality." He even claims that the Chinese people are criticizing this film because he happens to serve as a suitable tool in the rising political debate. True, he has served as a tool. But instead of the Chinese people using him as a tool, it is he himself who has willingly served as a tool of the enemies of the Chinese people and the people of the world.

What basis have we for saying that Antonioni serves as such a tool? It is common knowledge that a struggle between two classes and two roads exists in China, and that a threat of subversion and aggression by imperialism and social-imperialism comes from abroad. Antonioni came to China in mid-May, 1972, after the fall of Lin Piao the arch agent of the Soviet revisionist renegade clique, at a time when the Chinese people were deepening the movement to criticize Lin Piao and rectify the style of work. He used all sorts of despicable

cinematographic tricks to present thriving socialist China as in a state of chaos. By means of deliberately distorted scenes and vicious narration he insinuated that old China, "paradise" of imperialist adventurists, was much more "prosperous" than New China where the working people are masters of the country. This claim that conditions at present are worse than those of the past is very similar to the Lin Piao anti-Party clique's counter-revolutionary slanders of China's socialist cause in a vain attempt to restore capitalism. In fact, Antonioni mounted again on the screen the same old attack on the socialist system and the dictatorship of the proletariat in China made by Lin Piao and the social-imperialists, his Soviet revisionist bosses behind the scenes. Whose needs does this meet and whose tool is he? Isn't it very clear?

The interesting thing is that, when this question was raised, a Western reporter asked Antonioni whether or not he was a Russian mouthpiece. Antonioni "shrugged", to show that he was "hardly attempting to become less ambiguous". As to whether or not this "mouthpiece" just happened to chime in with the anti-China chorus of Soviet revisionism, let the facts make it "less ambiguous".

At the end of 1971 and beginning of 1972, Soviet revisionism set its propaganda machine into motion against China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, ranting that it had "greatly impeded" the development of production so that the economy was "at a standstill." After coming to China, instead of reflecting the truth about China's achievements in grasping revolution and promoting production, Antonioni scurrilously asserted in his anti-China film that "the Cultural Revolution has thrown the system of production into confusion". One may ask M. Antonioni: "Doesn't this show that you, acting as a 'mouthpiece', were singing exactly the same tune?"

At the beginning of 1972, Soviet revisionism vilified the Chinese people as "lacking freedom" and even alleged that the revolution "robs the children of human feeling". Therefore Antonioni shut his eyes to the Chinese people's exuberance now that they are their own masters, or if he saw it refrained from filming it. Instead, he viciously insinuated that the Chinese people were oppressed and slanderously claimed that for Chinese children to sing "political" songs

in praise of Chairman Mao and the Communist Party was not in keeping with their "lovable" age. Doesn't this reveal that the "conscience" of this "mouthpiece" is the same as that of Soviet revisionism?

It was also just before Antonioni came to China that Soviet revisionism slandered China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, saying "countless historical monuments were destroyed". Backing up this Soviet revisionist slander, Antonioni alleged in his anti-China film that "there are few monuments which remain intact" in China's cities. He claimed that he went to film China "in search of images, not judgements". There was indeed no need for him to "search" for judgements, because he had already made the counter-revolutionary "judgements" of the new tsars his own.

Early in 1972, the Soviet revisionist renegade clique also concocted a television documentary film to heap abuse on China. This film expressed the hope that China would "return to true socialism", in other words, that revisionism would take power and capitalism be restored to plunge China into darkness once again. So on his return to Rome after completing his anti-China film on the same theme, Antonioni held a press conference. Expatiating on his experience as if he were a fortune-teller he predicted: "It is more likely that China will be polluted than we purified." Here "polluted" obviously had a double meaning, implying that China was "more likely" to be transformed by capitalism and that socialism would not triumph over capitalism. This statement is scarcely new; it was the prophecy of Dulles in the past and is the dream of the new tsars today. However, Dulles went to his heaven before his prophecy came true; and the new tsars too, instead of seeing their dream come true, have seen the doom first of Liu Shao-chi and then Lin Piao! Frustration has become an obsession with them. How can this obsession be cured? The best prescription is to attack China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Whoever paints the blackest picture of China during the Cultural Revolution provides the best cure. In this respect the Soviet revisionists' anti-China film did not provide as good a cure as Antonioni's film *China*. Antonioni's prediction was heard more clearly by the new tsars in Moscow than by newsmen in Rome. His aside was:

Your Majesties, set your minds at rest. The film that I as your tool made is serving your attempt to realize your dream!

