

S. HARRISON

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STORIES

WU YEN-KO

The Women's Team Leader

It was mid-autumn, in the eighth moon. The water was so clear you could see the stones on the South River bed. The crops covering the slope were ripening. It looked like a bumper harvest.

Seeing those golden fields, Team Leader Li of Little South Village could hardly control the delight that bubbled within him. He washed his feet in the river and headed for home, humming a tune. His wife Kuei-ying was busy getting supper. He quickly put away his tools, took up the buckets and watered the bean-vines and loofah-gourd that covered the east and south walls of his little compound. Then he cleaned the sty, fed the pigs and swept the yard. Having washed his hands, he sat down by the table puffing contentedly at his pipe.

The moon climbed to the ridge of the roof, hanging like a giant lantern in the dark blue sky. Kuei-ying put supper on the table: A basin of thin gruel, a basket of pancakes, boiled beans and spicy

pepper fried with leek. Li's younger son Erh-kou went to gather grass after school. Back now from the stockyard where he had taken it, he grabbed a stack of pancakes, picked up his bowl and took himself off to the threshing ground outside to eat supper with his chums. As Li reached for a pancake, Kuei-ying pointed to the basin. "Have some gruel first. You must have been thirsty half the afternoon."

Li grinned. "Have you finished picking that patch of cotton south of the village?" he asked between sips.

"My, why ask?" answered Kuei-ying. "Our team's so enthusiastic, we finished picking that plot in half an afternoon. We reckoned there's no time to spare. That field needs ploughing for winter wheat as soon as the sorghum's reaped, so we carted a few more loads of manure there before knocking off."

"Good!" Li banged his fist on the table approvingly. "With the help of my women's team leader, my job is cut in half." This was no exaggeration, for led by Kuei-ying, her "half of the population" always fulfilled with flying colours the tasks assigned to them. That spring most of the men in the team had gone to work on an irrigation project and it was Kuei-ying and the women who sweated day and night to finish the sowing in time to ensure good crops.

"Pooh," said Kuei-ying pretending annoyance. "I'm not working for you, but for the revolution."

"So you work for the revolution. Do you mean by that that I as team leader work for myself then?" Li picked up a pancake, spread it thickly with fried pepper and rolling it up tightly, took a large bite. "The old fellows have been estimating our harvest. Ha! Everyone said 1,000 catties per *mu* is in the bag. Haha! Our output goes up by leaps and bounds!" He laughed hilariously. Kuei-ying's chopsticks stopped in mid air. "As if one thousand is the limit and can never be surpassed!" she thought. Staring at her husband, she said, "Have you been drinking? You sound as though you've had a drop too much!"

"I'm delighted, that's all. Since the Cultural Revolution, if you ask anyone on either bank of South River, they'll admit our team's

the very best. You've only to look at the crops to gauge a production team."

"But our side-lines don't compare well with other teams." Kuei-ying said seriously to prod her husband. "Don't forget to see both sides of yourself, comrade."

This touched Li on the raw. He looked as deflated as a punctured balloon. Bending his head, he gave full attention to his food.

"We've been thinking about those rushes in the northern swamp," said Kuei-ying, her eyes sparkling. "Why don't we organize ourselves and braid those rushes into mats. That'd be a good side-line."

Li shook his head. "But it takes know-how. Nobody here has learned how to do it."

"We can make a start. Chien-ping's young wife is an expert; where she came from they all know how to weave mats. I was thinking of asking her to teach some of our girls in the evenings, then they can teach others. It's not so terribly difficult. It won't take more than one winter to popularize it here."

"It's not practical. Soon it'll be time for the end-of-year reckoning and distribution. I have a better idea." Li smiled cannily. "If we succeed, no other team'll be able to compare with us."

"Stop blowing your own trumpet, you're no superman."

"You don't believe me, eh? Just wait and see. I've sent someone already to make a deal. We'll dig up that corner of land we call Duck's Bill and sell the sand there."

"Destroy that land to sell sand?" Kuei-ying could hardly believe her ears.

"That's right," Li replied. "That's a poor plot. We might as well dig it up and sell the sand. We'll rid ourselves of a burden and put money in our pockets. That's killing two birds with one stone."

"Whose idea is this?" Kuei-ying glared at Li.

"It's some commune members' brilliant idea and your team leader's made the arrangements. Well, what do you think of it?" He was evidently pleased with himself. Large helpings of hot pepper rolled in pancakes disappeared effortlessly into his capacious mouth.

"It's a rotten idea!" Kuei-ying answered coldly, putting down her chopsticks.

Li stared. Then, to appease her he said, "Oh! I get it. It was you who led the others in levelling that little patch and you hate to see it broken up now. Isn't that it? So do I. But then our side-lines are in a mess. We're an advanced team, we can't let our cash income fall below that of other teams. If so, our members will be annoyed and we leaders will lose face."

"What are you thinking about? What's all this blathering about our advanced team and face-saving. I think that whatever we plan to do we must look first to see in which direction we're heading and which line we're following. To break up a plot of poor land just to sell sand as a side-line, that's not the socialist way!"

"What?" Li choked. Was it only the hot pepper that burned his throat so that he coughed and spluttered? "What way is it then, according to you? The sand belongs to our collective and the money we get by selling it will go to the collective. I won't pocket any; so why isn't it the socialist way?"

"When the people elected us team leaders, they wanted us to help them build up our team by hard work. They didn't ask us to sell them out."

Li sprang up. "Haven't we built up our team? Take that irrigation system along the South River — did that drop down from heaven? And those wells with power pumps north of the village, did they pop up out of the ground?"

"You're always bragging about what's already done. I blush for you. Your eyes have moved to the top of your head. Be careful you don't fall flat on your face."

Li looked at his wife aghast, his eyes blazing with anger. "You've only just begun to learn a few terms and now you're hauling me over the coals."

"You're so blinded by conceit that you've forgotten our Party's line." Kuei-ying answered angrily, giving him tit for tat.

Li wanted to retort but couldn't find the right words. Suddenly he banged down his bowl, snatched up his tobacco pouch and headed for the door.

"Where're you going?" Kuei-ying asked, running after him.

"It's my turn to guard the crop on the pre-midnight shift."

"Why don't you finish your pancakes?"

"You've put too much pepper in for my liking." Li picked up a spade and strode out without a backward glance.

2

The moon reached the tip of the willows.

Kuei-ying washed up the dishes, locked the hen house, and sat down outside in the yard, feeling very disturbed. She was worried about her husband, realizing that because there was promise of a bumper harvest, he was walking on air. He was slack too in his political studies, and seldom discussed things with his team members. A few days before, the Party secretary had told him he was getting too smug and that their team's side-lines were nothing to be proud of. They were behind a number of other teams. A good team should go ahead in every way: in forestry, animal husbandry, fishery, side-lines as well as in agriculture. Li was not convinced. He didn't consider side-lines all that important. After all, it was only a question of earning a little more cash income. There was nothing to that. For a couple of days Li hadn't seemed so arrogant, now he was up in the clouds again. Kuei-ying didn't know exactly why, but sensed that something was not quite right. She felt it was imperative that she talked to him and straightened things out in time. Just then someone quietly entered the courtyard.

"Is it true, aunt, that our team leader's not in favour of us forming a team to weave mats?" a soft voice asked.

Kuei-ying turned to face Chien-ping's young wife, hesitant like a newcomer. "How can the team leader disapprove of something that's good for the collective? Just go ahead." Kuei-ying answered.

The young bride smiled. "Back home, every family weaves rush mats. In spring when they're all brought into the team office, they're piled up into a little hill."

"That's just it. We must learn from you and others. Just now someone's been telling me that corn shucks can be woven into rugs.

Yu-hua from the East Compound saw some in town. I've told her to go and learn how to do it."

"I say, aunty, that'll be wonderful. You won't have to worry about developing any other side-lines for our team. . . ."

Chatter and laughter drifted in from the gateway as several young women came in carrying armsful of rushes already soaked and cut and a matchet. One of them, a sharp-tongued girl, stopped laughing to say, "Report, aunty team leader. Our weaving team is here and ready to start work. Please give your orders."

Kuei-ying quickly forgot all annoyance with her husband a while before. She brought out stools and benches and in the bright moonlight they began learning to weave. Chien-ping's wife was a good teacher. Her nimble fingers flew in and out among the rustling rushes. Before long, she had completed a woven square, as big as a table top. Then Kuei-ying divided her girls into three groups. Watching Chien-ping's wife closely, they braided the prepared rushes and wove them into squares.

The moon had climbed high in the sky before Kuei-ying sent the others home. She went inside, lit the lamp and called her son in to bed. She thought it a pity her husband was not around to see the girls' enthusiasm. He should know what the masses were thinking and compare it with his own thoughts. Once the masses were enthused, side-lines were no problem at all. The key was the Party's line.

"Is the team leader home, Kuei-ying?" someone called in at the door.

Kuei-ying recognized the voice at once. "Come in Uncle Ma!" She went to the door. "No, he's gone to the south dip to guard the crop."

The man stepped gingerly into the house, mopping the sweat from his bald pate and still panting a little. The bright lamp shone on a little humpbacked old man.

"Do you want to see him about something?" asked Kuei-ying.

"Oh, just a little matter," the old man fawned on her and smiled. "The seventh moon brings flood or drought, the eighth moon determines the size of the harvest. I think our crops this year will

really hit the peak; the grain's as good as in our barns. But we may lack some ready cash and that's why I told the team leader we should try to sell some sand. When our members have cash in their pockets it'll be a boost for their leaders too, eh? Weren't you and the team leader always criticizing me for not thinking enough about the collective? Ha . . . ha . . ."

Kuei-ying frowned. "Of course you've made some progress, but. . . ."

The old man's eyes crinkled with pleasure. "Naturally, I'm still a long way behind you and the team leader. I've just made another trip though. Honestly, I've been running my feet off over this." Perhaps it was the look on Kuei-ying's face that made him pause. Instead of elaborating further, he stopped abruptly. "Well, everything's arranged now. As soon as we send over the sand, we'll be paid in cash."

"We still need to discuss this, uncle." Kuei-ying had no intention of revealing her disagreement with her husband to this man but she wanted to indicate her disapproval.

"Discuss it? Pooh!" the man blustered. "What's there to discuss? It's obviously a good bargain, isn't it? As long as there's money to fill their pockets, our members won't disapprove."

"Yes, there'll be money but two *mu* of land will be ruined." Kuei-ying's voice was grave.

"Uh . . . but" This made the man tongue-tied. He decided to leave right away. "I'll find the team leader and tell him."

Kuei-ying's mind was even more disturbed as she watched the man's retreating back. However, she had at least caught a loose end in this tangled knot. She knew now the idea of ruining Duck's Bill and selling sand had come from Ma.

The man's full name was Ma Fu-kuei. He'd spent half his life selling and buying and had a knack for petty-bourgeois trading. Though he was now a commune member and had been one for years, he still retained his love of speculation and had a sharp eye for business. He loved going to town or to the county fairs to try his hand at picking up some easy money. In recent years the production team had done so well that all members received fairly good annual

incomes. Although he had had no cause to try his hand at bargaining, he still hankered after easy money and was always trying to scoop up extra work-points for himself. Li had criticized this habit of his and talked to him many times to help him change his thinking.

The alarm clock on the table began to ring. Nine-thirty. Time for Kuei-ying's study of Chairman Mao's works. She had persisted for two years and every night at this hour she read for a while. During the campaign to rectify the Party's style of work the Party secretary had told her, "We've been through the Cultural Revolution, Kuei-ying, and now that the people have elected us as leaders we must hold the reins well for the poor and lower-middle peasants. We must study Chairman Mao's works conscientiously in order to do this. Only then shall we be able to see things clearly, take the right road and carry out the correct line. Only then can we advance continuously without losing our way."

Kuei-ying had been a poor-peasant girl before Liberation without any schooling. She only learned to read and write after the agricultural co-ops had set up winter schools. In spite of her poor educational level, she now studied Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought conscientiously, driven by her wish to continue the revolution. In these past two years she had finished the greater part of the *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung*. Last spring, when for the first time she had written a letter to her elder son serving in the army, it was mostly of what she had learned in her studies.

She opened the book before her, reading painstakingly. Outside, the moon was bright. The wind rustled the leaves of the loofah-gourd. Her young son snored peacefully in his bed. Reading attentively, she suddenly called out, "Erh-kou, wake up!" She shook the boy. Erh-kou muttered and turned over on his stomach. Kuei-ying tugged him by one arm.

"What's the matter?" The boy sat up sleepily.

"Read those characters for me, will you?" Kuei-ying pointed to a line in the book.

Thirteen-year-old Erh-kou blinked. "Why, that says luck — through good luck." He yawned and lying back was promptly asleep again.



Kuei-ying nodded, mulling this over. How right Chairman Mao is, when he says, "**We must thoroughly clean away all ideas among our cadres of winning easy victory through good luck, without hard and bitter struggle, without sweat and blood.**" She thought of their irrigation system over at South River, those deep wells with electric pump. Hadn't all these come from hard work? But this selling of sand. Why, it was trying to gain an easy victory through a windfall. Selling sand? It would be tantamount to betraying their tradition of hard work and arduous struggle. We

might sell some sand now, but will our sons be able to develop a side-line by selling sand too? Once we've exhausted our sand, what shall we do for a side-line then? She was too disturbed to continue reading, feeling she must find her husband and talk to him immediately. Putting down her book, she pulled the covers round Erh-kou's shoulder. Then she remembered that Li hadn't eaten many pancakes. Lighting the fire again, she fried some more peppers, this time with eggs, his favourite way of eating them.

3

The South River flowed gently on this autumn night; moonlight shimmered on the water gilding the silvery stream.