In fact, the appearance of this anti-China film was a shot in the arm for the new tsars. As soon as the Chinese people began rebuffing Antonioni, the Soviet revisionists set their propaganda machines going full blast to back him up at home as well as abroad. One Soviet newspaper praised him as "a great artist and a world-famed film director", saying "Nobody has ever regarded him as a reactionary". As for his distortions about China, the paper blatantly affirmed that these were not at all "slanderous". The Soviet revisionists' brazen recriminations on behalf of their tool fully reveal the squalid relationship between this "world-famed film director" and themselves.

It is no accident that Antonioni has entered the service of Soviet revisionism. He started serving the reactionaries long ago. During the Second World War, when the anti-fascist struggle of the people of the world was surging forward, he threw himself into the arms of the fascists and began his reactionary career of loyally serving the fascist rule of Mussolini. In documentary films he shot at that time, the labouring people were presented as ignorant pathetic creatures. This fully exposed his counter-revolutionary role as a tool of fascism. In 1942, acting on the orders of the Italian "Political and War Films Service", a fascist propaganda organ, he made the film *A Pilot Returns*, glorifying the fascist armed forces stained with the blood of the people. This film fulsomely praised the pilots of the fascist air force as "brave and good fighters" "loyal to fascist Italy". In the eyes of the revisionists, this old-time fascist who is notorious among the revolutionary people of Italy is not "reactionary" but superb. This makes it abundantly clear that they wallow in the same filth. So no one should be surprised that the tool which "happened" to produce the anti-China film has "happened" to win praise from the Soviet revisionists.

Now the nature of Antonioni's "conscience" is crystal clear. If we want a brief summary of his politics, the most appropriate words are "thinking of the past but loyal to the present" which he used in his anti-China film to slander the Chinese people. He is "thinking of the past" — Hitler and Mussolini — and "loyal to the present" —

Brezhnev and company. In the eighteenth century, the well-known Italian comedy *A Servant with Two Masters* showed how a quick-witted rascal was able to serve two masters at the same time. In twentieth-century Italy, Antonioni has edited, directed and performed another *A Servant with Two Masters* himself with his reactionary words and deeds. But this is not a comedy. The servant in this play becomes a homeless cur after his old master is ruined in the anti-fascist war. This is the origin of his "natural pessimism". Later, however, he derives some comfort from seeing that fascism is not extinct with Brezhnev and other Soviet revisionist rulers; and having found this new master, he wags his tail and fawns. But though the rascal is quick to change with the times, he cannot save himself from failure. Antonioni is simply acting out *A Servant with Two Masters*. The first part of the play ends with the doom of his old master. The second part, though unfinished, suggests that he and his new master, with their despicable performance, are lifting a rock only to drop it on their own feet.

Finally, one more thing: the Chiang Kai-shek clique now skulking on China's Taiwan Province are also lavishing the highest praise on Antonioni. They puff and extol this anti-China buffoon spurned by the people of the world as "a great man of the century". Such "great" bragging is the joke "of the century". But there is nothing strange about it, because the Chiang Kai-shek clique live in constant fear from one day to the next. They clamour for "calmness before changes" to hide their panic, and clutch at any straw like a drowning man. But a straw is only a straw. It will not save Chiang Kai-shek. Using this tool of Soviet revisionism as a shot in the arm to continue their last-ditch struggle against the Chinese people will only hasten the doom of the Chiang Kai-shek clique.

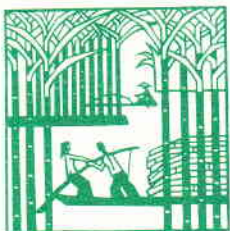


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