Li circled the fields for a while before he sat down on a dyke puffing moodily at his pipe. He looked dolefully at the plot of land called Duck's Bill—a small patch neither square nor round. It was wedged in between a newly-built highway leading to the commune office and a ditch bringing water from the South River to the team's broad fields. There, the crops were a sight to gladden any eye: hybrid sorghum growing in neat ranks, heavy russet ears as big as red lanterns; golden corn standing straight and tall, bearing red tassels and long cobs like a company on parade. Li was very pleased with them. But Duck's Bill was a different matter. After all their efforts, the beans sown there were poor in comparison to the crops in the big fields. Strangers would hardly recognize this plot as belonging to Little South Village. No wonder someone had compared it to a patch on a new suit of clothes. The more he looked the more annoyed he felt. It was all Kuei-ying's doing. Why did she have to lead that bunch of youngsters to level that wretched patch deeply pitted and left as wasteland when the ditch and road were built. They had ploughed this two *mu* of fallow land deep and planted beans in it. Though the team's total cultivated acreage was increased by two *mu* it was sure to bring down the team's average output, dragging down the record of an advanced team like a dead weight. This blight on their good name was their own fault. He had not wanted to sow anything on it in the first place. It was Kuei-

ying who began raising objections. "Farming is not like embroidery," she had said. "It's not something just to please the eye. Sowing beans, we'll reap a couple of hundred catties at least, there's no harm in that." True enough. But who doesn't want a good record? This goes for side-lines too. If they waited for the mat weaving to bring in returns, it would be too late to make a showing this year.

He stood up and knocked out his pipe. Going up to Duck's Bill he poked about among the beans. The pods were small, few and far between, many empty. Taking up his spade, he started digging in one corner. Before long he had made a pit nearly two feet deep. Below the top soil lay golden sand. He took up a handful and held it in the palm of his hand.

"Well, Duck's Bill, this seems the best thing to do with you." His mind was made up. He casually tossed the handful of sand to one side.

Someone seemed to pop right out of the ground beside him. Spluttering vehemently, the man spat out the sand from his mouth and brushed it from his neck.

Apologizing, Li flipped out his towel to dust the man's shoulders. "Why aren't you in bed, Old Ma?"

Ma took the towel and mopped his bald pate. "Because I've been trotting around on our common business. I tell you, team leader, you're on the right track this time. Selling this sand will bring in good money. On top of that, if these beans are sold in town now as green vegetables, on the eve of the mid-autumn festival, they'll bring us a good price. Killing two birds with one stone, eh?"

"Sell them as green beans?"

"That's it. You have to know the market if you want to make a profit. Why, in the old days, I..." Ma was about to introduce his valuable experience but Li glared at him in annoyance. "We're not doing business, we're developing a side-line."

"Oh... that's... uh... right. Anyway it's a worthwhile venture. If things go well, everyone will find some ready cash in their pockets... and I'll get work-points for running around, won't I?"

"You won't be doing it in vain. Is everything arranged?"

"Sure thing. The other party's waiting for the sand to start building."

"Good. Tomorrow, we'll call a meeting of the team committee to clinch the sale."

"Dear me, my good team leader," said Ma impatiently. "You're the leader of the team, aren't you? If you agree, who can object. Even your worthy wife can hardly..."

"All right. Don't worry about that now. Just leave it to me. And Old Ma, on your way back will you tell the treasurer to arrange for some carts to take the sand out?"

"I... I'm no longer light of foot and it's dark at night. Send someone else to tell the treasurer." With that, Ma walked quickly away.

Li shook his head in disgust. I know you, he thought. You just won't do a single thing unless you make something out of it. He rolled up his sleeves, spat on his palms and set to levelling a path so that the sand could be carted out of Duck's Bill.

Before long he heard Kuei-ying's voice calling him and guessed instantly what she wanted. Scraping off the caked earth on his spade with one foot, he rehearsed the arguments he would need to convince his wife.

Kuei-ying jumped down to him from the big dyke. "Is there honey in Old Ma's words that you must lick up everything he says?"

Li forced a smile. "I'm glad you've come. Have a look at these beans. At the most, how much will they bring in? But sand, you can sell it for something like three yuan a cartload."

"Is that any reason to sell our land?"

"Sell our land?"

"Yes. After you take away the sand, this land won't be fit to farm any more."

"That... that..." Li didn't know how to argue against this point.

"You're cutting off your nose to spite your face. That's no way out. Look at that road, those high tension wires, these ditches and channels... we got them by mobilizing the masses to work. We didn't buy them by selling our heritage." Kuei-ying pointed at

the fields all around them. "Look at our fields over there. Before the Cultural Revolution, our crops were poor, weren't they? It was because we repudiated Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line and worked hard to learn from Tachai in agriculture that things have improved so much. Why didn't you write a big-character poster proposing that we sell this land in those days?"

Her words touched a chord in Li's heart. But he was not fully convinced. "Stop dragging in every little thing. It's only that scrap of land on Duck's Bill that's involved, isn't it?"

"Duck's Bill can produce well too. I've been asking people's opinion about it. After we reap the beans, we should cover the patch with fresh top soil. Then crops here will catch up in a couple of years. If you don't believe me, just leave this plot to us women."

"But the trouble is that at the moment we haven't a good side-line to bring in some ready cash."

For some reason or other, all the arguments which he had prepared for selling the sand vanished under Kuei-ying's attack. He simply could not think of a convincing reason and felt quite at a loss.

"Who says we haven't. You can't see it, that's all. The rushes can be woven into mats or baskets, maize shucks can be braided into rugs..."

"But that's too slow."

Kuei-ying laughed out loud. "So you want to find a quicker way, eh? We develop side-lines to promote agriculture, not merely to get ready cash. Our side-lines are to help agriculture not to harm it. We are Communists, comrade, we make revolution. Whatever we do we must think of the Party's line."

Li had nothing to say.

Kuei-ying snatched the spade out of his hands, quickly filled up the sand pit he had dug and said, "Stop fussing here. You mustn't follow the wrong line."

Li was annoyed with her sharp remarks. He said angrily, "This is no business of yours. If I make a mistake, I'll criticize myself. I'm in charge."

Kuei-ying did not budge. "Talk's easy. What's the use of criticizing yourself when the damage is done. That'll be too late."

"But we've already promised the other party." Li softened. He knew his wife only too well.

"Then tell them right away. Call the whole thing off."

"How can I open my mouth to eat my own words?"

"Don't worry. I'll go and tell them for you." Kuei-ying tossed him the jacket in her hands and hurried off.

4

The moon drifted further west. Li came to the end of his guard duty. He paced round the fields once more before returning home in the moonlight. His young son was snoring soundly, his covering kicked to one side. Li tucked it round him and turned up the lamp. The copy of the *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung*, lying open on the table, caught his eye. He picked it up. Several places were heavily underlined. Li's face burned. For nearly a month, because there was so much to do in the fields, he had hardly touched his books. He had fallen far behind his wife in study. His mind went to the argument they had just had. In the twenty-odd years of their life together they had never quarrelled over family affairs. If they disagreed, it was always over something or other to do with their work. However, they never stayed angry for long, and quarrel or no they went on working together. Once things cleared up the person in the wrong usually criticized him or herself. This time she was so firm in telling him not to sell the sand, he began to wonder whether it really was as serious an error as she made out. His head felt heavy and he was quite perplexed.

"Aunt, oh, aunt!" This was followed by a bunch of chattering young women with Chien-ping's wife and the sharp-tongued girl in the lead coming in the yard.

"What do you want her for so late at night?" asked Li, puzzled.

The women stopped laughing at sight of him. The sharp-tongued girl, trying to look serious, said, "We want Auntie Kuei-ying to check the quality of our new work. But Uncle Team Leader, you can do it for us instead, eh?" She was laughing again.

Li took the piece of matting from her. Why, how quickly they've caught on, he thought. He glanced at the matting the others carried too and said, "Very good, very good indeed."

The girl snatched back her work. "But there are people dashing cold water over us," she said petulant and indignant. "They say this is a beggar's craft. It won't bring in more than a few cents. Tell me, team leader, should we develop side-lines merely for the sake of money?"

Li's heart missed a beat but before he could say anything, the new bride said, "Some say that you don't support us, team leader. I don't believe them for Auntie Kuei-ying told me just now that you do support us. Do you, uncle?"

"Uh... I do, I do..." Li muttered.

The sharp-tongued girl laughed. "What did I tell you? I knew the team leader was sure to support us. It must be that old Ma Fu-kuei, who made up this lie. He even said you'd decided to ruin Duck's Bill and sell the sand underneath it. According to him, once our carts start rolling they'll bring in enough cash to fill our pockets, there's no need to do this silly weaving."

"It seems to me something's wrong with his thinking," the new bride chimed in. "He's always talking of making money. Never once does he mention which road we should take or which line to follow. Isn't it exactly the kind of thing Liu Shao-chi peddled before the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution?"

Cold sweat glistened on Li's forehead. The young women's chatter pricked him like several sharp needles, giving him a shock that cleared his head.

The girl went on: "We were arguing with Ma Fu-kuei just now. 'Money won't bite anyone's fingers,' he said. But we told him, 'We're all members of a people's commune, we can't leave the correct line for the sake of a little cash!' Then he played his trump card by saying this was the decision of the team leader. We told him it didn't matter whose decision it was, we poor and lower-middle peasants won't allow it. But there were a few who liked what he said. They suggested that we should go on selling sand because the subsoil on the piece of land next to Duck's Bill is also sand. Why not let the



commune members have plenty of money to spend over New Year. Team leader, you ought to do something about such irresponsible talk.”

“Is that true?” Li’s eyes popped.

“You can investigate if you don’t believe us,” said another girl.

“It’s getting late, you girls had better turn in. I’ve been studying this problem with Kuei-ying and we’ve decided against selling the sand.” Li was swayed by their strong opposition.

“Remember to tell Kuei-ying what we’ve just said,” Chien-ping’s wife called out as she reached the door.

After they were gone Li fidgeted around, unable to sit still. He longed for Kuei-ying to return for he wanted to talk to her. He would not even mind being criticized by her. They had covered so much ground together in these last twenty-odd years. Before Liberation, the pair of them had gone begging together. During the days of land reform, they struggled against the landlords and when mutual aid and co-operation came, the first agricultural co-op office was set

up right there in their kitchen. They and six other poor peasant households had started that co-op and how hard they had worked pulling a plough, shoulder to shoulder. During the Cultural Revolution, the pair had signed their names on the same big-character poster. It was the two of them who ignited the fire of revolutionary criticism in their village and took the lead in rebelling against a handful of capitalist roaders within the Party. . . . Li put his head on the table deep in thought. Suddenly a strong hand shook him. He looked up, there was Kuei-ying, her hand on his shoulder. Rubbing his eyes, he asked eagerly, “Have you cancelled the sale?”

“No, we shan’t need to do that after all.”

“But Kuei-ying,” Li’s eyes were blazing again. “We can’t sell that sand.”

“Yes, we can. Just now I was so busy arguing with you I clean forgot that we should discuss it first with the rest of the team. I only remembered by the time I reached the northern threshing ground. As it happened some of the veteran poor peasants were there enjoying

the cool evening so I put the whole thing before them. Puffing on their pipes they said that both weaving and braiding are good sidelines that our leaders should promote. As for selling sand, that's all right too as long as we don't ruin our land. Finally, Grandad Wang told us that the big pond west of his house used to have a sandy bottom. It's only recently that a layer of mud has settled over it. If we can empty the pond of water, we can carry the mud to Duck's Bill for a new layer of top soil. Then we can dig up the sand at the bottom of the pond and sell it for building purposes. Afterwards we can refill the pond with clean water and stock it with some fish and ducks. You see, we'll kill one more bird than just your two with one stone. Everyone thought this a wonderful idea." Kuei-ying outlined the plan in high spirits.

"That's good. Remarkable!" Li kept nodding as Kuei-ying spoke, too happy for words. "I'm all for this plan of yours. I'll go right now to that west pond and look it over so we can start work on it as soon as possible."

Kuei-ying stopped him. "Just a minute. We've already done all that. All you have to do is assign our members and direct operations once the team committee has studied and approved the plan. Now, it's time to do a bit of looking at your own thinking."

"My thinking?" Li scratched his head, embarrassed. "I'm sorry about my attitude just now."

"That's nothing. The important thing is your orientation and line."

"Quite true," Li muttered, ill at ease. "I shouldn't have listened to Ma Fu-kuei."

"He's the external factor. You should look for causes within yourself. Why is it you agreed to ruin land just to sell some sand but took no interest in utilizing our rushes? Why didn't you talk things over with the poor and lower-middle peasants instead of listening to Ma Fu-kuei's ideas?"

Her series of "why's" left Li puffing at his pipe without a single answer.

Stealing a glance at his wife, he found Kuei-ying's bright eyes fixed on him, full of expectation. A warm glow enveloped him.

There was a pause. "Seems like these bumper harvests we've had in succession have turned my head a little bit."

Kuei-ying chuckled. "Why don't you go the whole way? You haven't changed a little bit, you've become downright arrogant. Our crops grew well, people praised them and you began thinking in terms of personal achievement and glory. You forgot about class struggle. You forgot the Party's basic line and weren't vigilant enough against petty-bourgeois trading. When Old Ma came to you, you went along with him as soon as he beckoned. How very dangerous it will be if you go on like this."

"I really must learn from you, Kuei-ying," Li smiled at her sheepishly.

"We must all learn from Chairman Mao's works," she said earnestly.

"Right. I've neglected my study these days," Li said, meaning every word. "I deserve to be criticized. Go ahead, Kuei-ying, fire away."

Kuei-ying stopped smiling. "Don't forget it's the Party and Chairman Mao who helped us to become Communists and cadres. It's a heavy responsibility. We must lead the masses along the socialist road without fail. We've a long way to go. We can't stop halfway for a rest. We shouldn't expect lucky windfalls to drop into our lap. Remember the lessons of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Never, at any time, forget the Party's basic line; never forget class struggle. Read and study conscientiously so you'll raise your political consciousness constantly. Continue the revolution and always be a revolutionary."

Kuei-ying's words stirred Li to the depths of his heart. His eyes were moist. Suddenly she seemed to have grown taller. I really must follow her example in the future, he told himself.

The moon had disappeared behind the western hills. Outside a cock crowed lustily. Kuei-ying blew out the lamp. "It'll soon be morning. Let's get some sleep. We've work to do tomorrow."

But Li struck a match and relit the lamp. "I'm not sleepy at all," he told her. "Go on with what you were saying. It clears my mind." His hand strayed to the basket of pancakes and Kuei-

ying remembered the fried eggs and hot peppers she had cooked for him. "Here you are," she said bringing out the dish.

Li tossed a big piece into his mouth, then drew in his breath sharply.

"Is it too hot?"

"Mm... it's hot all right! But it's so good."

They both smiled. More cocks crowed as the first light of dawn began to creep into the room. Another splendid day was beginning.

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien



Sending Her Off to College (traditional Chinese painting) by Tang Yi-wen ►

Sturdy As a Pine

A green jeep sped like a stampeding horse over the wide Silingol steppe. Next to the driver, Regiment Commander Batur kept mopping the moisture off the wind-shield, his bristly brows raised, eyes sparkling. The son of a herdsman, he was now in his forties. To him, this wintry grassland was familiar but half forgotten. Through the window of the bouncing car he saw the snow-covered steppe stretching to the distant horizon like a giant white carpet.

Suddenly the jeep skidded to a stop beside a frozen lake. Hsiao Li, the young driver, jumped out with a canvas bucket and walked straight to the lake. Batur got out too. Standing in the snow, he unbuttoned his overcoat and took a deep breath of the fresh air.

A moment later, the driver walked back dejected with an empty bucket.

"No water?" the commander asked dubiously.

"Frozen so hard I couldn't break it." The worried driver rubbed his stiff hands.

"How far is the August First Army Farm from here?"

"More than fifty kilometres."



The commander frowned. "The jeep won't go that far without water," he thought.

Suddenly they heard the sound of galloping horses in the distance. Batur raised his head and saw a rider on a big iron-grey stallion driving a herd of horses toward the lake. As the rider came nearer, Batur saw an old man about sixty, wearing a pair of felt boots, a fur cap, a broad belt tied over a sheep-skin coat and carrying a lasso-pole tightly in his right hand. Tall and robust, he looked dignified and militant. When he was some fifty yards away from the lake, he drew rein, took out an ox-horn from his belt and began to blow. As the sound rang out the herd of wildly galloping horses came to a quick halt.

"Bravo!" Batur exclaimed.

The old man rode up to the jeep and said, "Hey, comrades, are you standing here just to enjoy the scenery in this cold weather?" He had a strong Kiangsi accent.

"Old comrade," said Batur, pointing to the steaming radiator, "it's dry, so we want..."

"You want water!" The old herdsman got off his horse and came face to face with Batur. Batur was startled. There was something familiar about the old man's face. He was sure he had seen him somewhere before. While trying to recollect, he scrutinized the old man carefully: brown face covered with deep wrinkles, tufts of grey hair outside the tucked-up fur cap. With keen eyes the old herdsman returned the regiment commander's look.

"No, impossible." Batur smiled to himself and shook his head.

The old man wiped the frost off his eyebrows and whiskers with the back of his powerful hand. "Come on, young fellow." He waved to the driver who was standing dazed by one side, took over the bucket and strode toward the lake.

Gazing at the back of the old man walking away with big steady strides, Batur stood in the snow, lost in thought. In the distance, several young colts were chasing each other on the ice-covered lake.

"Regiment commander, this old man is a real expert. With one blow of his lasso-pole he broke a big hole in the ice." The driver's clear ringing voice woke Batur from his thought. He turned his

head and saw the old man and Hsiao Li walking back with a bucketful of water. A smile on his face, he ran to take over the bucket. After helping the driver lift the bucket to the radiator, he turned to ask, "Is your home on the grassland, old comrade?"

"Sure," the old man answered proudly. "Here I am and this is my home."

Batur wanted to ask more questions, but was stopped by a great commotion among the horses at the lake.

"Damn it!" the old man waved his lasso-pole and ran toward the lake, Batur and Hsiao Li behind him. A young colt had fallen into the hole the old man had broken. Its head raised, it was neighing and struggling in the water. Swiftly the old man ran to the rescue.

"It's dangerous there, grandpa!" the driver shouted.

The old man paid no attention but bent down to pull the young beast out of the water with all his strength. Batur and Hsiao Li ran to help. When they finally got the colt out, their clothes were wet from splashes of icy water. Eyeing the colt trembling with cold and the scattering herd, the old man took off his sheep-skin coat and put it over the colt and then said decisively, "Comrades, please take this colt to a yurt over that way. I'll go to round up the horses." He jumped on his horse and turned to ride away.

Batur ran to stop him. "Old comrade," he said, "you're so wet, you'll catch cold."

"It doesn't matter," the old man said cheerfully. "Riding will make me perspire." His horse broke into a canter. Batur wanted to say something, but the old man had already gone a long way off. Bending to pick up the dripping colt, he carried it to the jeep. The sound of the ox-horn came from behind him. He knew the old herdsman was rounding up his horses.

2

Following the direction pointed out by the old herdsman, the jeep climbed a slope and soon reached a yurt. After handing the colt over to the local people, Batur continued his way to the army farm.

As the jeep ran along on the snow-covered grassland, Batur sat with his eyes shut as if he had fallen asleep, his mind in a turmoil,

busy with recollections. The old man's face flashed back before his eyes. The look of the old man's eyes, that strong Kiangsi accent and soldier-like stride all reminded him of someone. "Yes, it must be him!" he said to himself excitedly. But what about that scar on his forehead and how to explain the lasso-pole in his hands and the ox-horn? He was dubious again.

The driver was puzzled when he saw the commander's unusual manner in the rearview mirror. "Commander, what were you saying?" he asked.

"It's a long story," Batur replied.

"What about? Tell me."

The commander fumbled in his pocket for a cigarette, struck a match, lit it and inhaled deeply. Through the mirror the driver saw the commander knitting his eyebrows and falling into reverie.

"It happened more than twenty years ago," Batur began in a low voice, his eyes fixed on the vast grassland, his mind full of past memories. "I was born on the grassland and spent my childhood here too. When I was about ten, my father and mother died in a battle fighting the enemy. Then the Party sent me to school at Yen-an, the revolutionary base.

"In 1946, I joined the army and was assigned as a guard in a regiment. The regiment commander was Comrade Yang Sung-tao, a man of forty, tall and robust, with a dark brown face and ringing voice. I was told he was once wounded in the left arm in a battle during the Long March but he clenched his teeth, raised his sword to charge the enemy and killed several Kuomintang soldiers in succession.

"In the spring of 1947, when the Chiang Kai-shek gang made their last-ditch struggle and launched a mad attack on the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region, our people's army withdrew from Yen-an so as to better destroy the enemy. On the day we left Yen-an, Commander Yang stood on the bank of the Yenho River and affectionately looked at the river and Pagoda Hill rising above it. A correspondent was staying with the regiment and Commander Yang asked him, 'Comrade, do you have a camera with you?'

“‘Yes.’

“‘Good. Take a photo for us.’

“‘A photo?’ the correspondent looked at the commander.

“‘That’s right.’ Commander Yang pulled me next to him, waved his arms and said to the correspondent, ‘Please, get the Yen-an hills, rivers and the pagoda in the picture.’ The correspondent understood his feeling and did as he was asked.

“A year later, our regiment went to fight on the north China battlefield and then joined the Huai-Hai Campaign to wipe out the Kuomintang reactionaries. In a battle, when our army charged to take the enemy’s last height, a shell suddenly came flying toward me. ‘Down!’ Commander Yang shouted and flung his body over me. When the smoke lifted I sat up and saw Commander Yang lying there with his eyes closed, his chest red with blood. I felt very bad. He was wounded protecting me! Tears in my eyes, I bandaged his wound carefully. ‘Don’t bother with me!’ He opened his eyes and looked at me. Pointing his finger at the height, he ordered, ‘Batur, go charge the enemy!’ I glanced at him, wiped the tears from my eyes and ran to battle in revenge.

“When the battle was over I went to the field hospital to see him. It was set up in an ancient temple. When I pushed the door open, I saw him sitting on a bed next to a window. Wearing a faded grey uniform, he was avidly reading.

“‘Commander!’ I called and ran to him, too excited to remember that I should salute him.

“‘Little Batur!’ He stood up with difficulty and held me in his arms. Excitedly, he told me, ‘Batur, good news! We’ve wiped out more than one million of Chiang Kai-shek’s troops in three big campaigns. Now, under the command of Chairman Mao, our army is making an all-round counter-offensive. It won’t be long before we cross the Yangtse River, capture Nanking and liberate all China.’

“‘Victory! We’ve won victory!’ I shouted and leaped for joy, so excited that I forgot I was in the ward. The commander was excited too. He nodded and smiled. He opened the window and looked outside. After a long while he turned his head and said, ‘Yes, after more than twenty years of hard struggle, we’ve won.

But remember that this victory is only the first step on the long march. We’ll have a long way to go. The tasks confronting us are even harder and difficulties on our way greater. So we must always keep a strong revolutionary zeal and never stop advancing.’

“I was too young to fully understand what he meant. So I naively asked him, ‘After the Chiang Kai-shek regime is overthrown and the country liberated, isn’t the revolution completed? Why do you say we have more arduous tasks confronting us?’

“The commander patted my head and told me, ‘The Chinese people will soon win liberation, but many people in other parts of the world are still under oppression and exploitation. Even in China, Chiang Kai-shek and his clique, big landlords and those herd-owners on your grassland will never accept defeat. Look! Chairman Mao has pointed out here the direction and new tasks for us after our victory.’ He picked up the booklet beside him and handed it to me. ‘This is a new work by Chairman Mao. Take it with you and study it.’

“I nodded and took the booklet. On its front cover was printed in red: *Carry the Revolution Through to the End*. Holding it in my hands, I looked at the characters with feeling.

“‘Little Batur,’ the commander continued, ‘we must do as Chairman Mao says and carry the revolution through to the end.’ He paused and then went on, ‘Tomorrow you will be leaving for the front. I’ll have to stay on at the hospital. You must find time to write to me.’”

Batur was lost in recollections. The jeep sped on, the blue sky, the grassland, the frozen lakes and herds of cattle flashed by the window.

“What happened later?” the driver asked.

Batur went on with his story, “Then, with the booklet *Carry the Revolution Through to the End* he gave me, I went south with our army. I haven’t seen him since.”

“Didn’t you ask about him?” the driver turned his head and glanced at Batur.

“Of course I did. In 1956 when I went to attend a conference in Peking, an old comrade-in-arms told me that after Commander

Yang recovered he was transferred to another army unit. After Liberation he went to Korea with the Chinese People's Volunteers and fought shoulder to shoulder with the Korean People's Army. Someone said that he died in the battle of Sanggamryong. I never heard anything more. But it's strange that the old herdsman we just met by the lake looks so much like him. . . ."

"Impossible," the driver shook his head. "Even if he were still alive, how could he be herding horses on the grassland? Didn't you see how skilled the old herdsman is with horses? A master hand who has been doing this from his childhood."

"That's what I think too," Batur said. "Still, you can never tell."

The jeep sped on. They lapsed into silence. Only the engine roared non-stop, urging the wheels faster.

3

They arrived at the August First Army Farm.

Around the rows of orderly buildings stood sturdy pines and cedars, green and vigorous under the snow. Now and then snowflakes fluttered down from the swaying branches. All this gave the farm an air of liveliness. In the open space between the houses haystacks were piled. Batur found the place attractive.

"Who do you want to see, comrade?" asked a gentle voice.

Turning around, Batur found a girl of about twenty coming from the stables on the left with a sieve of fodder in her hands, hay sticking to her clothes. She stood on the steps and looked the visitors over.

"We want to see the director," Batur replied.

"The director?" the girl smiled. "Sorry, he's gone to Pasture No. 3 to graze the horses and probably won't be back until evening. Why don't you go to his office and get some rest there?" She put down her sieve, brushed the hay from her clothes and led the way.

The director's office was part of a stable, partitioned off with sun-dried bricks. It was very simply furnished. Besides two beds, there were only two tables and some chairs. Stacked in a corner were sacks of fodder, crates of medicine bottles and a number of saddles. On one wall hung halters, lanterns and lasso-poles.

"So, this director is a storekeeper too, eh?" said Batur to Hsiao Li.

As they talked, the girl brought in water for them to wash. She put the basins on the floor and went off again.

Not in any hurry to wash, Batur looked around the room and noticed some books on the table. He leafed through them with interest. Among others were the *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung*, *The State and Revolution*, the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and a notebook and pocket dictionary. "He sure studies hard," Batur thought admiringly. He picked up a cup from the table and as he was going to pour himself some water, a small photo set in a frame on the wall caught his eye. He studied it for a long while. Then he took it down and examined it carefully.

"Yes, it's him all right!" he exclaimed suddenly with joy.

"What's the matter, commander?" asked Hsiao Li, who was washing his face.

Batur held the photo out. "Look!" he said, trying to control his emotion. "This is Comrade Yang Sung-tao, my former regiment commander."

"Regiment Commander Yang, the one you talked about on the way!" Hsiao Li took the photo and examined it. It was four inches square, somewhat faded, but two figures and the background could still be seen clearly. A man of about forty with regular features and a strong build stood upright, his arms akimbo, holster on a leather belt round his waist. Beside him was a smiling young soldier in his teens holding a tommy-gun. Behind them was the towering Pagoda Hill of Yen-an. On the lower part of the picture was written: "Carry on the Yen-an spirit and keep up revolutionary zeal."

In spite of the soap on his face and hands, Hsiao Li took Batur by the arm and shouted, "What a coincidence! You, the new regiment commander, have found the old regiment commander on the grassland. Wonderful!"

Batur felt as if he were in a dream.

Hsiao Li took up the photo again. He looked at the young soldier in the picture, then at his commander, and suddenly broke into laughter. "No, it's not like you at all. Not in the least," he said as he shook his head.

"Of course. After all, twenty years have passed." Batur felt the stubble on his chin.

"Your Commander Yang must be working at this farm, don't you think?" said Hsiao Li.

"I never believed he was killed on the battlefield. He must be working for the socialist revolution and construction still. So you see..."

Suddenly, the door was thrown open and in came a man of about thirty wearing a cap. He shook hands with Batur and introduced himself, "I'm Delighor, the farm technician. Just now Yen-feng told me that two PLA men had come to pick some horses."

"Yes. Whose photo is this?" Batur asked, pointing to the framed picture.

"Oh, that's our old director. He once told me it was taken in 1947 when our people's army withdrew from Yen-an."

"How did he happen to come here? And when?" Batur interrupted impatiently.

"Well, it's a long story." Delighor looked inquisitively at Batur.

"Tell me, will you? Every detail." Batur drew him down beside him on a bed and poured him a cup of water. "Begin at the time of Liberation."

Delighor took off his cap, thought for a moment and started his story.

"During the Korean war our director was badly wounded in the head. After he recovered, he worked in some rear-service organization for a couple of years. In 1962, in consideration for his health, the leadership decided he should retire from active service and go to a resort. But he argued, 'Our revolutionary work is progressing and each of us wants to do more work for the Party. How can I retire and just go somewhere to rest?' It so happened that the organization was to pick a number of cadres and send them here to the grassland to start a stud farm that year. When Old Yang learned this, he went jubilantly to his superior and said, 'All right. Get my transfer papers ready. I'll retire now and take care of my health.'

"You've agreed?"

"Of course. Why should I back out from such a good opportunity?"

"Where would you like to go, Comrade Yang?" the young man filling the transfer form for him looked up to ask.

"Can I choose the place where I am to live?"

"Sure. You can go anywhere you like.' The youngster then counted off some dozen resorts.

"But Old Yang picked up the pen and solemnly wrote: August First Army Farm in Inner Mongolia. Before long, with his bedding-roll on his back he came to the boundless grassland at the head of a group of young people. Tramping through ice and snow, they arrived here where all was desolate wilderness. There were no houses to live in and no water to cook with. Sudden snow-storms at night would whip away their tents and send their quilts flying. But Old Yang wasn't in the least daunted. He sang all day long and got the young people to make mud bricks, build houses and sink wells. In the evenings, sitting around a camp-fire, he told them stories of how the Red Army men climbed snow-covered mountains and crossed treacherous marshlands during the Long March. He also led them in political study. In those days their favourite book was Chairman Mao's *Carry the Revolution Through to the End*, a booklet which Old Yang brought with him. He was like a ball of fire setting everything ablaze. Inspired by him, the young people felt they could overcome any difficulty they met.

"Two years ago Director Yang's daughter Yen-feng graduated from senior middle school. He said, 'All right, let her come here to work and be a new-style herds woman.' Yen-feng came cheerfully, carrying her bedding-roll on her back. A girl of fine mettle, she is very much like her father. Yes, she is the one who received you just now."

As Delighor was talking with great gusto, footsteps approached, there was a rush of cold air and a man walked in. It was the old herdsman they had met. Though covered with frost, his hair was steaming.

"This is our director," said Delighor. Pointing to Batur and Hsiao Li, he introduced them, "Old Yang, these two PLA comrades have come here to pick some horses."

"Yes, I've already met them," Old Yang chuckled.

"No, you don't know who I..." Batur was so excited that he could not finish his sentence.

"Of course, I know you. If not for your help our colt might have... ha... ha..." Old Yang laughed heartily.

Batur took off his army cap and exclaimed, "I am Little Batur, regiment commander!"

"What! Batur?" Old Yang was stupefied. He looked the powerful soldier up and down, then faltered, "So you are Batur, my Little Batur!" He rushed up, gripped Batur's broad shoulders with his strong hands and shook him, muttering excitedly, "So it's really you!"

It was late at night, but Old Yang and Batur were still talking by a small oil lamp. The subjects of their conversation ranged from the Red Army's Long March in the mid-thirties to the War to Resist U. S. Aggression and Aid Korea in the early fifties, from the campaigns on the central China plain during the War of Liberation to the building of the stud farm on the grassland, from the struggles between the two lines within the Party to the present movement to criticize and repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius. The two old comrades-in-arms had much to tell each other.

"I never imagined that you would settle down on the grassland, commander," Batur said, sipping his strong tea.

Old Yang knocked out his pipe and said gravely, "Well, I always think that we Communists should be like pine-seeds — able to take root anywhere our Party sends us. But if we did not have the support and affection of the herdsmen we could never strike root here on the grassland, even if we were made of steel. I remember when we first arrived it was all ice and snow. We had no place to live and no water to drink. All sorts of difficulties threatened our hundred-odd newcomers. When our Mongolian brothers learned of our troubles, they braved wind and snow and came to us that very night. On horseback or driving carts, the poor and lower-middle herdsmen brought us clean rugs, pails of milk and bags of roast meat. Our youngsters were moved to tears.

"When they heard that we needed manpower to construct the farm, many herdsmen came to help. A sixty-four-year-old poor herdsman who lived about seventy miles away in Ulanghorhot brought his only son Delighor to us. Delighor was just twenty. His father



grasped my hand and said, 'I've heard that you are short of hands. I'm bringing you my son to help construct the farm. If you need anything else, let me know.' What could I say to him? I wanted to express my thanks but words failed me. So deep is the class feeling of our working people, it could not be expressed in words. Batur, this shows the solidarity among the different nationalities of our great motherland. Relying on this mighty force, we can defeat all enemies and overcome all difficulties."

Later that night, lying on his bed, Batur heard the wind roaring outside and knew that a snow-storm had started again. When he adjusted his quilt he felt a sheep-skin coat on top. Eyeing Old Yang's bed, he found it was not slept in. The quilt and the blanket were neatly folded in one corner.

"Where has he gone?" Batur got out of bed, dressed quickly and was at the door with the coat when Old Yang came in with a lantern in his hand, snow on his head and shoulders. Batur quickly draped the coat over the old man's shoulders and said, "Commander, how could you. . ."

"A storm has started, I must look over the stables. If the doors and windows aren't shut right, the horses might catch cold." Old Yang picked up the lantern and went out again.

Batur looked at the receding figure with fondness. He seemed to see scenes of the past in his mind's eye: On the Long March a young Red Armyman raising his sword to charge the enemy, by the Yalu River a seasoned commander leading the Chinese People's Volunteers across the river through enemy barrage. . .

With Old Yang's help, Batur picked his hundred stallions. On the third morning he took leave of his former commander and drove homeward. Looking back, he could still see this old hero standing before a row of pines in the golden sunlight and waving to him. His green army coat flapping in the wind, the old man himself looked like one of these evergreen pines, still young and vigorous, proudly facing the wind and snow.

Illustrated by Tung Chen-sheng

A Mobile Art Troupe (woodcut)
by Chang Chen-chi ▶



Ready on the Take-off Line

“Whoosh. . . .”

A jet fighter touched down with a whining roar.

As he turned his plane off the runway, Chang Cheng-hui pushed the canopy open to cool his flushed face. He had never been so excited since he came to the Second Squadron. He had scored another A for live dive-bombing, his tenth in a row.

The plane came to a standstill. Chang climbed out and, out of habit, turned to look at the place beside the runway. His heart missed a beat. Where was Niu Shih?

Comrade Niu Shih, who piloted his lead plane, always waited for him there after every landing. But he was not there today. Niu Shih hadn't come out with a good mark and Chang Cheng-hui was feeling sorry for him. “Well, that would make anyone dejected,” he thought.

Just as he was climbing on a tow truck to go to the far end of the runway he heard someone calling him, “Wait a minute, Chang! Let's walk back.”



Chang spun around. Beside a plane, Niu Shih, his flight cap and map case in his hand, was talking animatedly with the meteorologist. "What are they talking about?" Chang wondered.

Past experience told him that when Niu Shih proposed a stroll he wanted to talk something over. Chang expected another heated argument. Waiting beside the runway, he reviewed the things that had happened since he came to the Second Squadron.

Last May, Chang Cheng-hui had been transferred from the recruits' squadron to the Second Squadron. Braving a windstorm, he arrived to report for duty in high spirits. The camp was quiet and empty. Shading his eyes from the sun, he looked for someone to tell him where to go. A man was moving about on the drill ground and he walked towards him. The man was of medium height, big eyes flashing under fine eyebrows. His left hand holding a cardboard cockpit model, his right clenched as if around a control rod, he was circling around a target drawn on the ground, stopping every few steps, thinking and mumbling to himself. Then he scooped up a handful of sand and tossed it into the air to test the wind speed. He circled his model again. He was concentrating so hard that Chang had to cut through his "bombing circle" to get his attention. "Where can I find the Second Squadron, comrade?" he asked.

The man looked at Chang and then at the knapsack on his back. "Are you Chang Cheng-hui?" he demanded.

"Why, yes!"

"My name is Niu Shih. The squadron has gone to the airfield. I was asked to stay behind and wait for you."

They shook hands. Niu took Chang's knapsack. In the hostel, he helped Chang make his bed and then took another cockpit model from a drawer. "Here, I made this for you. You'll need it in training."

Chang accepted it. On the model was written, "Ruthless towards the enemy, kind to one's own comrades. Drill as if fighting real battles."

As Chang fingered the model, Niu Shih asked, "D'you like it?"

"Sure. Very much." Chang raised the model with obvious pleasure. "Certainly have to train hard, don't we?" he added.

After putting his things away, Chang had nothing to do. Niu Shih picked up his own model. "Are you tired?" he asked.

"No. I didn't walk far."

"Good. How about doing some training now?"

Chang was pleased to find an easy-going and practical companion in Niu. They went to the drill ground together.

They were training hard when the others returned.

"You two paired up already?" someone joked.

"Old Niu, you're a hard worker — got him working already, eh?"

"So," someone else said, "is this the way to welcome a new comrade?"

The corners of Niu's mouth went up in a smile. "Well, in a way, training is resting," he said lamely. Turning to Chang he said, "Don't you think so?"

Chang nodded and smiled as the idea flashed through his mind, "What an interesting man."

Chang got to know Niu more as the days went by. A hunter's son from the Khingan Mountains, Niu set high demands on himself. His motto was "never fire before aiming accurately". He didn't talk much and used most of his time for study or hard training. He always put his mind to good use — "aiming" all the time, his comrades said. Once he made up his mind to do something, that is, when he "fired" after careful "aiming", he could not be pulled back.

Chang and Niu were paired up after all. Chang became Niu's wingman.

On Chang's first day in the air, the sky was blue with not a wisp of cloud. He and Niu Shih roared down the runway together, gathered speed and climbed up into the sky. Following close behind Niu, Chang wanted to make a good show on his first day. He gripped the control rod tightly to get ready to turn as they approached the stipulated area. But Niu didn't turn until they were almost out of the area. Then he made a sudden sharp-angled turn, swiftly and daringly, leaving Chang behind. Chang quickly pushed the control rod forward, kicked the rudder and caught up by dipping a wing to cut the circle short. But Niu turned abruptly again, this time leaving Chang out in front of him. It was only after great effort that Chang got back into formation.

When they landed, Chang clambered out of the cockpit resentfully. Niu Shih, carrying his flight cap and map case, was waiting for him beside the runway. Silently, Chang walked over to the tow truck. Niu stopped him. "How about walking back, eh?"

Sauntering along the runway Niu smiled at Chang's resentment. "Why so dejected?" Giving him a playful punch, he said half consolingly and half encouragingly, "You've done quite well, haven't you?"

"Not at all. I was tumbling about like a leaf." Chang glanced at Niu. "I can't understand. Why do you have to make such a sharp turn while we were flying in a formation course?"

"Well, if we know how to make sharp turns we'll have more opportunities to attack and avoid being attacked at the same time."

"That's true. But we were in a training course today. And so many people were watching."

"So what? We train for combat, not for people to watch."

"But we were in such bad formation. What will people think?"

"We're training to meet real battle conditions. People will understand."

Niu was "aiming" and "firing" at Chang's worry about losing face. One must raise one's political consciousness, he said, and have a clear aim for training so that one would learn the skills useful in real battle. When finally Chang saw light, Niu smiled, the corners of his mouth going up.

Since that day, they had walked from the runway many times. Chang began to see that Niu Shih's severe demands on him came from his concern for him. He had a genuine liking for Niu Shih too.

What does Niu want to talk about today, Chang wondered? He had scored ten A's in a row, every one of his bombs found its mark. What else would he want me to aim at? Maybe Niu wants to talk about himself.

"Let's go. Don't stand there like a dummy!" Niu had walked over unnoticed, still wearing a meditative look as he mopped his face with a handkerchief.

The bad mark he got must still be rankling him. Chang's heart bled for him. Niu was a shock bomber in the regiment who usually scored A or B in every flight. Chang had learned the knack from him too. But Niu hadn't done well during the last two flights.

Chang didn't know how to console him, so to make conversation he asked, "I heard that your bombing was not so hot today, Old Niu."

"I flunked."

"Really! Well, don't feel so bad about it. You're good. You'll get an A next time if you fly over the area twice before you release your bomb."

The advice mixed in with Chang's consolation made Niu smile. "I'm trying to find out why I missed my target. You were behind me, Chang. Did you notice my bomb fell a little to the south of the target?"

"Hmm."

"It's queer. It happened both times, and each time the weather forecast said no wind, so I didn't make any adjustment. The meteorologist came by just now. We were wondering whether there could be a north wind which affected the bombs."

"But we usually have a south wind in this season. I flew over the area twice and felt a south wind. I made my adjustments according to that."

"Could this be an exception — a special case? The meteorologist promised to study it at the commune weather station. I'll look into the way I work too, maybe there's something wrong there."

That was Niu Shih, always analysing everything after each flight. Finding the cause of a poor mark pleased him tremendously, while a lasting frown would settle on his face if he didn't know exactly how he had gotten an A. Chang still thought Niu should have flown over the area twice like he had, and didn't hesitate to say so. "The leadership allowed two target runs, why did you drop your bomb the first time? Why don't you fly over the target for a second run?"

"In real battles we may need to drop our bombs the first time we dive."

"Anyway, Niu, hasn't it occurred to you that the squadron's shock bomber's *marks* will drop if you go on like this?" Chang emphasized the word "mark".

Niu didn't answer, his thick brows locked again. He was giving it some consideration, Chang thought smugly. But before he could

offer more advice, Niu blurted, "I know you feel sorry for me, Chang. But I'm worried about you and your ten straight A's."

Worried because of his A's? What was wrong with A's, Chang wondered? The conversation stopped, they strolled on to the lawn.

Niu recalled the time he went hunting at fourteen with his father. He had a small hunting rifle. When he saw a bear lumbering towards him, he thought he could get it at a distance. His father warned him not to be rash but he fired. His bullet merely grazed the animal and in a rage the bear charged him. There was no time to fire a second shot. But a shot rang out anyway and the bear rolled in front of him. His father had hit the bear in the chest. "Rashness is fatal and will cost you your life," his father scolded. "If you don't kill him first, he'll kill you."

"That's true in fighting the enemy, too," Niu Shih thought agitatedly. He was going to tell Chang this when he caught sight of a flock of sparrows. Picking up a stone he broke the silence. "Do you think I can get one of those sparrows, Chang?"

"Maybe," Chang answered casually. What a time to be in a bird-catching mood, he thought.

"You don't think I can get one?" Niu flung the stone at the sparrows. He missed, scaring all the sparrows away. He picked up another stone.

"Why throw another one now that they've flown away?" Chang said.

"Yes. They're gone." Niu turned sparkling eyes on Chang. "We threw a stone and missed. All the sparrows flew away. If we do a trial run when we're bombing the enemy, what would he do?"

"The enemy?"

"Yes. He'd run away and hide. To annihilate the enemy we need to drop the bomb on him the very first time we fly over him, don't you agree?"

"Well, you have a point, I guess. But the leadership allows three times in training."

"That's for beginners. Since we have mastered bombing, shouldn't we set a higher demand on ourselves?" Niu looked at Chang expectantly.

On the runway planes were being towed. Niu pointed and said, "Look, after every flight the planes are towed to the take-off line right away, to be ready for the next flight. What about us? Are we standing on the take-off line and ready at all times?"

Suddenly Chang's horizon broadened. Claspings Niu's right hand, he said, "So this is what you have been aiming at, old man! All right, let's make a deal — I'll practise hitting the target on the very first run with you and not let my ten A's hold me back from becoming a better bomber."

Niu slapped Chang on the shoulder and laughed. His frown disappeared.

"Whooo. . . ."

The alarm went off at dawn, waking the pilots from their dreams. Rapidly they climbed into cars and sped off to the airfield.

Standing at attention in front of their fighter planes, the pilots listened to the commander's directions for the practice exercise. "Enemy gunboats have been discovered heading for the coast near Seal Island. Second Squadron is to sink them."

Two signal lights zoomed into the sky. The jets pulled up in pairs.

The day after their conversation, the meteorologist found out from the commune weather station that there really was a temporary north wind caused by a return current against the south wind. Niu Shih and Chang had overcome this complication with hard practice and learned to hit the target on the first run. Now they were flying the first pair of planes out to sea.

The sea was shimmering and golden, reflecting the rays of the rising sun. They flew just above the surface to avoid being detected. Niu was on the alert, veering sharply left and right. Chang followed like a shadow. Suddenly, he saw two small dots on the horizon. He was on the point of reporting when he heard Niu Shih's voice in his earphones, "Enemy boats located. Going in for attack." Dipping a wing, Niu veered to the east. Chang knew that Niu was going to come in with the sun behind him in order to give a surprise attack. Chang speeded up and followed closely. Then, each aiming

at his target, they dived, their bombs hitting the targets towed behind the "enemy" boats. Tall water columns shot up. When the boats spotted them and fired back they were already up and away, returning triumphantly.

Niu was again waiting for Chang at his usual place beside the runway, his flight cap and map case in his hand. Chang walked over and took the towel Niu handed him. Mopping his face, he said, "Let's walk back, Old Niu."

"Sure."

"I've been thinking, Old Niu. We might be called on to destroy enemy tanks and pillboxes besides warships and boats in an enemy attack. Can't we make our practice targets still smaller?"

Niu turned to him in surprise. Highly pleased, he looked at this comrade-in-arms, now ready on the take-off line.

Illustrated by Huang Chia-yu

A Bastion of Strength

In the autumn of 1947 Li Chih-chien, a detachment leader of our Pearl River guerrillas, was wounded in the leg during a fierce holding operation. He was instructed to remain behind and take cover in the home of Sister Ho of White Stone Village while recuperating.

Sister Ho was the wife of an overseas Chinese. She had moved to the village when old Mr. Chu, also an overseas Chinese, asked her to look after his house during his absence. Bordering on the guerrilla zone, White Stone Village though in the hands of the Kuomintang reactionaries already had an underground Party organization.

Three days after Li's arrival Sister Ho and her twelve-year-old boy Shui-sheng were going to retire when they heard someone pounding on the door. Sister Ho was surprised. Who could it be at this hour of the night? She hesitated.

"Open up, quick," a coarse voice demanded, "or I'll smash the door to pieces."

The arrogance of the caller alerted Sister Ho. She turned to whisper a few words to the boy, then took her time answering the door.

"Who's there? What under heaven is the door to blame for?" Exasperated by the tone of the reply, the man bellowed: "None of your nonsense! Open the door. We are checking up."

"What's there to be checked on here? Who doesn't know this is the house of Mr. Chu!?" Sister Ho unbolted the door.

Two soldiers from the Peace Preservation Corps burst in, actually armed men from the Detective Bureau in disguise. They were on the trail of Li Chih-chien, but they pretended to be looking for a deserter.

"We're checking resident permits."

Sister Ho stretched out her arms to block their way. "What has an escaped soldier to do with us villagers? Nobody is allowed to rummage through Mr. Chu's house."

"Not allowed? We have the order. Mr. Chu's house or not!"

One of the two clutched at Sister Ho and the other slipped past under her arm. The man searched the whole house with a flashlight inside out. At that moment Shui-sheng returned with Old Ma the village head.

"Village head, you're just in time," Sister Ho said righteously. "Are we villagers supposed to be responsible for every missing soldier and be disturbed late at night? They don't even spare the house of respected old Mr. Chu..."

Old Ma was actually the leader of the underground Party. He felt it was strange that the raid should take place so shortly after Li's arrival. The desertion story was obviously a fake. The first thing was to get rid of the enemy. Ma went up to the two ruffians and calmly patted them on the shoulder.

"Brothers, if you're checking resident permits, you've come to the wrong house. Everybody knows old Mr. Chu is a patriotic overseas Chinese. He was a follower of Dr. Sun Yat-sen in the 1911 Revolution and did much for the cause. During the War of Resistance Against Japan, he contributed a good sum of money to our government. His name evokes respect in our whole county. What suspicions can you have about such a household? If the authorities get wind of this, you'll suffer for it. Besides, all the neighbours know Sister Ho here has looked after Mr. Chu's house for over ten years

and is a most reliable person. She'd never have anything to do with a culprit."

The ruffians were dejected by their fruitless search and were afraid of consequences. "You're right," they said. "Sorry to have caused any trouble." Taking up their rifles, they left in low spirits.

After they were a good way off, Old Ma said, "The situation is getting dangerous. To move Li elsewhere is already impossible. The only thing to do is be more vigilant and keep a stricter guard."

Sister Ho nodded.

Being a firm supporter of our Party-led guerrilla forces ever since the War of Resistance, Sister Ho often received guerrillas in her home. To safeguard them against the enemy's search, she had a double wall built within the back parlour, creating a three-foot wide compartment with its entrance concealed in the attic directly above. Many times she had at a moment's notice hidden fighters there. It was now Li Chih-chien's hide-out. No wonder the search party had failed to discover him that night.

The following afternoon Sister Ho went in to dress Li's wound and told him all about the search. While she was finishing, Shui-sheng popped his head in and warned her in a subdued voice: "Somebody is at the door again."

"Old Ma's appraisal of the situation is correct," Li said. "Since I can neither move nor leave, we're going to have a hard time with the enemy right here. But I believe we can defeat them if we keep calm and alert and rely closely on the Party underground."

"I understand. Don't you worry," rejoined Sister Ho confidently, then left to answer the door.

This time the caller was a man of nearly forty. Lean as a rake, he had a pair of rat eyes in a wax-yellow face. He wore a coarse cloth suit full of patches and carried a small bedding-roll on his shoulder. Sister Ho could not place him at first, but when she did she was a bit disconcerted.

"Cousin," the man greeted her with a smile, "this is a surprise, isn't it? I've come to pay you a visit." He shoved a small pack of candies into Shui-sheng's hand. Under the circumstances Sister Ho could but ask the boy to say thanks to the "uncle".

The appearance of her cousin Kan Sung-chih was indeed something she hadn't expected.

Two days before Sister Ho had gone to town to replenish her stock of bandages. She had not realized that the situation had changed so much. The enemy had set up a network of spies not only in the town, but in all villages close to the guerrilla zone as well. They had heard that a wounded guerrilla fighter, thought to be Li Chih-chien, was hiding in White Stone Village. To the enemy Li was a feared and hated man who had on several occasions inflicted heavy losses on them. They longed to exterminate this thorn in their flesh, but as Li was brave and clever they could never lay hands on him.

This time, taught by their past failures, they changed their tactics. Instead of combing the county in a door-to-door search, they made careful and intensive investigations, hoping that once Li's whereabouts were known they could take him unawares.

Though Sister Ho did not know all this, she was on the alert. She bought two rolls of ordinary cotton-wool to put on top of the absorbent cotton she was going to get. When she finished her shopping she spread a towel over the basket and started home. On the way she ran into a man wearing sun-glasses under a felt hat pulled extremely low. Behind him were two soldiers. At the sight of Sister Ho, the man quickly turned his face away and signed his followers to question her.

"What are you doing here?" the soldiers bawled.

"Shopping," replied Sister Ho unruffled, taking out a roll of cotton-wool from the top and waving it before their eyes. The two extended their hands, a gesture Sister Ho knew only too well. She immediately presented them a packet of cigarettes and said, "Respected officers, please, I need the cotton to pad a jacket for the winter." The men accepted the cigarettes and began to smoke, at the same time glancing over the basket. Finding nothing suspicious, they cried, "Get along." Sister Ho quickly walked on.

The man in dark glasses was Kan Sung-chih, a treacherous secret agent of the Detective Bureau. He had turned away to avoid being recognized by Sister Ho. But not for a moment had his eyes left the basket while his men were questioning her. He noted two different

shades of cotton-wool, the whiter one below. This aroused his suspicion: Was the whiter one for surgical use? Why was it hidden below? There must be some reason.

Back at the bureau, he reported his important discovery. Two armed men were sent to search Sister Ho's house. When the two fools drew a blank, the enemy decided to send Kan Sung-chih along personally. They ordered him to ferret out the secret within three days.

Now he put down his bedding-roll and Sister Ho offered him a cup of tea. The two began conversing. Kan thought it would not be very difficult to discover her relationship with the guerrillas. He was glib enough and, besides, she was a mere woman. Sister Ho was interested in finding out what sort of person her cousin was after an absence of ten years. Kan didn't know that the woman before him had sharp insight gained through years of struggle with the enemy. She was at the moment very vigilant, particularly after the previous night's raid.

The conversation between the two was a battle of wits, the prologue of a coming struggle.

"Sung-chih," Sister Ho began. "I haven't seen you in ten years. People say you've done very well in Kwangchow and made a lot of money."

Kan was astonished. Sister Ho unwittingly had probed into his secret. Kan had served the Japanese as a spy in that city during the War of Resistance, and after the surrender of the Japanese army was taken on by the Kuomintang secret police. But his cousin's face was peaceful. She was probably just trying to find out more about him. He heaved a sigh of relief.

"Ah, cousin, look at my garments, and you'll see how badly I have fared. I've been a disgrace to the family these ten years. To keep body and soul together, I've been a vegetable-vender, a coolie, and a pedicab-driver at one time or another." He seemed almost in tears.

This trick of Kan's certainly could not hoodwink Sister Ho. To show "sympathy", however, she said: "Yes, our country is in great turmoil, and the times are hard indeed."

Kan was very glad he had touched the right chord and won her confidence. He sat back, crossed his legs and swung them negligently. But soon he feared this was liable to betray him. To cover his uneasiness, he sat up, took out his tobacco pouch and began to roll himself a cigarette.

None of this escaped the sharp eyes of Sister Ho. There was nothing wrong, she thought, with a man who's done rough work crossing his legs and swinging them. Why should Kan be frightened over his own behaviour? Suspicion sprang up in her mind. She noticed that his hands were not those of a manual worker's. His fore and middle fingers were badly stained, a sure sign of a heavy cigarette-smoker, but he was so clumsy at rolling them. Her suspicions increased.

"Sung-chih, since you made a special trip here, you..."

"I came to ask for your help. I simply can't go on like this. You must find me a way out."

Why should he come at this exact moment for my help when there's a guerrilla in my house? Sister Ho wondered. She shook her head and laughed. "What can I, a mere woman, do for you?"

"You're probably right," answered Kan, pretending to sigh helplessly. "If only uncle were alive. What a pity that kind-hearted men often die before their time." He stole a look at his cousin. Sure enough, his words had cast a cloud of sadness over her face, as was always the case when people mentioned her dead father. An active revolutionary, he had been slaughtered by the Kuomintang reactionaries when the great revolution of 1927 failed.

"Every time I think of uncle," Kan continued, "I'm filled with hatred for the Kuomintang. To be frank, I long to carry on his unfinished cause."

Had these words come from anyone else's mouth, Sister Ho might have felt consoled. Yet, how disgusting they sounded on the lips of Kan Sung-chih! For Sister Ho remembered clearly that as soon as her father was killed, of all the kinsfolk it was Kan who first severed his relationship with her family.

Now fifty per cent sure why Kan had come, she said disinterestedly, "Don't speak foolishly. Father has left us a bitter cup. All these

years, whether district heads or village heads, they have branded us 'a family of Reds', and continuously make demands on us for money or grain. And some of our relatives have avoided us like lepers."

Her last sentence was, of course, a dig at Kan. This, Kan was quite aware of, but he pretended not to have heard. Instead, he drew his chair closer to Sister Ho and said in a suppressed voice, "Cousin, a few years from now the title of 'a family of Reds' will be priceless. The Kuomintang have enraged the people and are on their last legs. It's because their days are numbered that I've come to ask for your help."

Noticing his hesitancy in saying this, Sister Ho tried to draw him out. "Sung-chih, we're like sister and brother. If you've anything to say, speak up."

Kan thought she had risen to his bait, so he feigned boldness and added, "I want to join the guerrillas. Later, when the Communist Party comes into power, I'll have a position in the new government, and the Kan family will be honoured. I know you have connections. . . ."

Stopping him short with a wave of the hand, Sister Ho cried: "How dare you! We're under the very nose of the village government. Suppose someone reports this. I and my son will be badly involved. Our lives will be in danger."

Kan was very disappointed. Sister Ho, however, was now more certain of his true colours.

At this moment Shui-sheng came skipping in and said, "Mamma, I'm hungry. When shall we have our meal? Shall I fetch it now?"

The mother nodded. The boy went off and in no time came back with a plate of steamed sweet potatoes. He offered them to Kan. "Uncle, have one of these."

"Cousin," Kan frowned and asked disapprovingly, "is this what you eat?"

"What did you think? That I'd made a fortune?" sighed Sister Ho. "Alas, times are hard. True, my husband sends me money from abroad, but not much. After all the deductions by the Overseas Remittances Bureau, there is very little when it reaches my hands.

And money is worth less and less these days, with prices constantly rising. We have to be satisfied with food like this."

"Well, sweet potatoes are good enough," said Kan with a grimace. He took one from the plate and began to skin it. But when he saw that his hosts were eating the potatoes, skins and all, he was in a dilemma: Should he continue to peel his as the affluent do? Finally he forced a piece, complete with skin, down his throat. It happened to have some rotten spots on it, and he frowned and burped as he ate. Obviously he had never lived on sweet potatoes before. Poor people know what to eat and what to discard. They do not eat spotted skin. Sister Ho was all the more suspicious of his past.

After the meal Sister Ho said to Kan, "Sung-chih, I must report your name to the village office. There's a very strict control over visitors." She went with her boy to the village head.

When Old Ma heard Sister Ho's report, he pondered a while and said, "You must be on the look-out. When the time comes we shall deal with that cur. . . ." The rest of his words were said in whispers. Sister Ho kept nodding.

Returning home, she had a talk with Shui-sheng. A kid like him, though clever, might make a slip of the tongue. "Shui-sheng, you saw the search last night," she said, "and today this mysterious 'uncle' comes to visit us. There's something fishy going on. You must be careful."

"Mamma, I understand," the boy replied gravely. "I shall be more watchful, and nothing bad shall happen because of me."

"That's right," rejoined the mother in relief. "But more than that, you must keep an eye on him."

The next morning Shui-sheng watched Kan secretly as soon as he got up. When Kan was washing in the open, he observed him from a distance, pretending to read. When Kan was in the house, he planted himself on a stool outside the door with his book. Later, he found the man probing in the garbage and inspecting the house on the sly. The boy smelled a rat. So when Kan went to the latrine Shui-sheng was close on his heels. He discovered the man hunting in the pit with a bamboo stick.

Kan Sung-chih, after the lamentable failure of his conversation with Sister Ho, resolved to trace the cotton-wool he had seen purchased by her as proof of the presence of Li Chih-chien. The most probable spot to dispose of used bandages, he presumed, would be either in the garbage or in the latrine. That was why he was scrabbling in these two places.

Shui-sheng whispered to his mother, while she was preparing the day's meal, what he had seen that morning. It was now all too clear to her what Kan was after. And she was afraid he was on the right track, for it was in the latrine that she had carefully buried every bit of the discarded bandages. So she told her son to watch the fire for her and hurried out of the kitchen.

In her room she weighed the matter coolly. Kan had to be led off the track. She sat down, rolled up her trouser-leg and with clenched teeth knifed herself in the leg. Blood spurted. The pain was so intense that sweat beaded her forehead. But this was a crisis. Any inconsistency or sign of weakness would heighten Kan's suspicion. She thought of how heroically Li Chih-chien had stood the pain of a much more severe wound. Feeling better, she cleaned her own wound with pieces of absorbent cotton and stanching the bleeding with some of the medicinal herb Li was using.

As she was dressing her wound, Kan came by her door. It was ajar, and she could see the ruffian smiling and hear him humming a vulgar tune. She knew he had found discarded cotton and bandage in the latrine, but she remained unperturbed. Kan peeped through the door and was overjoyed to see Sister Ho with a bandage in her hand. Not wishing to waste a second, he barged in and smiled sarcastically. But then he saw her injured leg and the floor around her littered with blood-stained cotton-wool.

"*Aiya!*" he uttered a cry but quickly changed his tone, "cousin, what's happened to you?"

"Some cursed dog gave me a bite the other day," answered Sister Ho contemptuously.

As if himself bitten, Kan turned tail.

That evening Kan went out. Taking the opportunity, she asked her boy to keep guard outside and went through the attic to report

all these happenings to Li Chih-chien. After a pause Li said decisively, "First of all, we must stop that cur. Wait until we get enough evidence against him, then consult with Old Ma and get rid of him completely."

After she came downstairs, Sister Ho told Shui-sheng, "Your uncle is a villain. He came here to look for Comrade Li." She repeated what Li had just said to her.

"Mamma, what shall we do?" asked Shui-sheng.

The mother whispered something in his ear.

"I'll get it ready," said the boy gleefully.

After lunch on the following day Shui-sheng was silently at work on a ladder. Afterwards he stood it against the attic wall. Kan was pondering his next step in his room when he heard a noise outside. He sprang to his feet and rushed out to see what it was. Shui-sheng was standing before the ladder, a bowl of rice in his hand. After looking round for a moment, the boy went up in haste.

"So that's it," Kan said to himself, "I had a suspicion this morning: Why should they cook rice for four instead of three? Li Chih-chien must be fed. The boy is sending him his meal. Li must be up there." He waited until the boy disappeared into the attic, then he stealthily went over and started to mount, planning to catch the boy and Li unawares. But when he got to the sixth rung, crack! — the cross-piece broke. Down went the villain to the dust. Black and blue, he groaned between swollen lips. Fortunately for him, no bone was fractured. At this moment Shui-sheng popped his head out from above and clapped, exclaiming: "Uncle's fallen flat on his face!" Kan was exasperated.

This was a trap Sister Ho had set for Kan. The sixth cross-piece of the ladder had long needed replacement but was only improvised with a support underneath. Shui-sheng had been instructed to take the support off, a trick Kan certainly would never have expected. No wonder he slipped and fell.

Sister Ho hurried over and said in apparent alarm, "Sung-chih, how careless you are. The ladder needs repair. What were you going to do up there?"

"I was looking for a table," Kan said pathetically.

Seeing through his lie, Sister Ho immediately repaired the ladder and set it firmly in place. "Go up, now. Take any one you think fit."

She did this to lull Kan's suspicion that the entrance to the secret concealment place was in the attic. The risk of its being discovered by Kan was slim, since the trapdoor fitted smoothly and was bolted from underneath.

Limping, Kan clambered up. There was not a shadow of Li Chih-chien in the upper room. On the floor a cat and several kittens were licking the rice bowl clean. Kan sighed in disappointment but did not take his defeat lying down. He had a good look around the attic. He had the feeling that it was longer than the back parlour directly below. Could there be a double wall downstairs? If so, there must be a space between the wall of the parlour and the outer wall of the building. Pleased with his brain wave, he limped stealthily down.

He meant to pace the floor in the back parlour at once, but it was not possible under the watchful eyes of Sister Ho. Reluctantly he went back to his own room. Rubbing his aching backside he said to himself viciously, "I'll soon show you what I'm worth."

Early the next morning Sister Ho left her son to keep watch at home. Pretending to go to market, she called on Old Ma. Taking this rare chance, Kan said to the boy, "Here's some money. Go buy yourself some candy."

"No, I don't like candy!" was the sulky reply.

"But I do. Get some for me then, will you?"

"No," Shui-sheng declined.

Kan tried another trick, thinking it easy to fool a child. "Shui-sheng, let me give you a test," he said. "How long and how wide is this parlour?"

The boy did not reply.

"Well, if you can't tell me, I'll measure it for you."

Kan began pacing the floor. After that he went outside to pace off the length of the wall. At first Shui-sheng did not know what the man was up to. But he kept his eyes on him. Not until he saw Kan coming in again to re-check the floor space did he realize that Kan was aiming at discovering their compartment in the double wall.

What should he do? After a pause the boy took to his heels to report this to Old Ma.

Kan did not know the reason for the boy's disappearance, believing he had gone out to play. Now that Shui-sheng was not there, he was free to do a thorough check. When his findings tallied with his assumption he smiled coldly. "The other day a fortune-teller said that both position and fortune are in store for me this year," he thought. "I never dreamt the prophecy would be fulfilled through this discovery. That old bitch has given me enough trouble. I shall be back with my men to demolish her double wall and bring Li Chih-chien into the open. I'll show her what I'm capable of."

Kan hurriedly rolled up his bedding, getting ready to leave for town. He was eager to report on his success. But Sister Ho returned, shopping basket in hand. She threw a cold glance at Kan and said in seeming surprise: "Why, you're not leaving! I've just made a connection for you. . . ."

"You mean contact with the guerrilla forces?" asked Kan. "That's what I've been dreaming of. . . ."

Hardly had he finished his words, when Old Ma and two village guards with guns burst in.

"How dare you! Going to join the guerrillas?" cried Old Ma. "You are just the sort of suspicious character we're looking for these days. Seize him!"

The guards were stepping forward to lay hands on him when Kan said calmly, "Village head, your inveterate hatred for the Reds wins my admiration, but. . . ."

Sister Ho quickly cut in, "Village head, don't listen to this nuisance. He came to my home for no other purpose than to seek a way to join the guerrillas."

Hearing this Kan smiled cynically and said, "Remember this is not a guerrilla zone, you witch. It's under our control. It's no place for your wicked craft."

Old Ma, the "bogus" village head, glared at Kan and shouted, "Watch your tongue. Tie him up."

Before the guards could go into action, Kan drew a paper from his vest pocket and handed it to Old Ma, assuming there must be some misunderstanding on the part of the village head.

“Now you know who I am, eh?” Kan said to Old Ma with a smile.

It was an identification card showing that Kan Sung-chih was employed by the Kuomintang Detective Bureau. Ma pretended to be enraged. “So you are a spy planted in our Detective Bureau by the Communists! We have ample evidence. You are under arrest.”

Kan was panic-stricken. Before he could protest the two guards jumped upon him and tied him, hands and feet.

When Kan was carried off by the guards, who were guerrillas in disguise, Old Ma and Sister Ho hurried upstairs to see Li Chih-chien.

“Old Li, all this could have been avoided if we had only taken enough precautions. We’re sorry to have made you worry.”

“With the Party leading us and such admirable people all around, what do I have to worry about? I’m staying in a bastion of strength, never to be taken by storm or destroyed.”



Good Tidings from Home (traditional Chinese painting) by Chai Shan-lin ►

POEMS

LI YING

Early Spring in the Mountains

Streams still with floating ice
carried on springtime waters;
mountain snows melting
make little rivulets
glitter like lute strings.

So many terraced fields
rising from a myriad valleys
commune members in their busy season
ploughing, repairing irrigation laterals
getting compost out to the land.

A scrap of red, a slice of green
as far as our fighters can see:
range upon range of back mountains
coming to life everywhere.

Weather-tanned hands ever carrying;
ear-rings shining under the sun;
folk songs rising, with the season,
the twittering of birds
accompanying a blooming of wild flowers.

If proof is needed that indeed
spring is here, just look at the
reflection of the sun on farm tools
as they move, and as it glances
from the bayonets of fighters
at their spring training.



After Rain

A swift downpour halts;
a thousand streams empty
into a valley reservoir;
white mist rises from the plains,
hills seem to be singing.

Singing of what? Of our sentries
on watch on hilltops, of
commune youth building dykes
and digging canals below.

Then where does the water flow?
All through a network of canals
of the commune; where it turns
millstones, hulls rice, then going out
to the fields, raises rich crops of grain.

Irrigation canals laugh as waters
speed through them, the sound
bringing wild flowers fluttering down;
soon at harvest piles of grain will
bring sweet fragrance around these hills
as if farmers were saying, "Dear
motherland! Please accept this gift from us!"

In the little breeze,
flecks of cloud are wafted;
see, half the sky is blue
the other purple, and a rainbow
spans the hills.



YEN YI-CHIANG

Rain in the Meng Mountain*

In rain,
mountains seem more blue
trees more beautiful, showing
forest belts in varied shades of green,
colours of mountain flowers more vivid,
though at times amongst moving cloud and mist.

Sheep on the slopes
farmers in the fields
big straw hats standing out
against hillsides; wet carrying-poles
loaded with compost; today
they hope to try out their new seed
drill.

*A mountain in central Shantung.

High water in the river
people busy everywhere
mountain stream fill the reservoir
wet horse hooves shine
as laden carts come down the mountain road
to the accompaniment of cracking whips.

Rain slows down to a drizzle;
wild silkworms do not fear the wet;
commune girls laughingly catch
rain in their hands and splash it
over their faces.



Red Tassel on Her Whip

A hundred *li* of mountain road,
a hundred *li* with spring wind blowing,
a horse cart winds through cloud and mist;
ding! ling! ling! merrily
bells tinkle with trotting horses.

A lass is the driver,
plaits tied with bright wool,
green scarf around her neck, and like
a piece of fire the red tassel
on the whip she wields, the cart
climbing up the ridge amongst
stars, then going downhill
under the moonlight, so that before
the sun rises in the east she has gone
another ten *li*.

Why have you started so early, girl?
Where are you going?
What are you out to buy?

Bringing the reply, "I do not go
to shop — something more important
today, for I haul some of the wealth
of our land, and the welcoming spring
song of our communc!"
Such nonsense you talk, girl!
Just tell me what really do you carry!

I'm going to Date Tree Valley
then to Ash Slope; you ask why,
so I will tell you; these sacks
are filled with the "Mountain Joy"
strain of seed our brigade has developed.

"Mountain Joy" — but surely
that is the new rice seed
created by our youngsters! Why
take it elsewhere?

Date Tree Valley is but
two hills away from us;
Ash Slope divided
by but one river; no need
to look at them because they belong
to another province! Our lands so

close to each other with the same
soil, the same climate; the best
seed we have grown will grow too
in another province, and surely
I will bring back what they
have gained in experience from Tachai.



CHU LAN

Keep to the Correct Orientation and Uphold the Philosophy of Struggle

Thirty-two years ago, Chairman Mao published his *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art* in the thick of a fierce struggle between the two lines. This brilliant work thoroughly criticized the opportunist line pushed by Wang Ming and his followers and one of its important ideological origins — the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. It penetratingly repudiated Wang Ming and company's reactionary political stand in opposing progress and persisting in retrogression and its manifestations in literature and art, and has inherited and carried forward the Marxist world outlook and theory on literature and art. Over the past 32 years, the *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art* has all along been a sharp ideological weapon in our struggle against various opportunist trends of thought and it remains so in our current criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius.

In the *Talks*, Chairman Mao states at the outset that the problem of "for whom" is a problem of fundamental importance and of prin-

ciple. He points out explicitly: "All our literature and art are for the masses of the people, and in the first place for the workers, peasants and soldiers; they are created for the workers, peasants and soldiers and are for their use." The orientation of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers indicated here applies not only to revolutionary work in literature and art but to all other aspects of our revolutionary work as well.

Adherence to this orientation means, in the final analysis, adherence to Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution initiated and led personally by our great leader Chairman Mao is a great political revolution carried out under the conditions of socialism by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes. It aims at upholding the Party's basic line which Chairman Mao has formulated for the historical period of socialism and at "consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, preventing capitalist restoration and building socialism." The renegade and traitor Lin Piao, however, worked overtime to follow in the footsteps of Confucius in preaching "restrain oneself and return to the rites" and viciously attacked and negated the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in a futile attempt to change the Party's basic line and policies, subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat and restore capitalism. Lin Piao wanted to "revive states that were extinct, restore families that had lost their positions, and call to office those who had fallen into obscurity", so as to have the landlord and capitalist classes ride roughshod over the labouring people again. This was tantamount to fundamentally negating the orientation of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers.

The current movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius is a development in depth of the socialist revolution. It is also a continuation of the protracted struggles which the Chinese Communist Party and the revolutionary people under its leadership have waged against domestic and foreign enemies since the May 4th Movement. The revolution led by the proletariat in China is always linked with criticism of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. For more than half a century since the May 4th Movement — during both the new-democratic revolution and the socialist revolution — Chair-

man Mao has, in close connection with struggles against domestic and foreign reactionaries and with struggles against "Left" and Right opportunist lines within the Party, used the dialectical and historical materialist world outlook to repeatedly criticize the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and the worshippers of Confucius, politically and ideologically. Such criticism constitutes an important content of the two-line struggles in our Party. The current struggle to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius is a political and ideological struggle in the superstructure, through which Marxism will triumph over revisionism and the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. This struggle is of great immediate significance and far-reaching historic importance for consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and preventing capitalist restoration. On the literary and art front, this is a great struggle to keep to the correct orientation of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers, use the proletarian revolutionary line on literature and art to defeat the revisionist line and carry the proletarian revolution in literature and art through to the end. In his *Talks*, Chairman Mao enjoins us to uphold everything that **"encourages the masses to be of one heart and one mind, that opposes retrogression and promotes progress"** and oppose everything that **"foments dissension and discord among the masses and opposes progress and drags people back"**. To make revolutionary literature and art a weapon for upholding revolution and opposing retrogression and restoration, it is imperative to criticize the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and criticize revisionism. Revolutionary literary and art workers must deepen their understanding of the protractedness and complexity of the struggle between restoration and counter-restoration in the historical period of socialism, arm themselves with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and take an active part in the struggle.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has led to profound changes in the political, ideological, cultural, and economic fields and the emergence of many new socialist things which in themselves are a deep criticism of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. The Lin Piao anti-Party clique had a bitter hatred for these new things and was bent on undermining them. We, on the contrary, should warmly

support these new things, promote their growth and further consolidate and expand the achievements of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. In the *Talks*, Chairman Mao urges revolutionary literary and art workers to extol **"the new people and the new world"**. In accordance with this instruction, an important task for proletarian revolutionary literature and art at present is to adhere to the Party's basic line as the key link, conscientiously learn from the experience in creating the model revolutionary theatrical works, make every effort to reflect the magnificent struggle of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, profoundly reflect the socialist revolution and construction and sing the praises of new socialist things, and, at the same time, expose all the dark forces that harm the masses of the people. What to extol and what to expose has never been a question that concerns literature and art alone, but is first of all an important political question. While the proletariat wants to praise the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the bourgeoisie is bound to negate and oppose it. We must determine our attitude towards all literary and art works **only after examining their attitude to the people**. We must wholeheartedly support and foster works that extol with full revolutionary enthusiasm the proletarian revolution, especially the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, even if they are not so perfect artistically or have some shortcomings. We must do so as long as their political orientation is correct. At the same time, we must take a realistic approach and, through analysis, point out the problems they still have and help the writers improve and revise their works. This will encourage our professional and amateur literary and art workers to reflect practical struggles in the era of socialism still better and give full play to the militant role of revolutionary literature and art as a weapon **"for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy"**. On the other hand, we must relentlessly criticize works that take an extremely hostile attitude towards the proletarian revolution, especially the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and viciously distort and smear it.

Because of his political needs for counter-revolution, Lin Piao politically advocated the Confucian precept "restrain oneself and return to the rites" and the "doctrine of the mean", and in literature

and art he preached the theory of human nature of the landlord and capitalist classes, the "theory of no conflicts" and other fallacies. These were in fact nothing new. As far back as more than 30 years ago when the War of Resistance Against Japan was at a critical point, Wang Ming and Liu Shao-chi and company clamoured that works of literature and art should depict "love of humanity", in an attempt to disarm the Chinese people ideologically before national and class enemies. Refuting that reactionary fallacy, Chairman Mao in his *Talks* makes this incisive remark: **"There is absolutely no such thing in the world as love or hatred without reason or cause. As for the so-called love of humanity, there has been no such all-inclusive love since humanity was divided into classes. All the ruling classes of the past were fond of advocating it, and so were many so-called sages and wise men, but nobody has ever really practised it, because it is impossible in class society."** In these words, Chairman Mao thoroughly bares the hypocrisy, deceitfulness and reactionary nature of the nonsense about "love of humanity". Didn't Confucius rant that one "should love all men"? This was sheer humbug! Not only did he never show any love for the labouring people, but he bitterly hated even the new emerging landlord class. What he loved was only a handful of diehards from the slave-owning class. Whatever Lin Piao and his followers trumpeted, be it the "doctrine of the mean", the theory of human nature of the landlord and capitalist classes or the "theory of no conflicts", all of them were nothing more than weapons for the overthrown landlord and capitalist classes to attack the proletariat under the conditions of socialism. They wanted only the proletariat and other working people to deal with the landlord and capitalist classes in accordance with the "doctrine of the mean" and "love of humanity", and refrain from coming into "conflict" with and struggling against them. But on their part, Lin Piao and company energetically practised revisionism and splittism and engaged in intrigues and conspiracy in a futile bid to change the Party's basic line and policies, subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat and restore capitalism. In doing all this, they did not in the least follow the "doctrine of the mean", the principle of "love of humanity" or the "theory of no conflicts".

In the political sphere, while rattling their sabres they waited for the opportune moment to launch a counter-revolutionary coup d'état; and in the field of art and literature, they did not let a single day pass without dreaming of getting monsters and demons to dominate the stage again and without viciously attacking our model revolutionary theatrical works. As Lu Hsun wrote, when the reactionaries "see others can do nothing about them . . . they are always ferocious, arrogant and unbridled like tyrants, and never act upon the doctrine of the mean; when they glibly talk of the 'doctrine of the mean', they have in fact already lost their influence and have to resort to the 'doctrine of the mean'".

Chairman Mao has pointed out: **"Between the opposites in a contradiction there is at once unity and struggle, and it is this that impels things to move and change."** Social contradictions propel history forward only through struggle to bring about a revolutionary transformation. **The philosophy of the Communist Party is the philosophy of struggle.** Struggle means advance; giving up struggle means retrogression, collapse and revisionism. Our literary and art works must correctly reflect the revolutionary life and struggle of our time and, as the model revolutionary theatrical works do, apply the method of combining revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism in creating images of proletarian heroes. To achieve this, we must thoroughly criticize the reactionary and decadent doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and such fallacies spread by Lin Piao as the "doctrine of the mean", the theory of human nature of the landlord and capitalist classes and the "theory of no conflicts". We must fervently praise the new socialist things that have emerged in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, dare to reflect the acute contradictions and conflicts in class struggle and the struggle between the two lines and be good at depicting them.

In his *Talks*, Chairman Mao points out: **"In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines."** The struggle in the field of literature and art is a manifestation of the class struggle in society and the two-line struggle in the Party. Chairman Mao has always attached great importance to the Party's leadership over the work in literature

and art. He has personally initiated and led the various struggles in the superstructure, art and literature included. With every attention from the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao, revolutionary artists began with the revolution in Peking opera and, after overcoming numerous difficulties and surmounting many obstacles, created a number of model revolutionary theatrical works scintillating with the radiance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. These works have set for us an example in grasping the revolution in literature and art and in the superstructure as a whole. Party committees at all levels should give full attention to literary and art work, strengthen their leadership and use the struggle to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius to further push the revolution in literature and art forward. Historical experience shows that the struggle in the field of literature and art is invariably linked with the struggle between political lines. Didn't the renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi and his gang trot out *Hai Jui Dismissed from Office* to reverse the correct decisions passed on Peng Teh-huai? Didn't *Going Up to Peach Peak Three Times* make its appearance in co-ordination with the political trend of negating the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution? If the proletariat does not exercise dictatorship in the superstructure, including the various cultural fields, the bourgeoisie inevitably will carry out restoration in these fields.

Chairman Mao has pointed out: **"Either the East Wind prevails over the West Wind, or the West Wind prevails over the East Wind; there is no room for compromise on the question of the two lines."** The bourgeoisie always stubbornly tries to express itself and remould the Party and the world in its own image. But this simply won't work. To yield to them would actually be to **run the risk of undermining our Party and our country. Whom then must we yield to? We can mould the Party and the world only in the image of the proletarian vanguard.** This is a life-and-death struggle concerning who moulds whom and who will win out. Party committees at all levels must rely on the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers who are armed with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, persist in exercising the dictatorship of the proletariat in the superstructure, including the various cultural fields, and carry

the struggle to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius through to the end. All Communists, revolutionary cadres, revolutionary intellectuals and literary and art workers should engage in **"the study of Marxism-Leninism and of society"** in the course of struggle and continue to remould their own world outlook. So long as we adhere to Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line, keep to the orientation of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers and uphold the Communist philosophy of struggle, we are sure to win great victories in the struggle to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius and still greater victories in the proletarian revolution in literature and art. Thus the dictatorship of the proletariat in China will become more consolidated and the cause of socialist revolution and socialist construction more prosperous than ever.

Art Derived from the Life and Struggle of the Masses

The amateur art propaganda team of Tahsing County near Peking was first organized during the Cultural Revolution. It has more than thirty members, mostly of poor and lower-middle peasant origin and youth who came to settle in the rural areas to work in agriculture after finishing school. Following the instruction that literature and art should serve the masses as pointed out by Chairman Mao in the *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*, they strive hard to learn from the experience of the revolutionary model theatrical works, keep their group small and compact, produce mainly short items and use very few stage properties, so that they can go down to the grass-roots level in the countryside and mountain districts to perform for the poor and lower-middle peasants. Apart from some arias and scenes taken from the model operas and ballets, most of the numbers they perform are their own creations. Welcomed by the peasant masses, some of their dances, like *Sunning Grain Kept in Reserve for War*, *Sowing Seeds*, *Red Flowers on Dry Land* and *Shoes to Strike Roots* etc., are derived from the life and struggle of the masses, with a clear ideological message, a rich flavour of real life and a fresh and simple style.

When they first set up the propaganda team, the members tried out a few national minority dances. Though they worked quite hard, the response was not so good and some peasants said: "You certainly jumped about and used a lot of energy, but we don't know what you want to express." This criticism from the masses was a great shock. Some of these comrades thought: We've worked so hard to perform for the peasants, yet they don't seem to appreciate it. Why is that? Then their leadership made them study the *Yenan Talks* again. Chairman Mao has said: **"In the last analysis, what is the source of all literature and art? Works of literature and art, as ideological forms, are products of the reflection in the human brain of the life of a given society. Revolutionary literature and art are the products of the reflection of the life of the people in the brains of revolutionary writers and artists."**

When they reviewed their work in the light of these instructions, they realized that the reason the masses' response had not been good was not because the content of the dances was poor but because the local masses were unfamiliar with the life of the national minorities and could not understand them. Also, they themselves as performers were not familiar with the life of the minority peoples and did not quite understand what the specific movements meant to express; they were just imitating certain gestures. So how could these revolutionary dances be effective? The masses felt it was quite all right to stage a few minority dances, but the team should strive to create new dances expressing the life and struggle of the local masses. So the team made up its mind to find the raw material from the life of the peasants and to create new dances in the heat of their struggle.

Taking an active part in farm labour, these amateur artists saw for themselves in 1970 how the poor and lower-middle peasants worked painstakingly and with meticulous care during the harvest, obeying Chairman Mao's great call: **"Be prepared against war, be prepared against natural disasters, and do everything for the people"** and how they kept the best grain for the state. The revolutionary spirit and selfless attitude of these peasants gave them a profound lesson and they became even more keen to work out new dances. They chose a scene which could best express this revolutionary spirit of the



*Sunning Grain Kept
in Reserve for War*

peasants, one on the threshing floor when they were sunning grain to keep as a reserve in case of war, to show the mighty material force produced through Chairman Mao's great call, and created the new dance *Sunning Grain Kept in Reserve for War*. Elated when they saw this dance, the peasants said: "This is a dance we can understand. You've brought out our enthusiasm all right. Seeing this gives us more strength."

When there was a serious drought in spring and early summer last year, team members worked shoulder to shoulder with the local peasants to fight the drought and protect the plants, endeavouring to win a good harvest. In that battle they saw the confidence and strength of the masses who were inspired by the example of Tachai and they

were deeply moved by their heroism. It was just like what was said in the Tachai Brigade: "The greater the drought, the harder we'll work." Based on this experience, they created another new dance *Red Flowers on Dry Land* to praise the peasants' revolutionary spirit in their struggle to conquer nature by relying on the superiority of the socialist system. After the launching of the mass movement to criticize and repudiate Lin Piao and rectify the Party's style, they joined the poor and lower-middle peasants to study the Party's basic line, hold meetings in the fields to repudiate Lin Piao's criminal attacks on new socialist phenomena and to praise the Great Proletarian Cultural

Red Flowers on Dry Land



Revolution. They created more new dances like *Sowing Seeds* and *Shoes to Strike Roots* which they performed several hundred times in the fields and on the threshing floors. The local poor and lower-middle peasants not only enjoyed watching these dances, but they also actively made their comments and helped in the revisions.

To find raw material for themes and create dance movements from the life and struggle of the masses does not mean mechanically imitating real life. One should find what is typical and create choreography on a higher plane than real life. In 1968 they worked out the dance *Grasp Revolution, Spur Production* in which they put on stage various farming activities like ploughing, carting manure, sowing, watering plants, weeding and harvesting. However, after the peasants saw it, they said, "Your movements are quite lifelike, but the dance lacks something." Why is this? They studied the *Yenan Talks* again in connection with this problem and better understood Chairman Mao's instruction: **"Although man's social life is the only source of literature and art and is incomparably livelier and richer in content, the people are not satisfied with life alone and demand literature and art as well."** That is to say, the artist cannot satisfy the labouring people by just copying from real life. So they also seriously studied the revolutionary model theatrical works and their experience in production and realized that in the creation of art not only must one go deep among the masses to find raw material, but one must learn how to distil the essence from the raw material and concentrate and typify such everyday phenomena. In the past few years, following Chairman Mao's instructions in the *Yenan Talks* and the principle of creating art derived from the life of the masses but on a higher plane than real life, as postulated in the revolutionary model operas and ballets, they have produced some new dances and achieved notable results. Their experience can be summed up as follows:

First, the artist should choose such themes from real life which are familiar to the masses and have certain educational significance. The new dances are for the enjoyment and use of the workers, peasants and soldiers and so they must suit their taste. Such dance movements, as sifting grain and filling sacks in the dance *Sunning Grain Kept in Re-*



Sowing Seeds

serve for War, carrying and pouring water in the dance *Sowing Seeds*, stitching cloth soles and twisting hempen thread in the dance *Shoes to Strike Roots*, are all taken from real life and are very familiar to the peasants. When such activities are concentrated and typified in art, the peasants enjoy watching them.

Second, dance movements should serve to depict proletarian heroes and the heroic masses. When working on raw material taken from real life, the criterion for the conception of the plot and portraying characters should be whether they can reveal the revolutionary spirit of the poor and lower-middle peasants. One movement in the dance *Sunning Grain Kept in Reserve for War* called for performers checking the heaviness of the grain by weighing it in their hands. At first they just copied the actual movement: bend down to pick up the grain, weigh it in the hand, then slowly scatter it on the ground. When the peasants saw this, they felt that while it was true to life it was lacking in spirit because it did not show elation. So the movement was

changed: first the performers pick up some grain, weigh it, look at each other with joy and nod to show their pride in the good harvest and then slowly toss the grain in the air and raise their heads as they watch it descend. After this change, the peasants were satisfied for this was based on real life, but it was made more noble and beautiful and clearly showed the joy and pride of the peasants when they weighed the grain.

The theme and subject of the dance *Shoes to Strike Roots* also came from real life. When members of the art propaganda team went to live with the peasants, they saw that many peasant women had kept up the revolutionary tradition of making clothes and shoes for their soldiers during the war years, except that now they make shoes for the educated youth who have come to settle in the countryside. They also teach them how to make cloth shoes themselves, showing the peasants' expectation of these young people, wanting them to strike roots in the countryside and work for the revolution all their lives. Our amateur artists decided that they should turn this moving scene into a dance. However, the stitching of shoe-soles in real life is rather slow and monotonous. To bring out the character of the peasant women and of these youth more vividly, the basic movements for stitching shoe-soles in real life had to be suitably exaggerated, so that they seemed more rhythmic and graceful. For example, when showing how they learn to stitch soles, the girls were made to leave the stools with a *yangko* dance movement and do the stitching with their hands in quickening tempo; in this way it went beyond the limitations of real life movements and could better express their elation and the revolutionary fervour of youngsters who, educated by the poor and lower-middle peasants to carry on the revolutionary tradition, were determined to strike roots in the countryside.

Third, there must be a correct relationship between learning from the life of the masses which is the source of all art and learning from the artistic heritage. When we create new dances, we must go deep into the life of the masses, but at the same time we should also study the fine works of the art of the past. To create a particular dance or a single dance movement, we usually use certain works as examples. **"It makes a difference whether or not we have such examples,**

the difference between crudeness and refinement, between roughness and polish, between a low and a high level, and between slower and faster work." However, all successful works of the past **"are not a source but a stream"**. They can be used as examples when we create works from the artistic raw material in the life of the people of our own time and place, but we must not uncritically copy them. Taking over legacies and using them as examples must never replace our own creative work. The dance at the beginning of *Sunning Grain Kept in Reserve for War*, for instance, has taken a leaf from movements in the folk *yangko* dance — its wide, sweeping movements and precise rhythm; it also drew lessons from the vigorous features of a balancing-drill for army recruits, so that it could better express the peasants' buoyant spirit and pride when they go to the threshing floor to sun the grain. The movements showing peasants watering the plants in *Red Flowers on Dry Land* have gone to the quick steps in ballet to convey a feeling of vigour, agility and proficiency, depicting the peasants' determination to fight the drought and protect the young plants.

One scene in *Sunning Grain Kept in Reserve for War* has three men in a team, two of them carrying grain in little crates, the other holding the sack open; they do the movements of filling and thumping the sack. When the dance was performed, someone said: "Filling a sack with grain is not poetic; the movements are too jerky and not good to look at." However, the poor and lower-middle peasants said: "Filling the sacks shows the result of one year's hard labour and our peasants' eagerness for socialism. The movements are fine!" Also, some people thought using the little crates on stage too crude and not artistic, but most peasants felt otherwise. They said: "The crate is necessary for the job; it is handy and good looking. It's quite suitable to have it on the stage, and seeing this familiar object gives us a good feeling."

Thus different people can have different feelings about the same movement or the same object. This shows a different aesthetic viewpoint. In a class society, different classes will have different aesthetic views; what the exploiting class considers beautiful will be considered ugly by the labouring people, and vice versa. The class character and the scientific character of the aesthetics of the proletariat are completely

consistent. This criterion comes through practice and is tested in practice. The poor and lower-middle peasants, who are determined to go the socialist way, work hard all year, overcoming all sorts of difficulties and when they put their hard-won grain into sacks to deliver to the state, they are full of joy after victory and full of fight for the socialist revolution. Such labour and such spirit are fine, and so the dance movements derived from this kind of labour can be beautiful. Crates are common farm equipment in the north China countryside; the peasants use them to sift and select the best grain for the state. Such labour and such spirit are fine, and so the little crate as stage property here can be beautiful too for it helps express this content. All works of art have their content and form. The proletariat demands the unity of revolutionary political content with the best possible artistic form. If we ignore the revolutionary political content and only seek beauty in form, we shall fall into the quagmire of art-for-art's-sake and formalism.

The amateur art propaganda team of Tahsing County through practice came to realize that it must keep firmly to the proletarian

criterion regarding what is beautiful and what is ugly. It must grasp the principle of putting the political criterion first and artistic criterion second, as Chairman Mao has instructed us. The team strives to show the spirit of our socialist age and the revolutionary enthusiasm of the proletariat, while resolutely opposing and rejecting everything decadent and artificial. Actually, all works of revolutionary art are born in the struggle against the bourgeois world outlook and bourgeois aesthetic viewpoints. When revolutionary artists go deep into the life of the masses they do not just go there to find the raw material for their art. The more important thing is to remould their own outlook on life and art, making their thoughts and feelings and appreciation of art gradually become the same as that of the workers, peasants and soldiers. The amateur art propaganda team of Tahsing constantly sums up its experience on this point. Whenever it has produced a new item it invited the masses to come and make their comments and decide whether it was good or not. Recently, after hearing the masses' comments on the dance *Shoes to Strike Roots*, the members feel even more strongly that whether a new item is successful or not depends

Shoes to Strike Roots



mainly on the world outlook and outlook on art of the artists. Not only should professional artists work hard to remould themselves, amateur artists from the ranks of workers, peasants and soldiers also need to remould themselves all the time, and this process of self-remoulding has no end.

Whenever the team's members create a new number, they always keep to the "three-in-one" combination, i.e. combining the amateur artists, the leadership and the poor and lower-middle peasants. Because they use their united strength, they are able to make continuous progress in creating new dances and in their performances.

Sketches by Chen Yu-hsien

Militiawomen of the South Sea (traditional Chinese painting)
by Chen Chen-ming ▶



Paintings by One of Today's Peasants

At the National Exhibition of Serial (Picture-book) Pictures and Traditional Chinese Paintings held last year, keen interest was aroused by two sets of the former: *The Young Sentinel*, about a children's corps in past war years, and *Angry Waves on the Yangtse*, which told about a group of dock workers. The artist, a young man named Wang Meng-chi, had never studied art and had only left school three years previously when he had come to settle in the countryside and become a peasant.

In the spring of 1970, when Wang graduated from senior middle school, he decided to work as a peasant and joined the Revolutionary Martyrs Production Brigade of the Tainan Commune, Tungtai County, Kiangsu Province. Wishing to remould his own thinking and learn from the poor and lower-middle peasants, he joined in manual labour with the commune members during the day, and spent the evenings calling on peasant families to learn about the past of the village and production brigade and so raise his political consciousness concerning the class struggle and the struggle between the two lines.



From *The Young Sentinel*

In the village Wang Meng-chi discovered that some picture-books which were reactionary in content and had been criticized during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution were still in circulation, poisoning the minds of the people. Some class enemies, when painting pictures for the population, took the opportunity to propagate reactionary Confucian ideas, vilify the labouring masses and spread counter-revolutionary rumours.

A fierce struggle between the two classes and the two lines exists on the art front in the countryside, Wang thought. If the proletariat doesn't occupy this position with socialist art, then feudal, bourgeois and revisionist art will run wild. How good it would be to create more new picture-books with revolutionary content to occupy this position!

When he first went to the village, Wang had brought with him some dozen new picture-books with revolutionary content. They were eagerly sought by young and old. The exemplary deeds of the proletarian heroes depicted in them had greatly inspired the masses and helped to promote the brigade's movement to learn from Tachai. This showed their great need for revolutionary culture. The more Wang thought, the more excited he got. He decided to use his paint brush to wage war on Confucian doctrines and all feudal, bourgeois and revisionist ideas, and to play a part in the socialist revolution in art as well as other cultural spheres. Young Wang was warmly supported in his resolve by the poor and lower-middle peasants. While continuing to learn from them, he spent his spare time sketching. At first he was unable to bring out the people's individual characteristics. Some people asked him: "Who are those people you've drawn? Why do they all look alike?" Wang was discouraged and wanted to give up.

The local Party branch secretary Wang Ai-chun, noticed the young man's mood, and went to have a chat with him. He found sketches and drawings scattered all over Wang's table. Examining them, he said enthusiastically: "Meng-chi, you've made rapid progress! These works reflect the new life in our socialist countryside." Then he went on to point out, "Painting is part of our struggle. You young people must master the brush and use it to attack the landlords and the bourgeoisie. Also you should remember that the life of the masses is the sole source for art. You can depict the working people with truth, and reflect life in the spirit of our age only if you go deep among the masses and take part in the class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment.

The Party secretary's words gave Wang much food for thought. After that, instead of drawing things from memory in his room, he

went to the fields to sketch the people and the scenes there. He drew an old peasant smoking his pipe under a tree, young girls vying with each other in doing good work and educated youth doing scientific experiments. The poor and lower-middle peasants approved these sketches with comments like: "Now Meng-chi is really putting heart and soul into his drawing."

One day young Wang took a painting to the county town to solicit comments from some artists. Most of them felt that he had succeeded in reflecting the dauntless spirit of the peasants in transforming nature but a few made disparaging remarks, saying, "The flavour isn't quite right" or "It's technically weak." Some advised him not to be in such a hurry to do creative work, but to get proper basic training first. For a while Wang was plunged into doubt by these remarks. But then he repeatedly studied Chairman Mao's instruction: **"Our writers and artists have their literary and art work to do, but their primary task is to understand people and know them well."** And he thought: "I am a young student just learning to draw and lacking in basic training, so naturally I should pay attention to it and try to improve my technique. But this training and improvement must never be separated from real life."

The poor and lower-middle peasants, on their part, told him whether he sat at home endeavouring to improve his technique separated from the life of the masses, or went into the midst of real life to understand and learn from the thoughts and feelings of the poor and lower-middle peasants was a question that reflected the struggle between the two lines in art. Technique could only be improved in the heat of the mass struggle, through practice and understanding of life. As for "flavour", the sole criterion should be whether his work was liked by the workers, peasants and soldiers.

So, with the support of the Party organization and the local peasants, Wang made painstaking efforts to improve his technique by making repeated sketches of scenes and people. At the same time he concentrates on "the primary task" of trying to "understand people and know them well". He went to the Tangyang Commune, several dozen miles away, to see an exhibition on the traditions of the local militia and to learn from the poor and lower-middle peasants there.

He also travelled by boat to a work-site on the coast to make friends with the workers and to learn about the water-conservancy plan for the whole county from responsible cadres. The rousing songs and work chants on the site gave him added impetus to create art works for the revolution; and the exhilarating scenes became embedded in his mind. Working hard for several days and nights, he made a charcoal sketch to reflect the heroic spirit of the peasants in labouring to transform the whole of Tungtai County under the Party's leadership.

Many moving incidents in our socialist countryside educated Wang and inspired him to make great efforts to depict the peasant heroes. When a team leader in the Liangtuo Commune sacrificed his life while fighting a fire to preserve public property, Wang was so moved that he could not sleep. The heroic image of this comrade kept coming into his mind. For a month he worked on his first series of pictures to depict the character of this team leader. When painting the death

From Angry Waves on the Yangtze



scene he wept. This set of pictures, exhibited in the village, heightened the revolutionary drive of the cadres and commune members.

Support from the local Party organization and the local peasants, along with instruction and help from the county and commune levels, enables Wang to make quick progress. Over the past three years, besides the two picture-books in colour, *The Young Sentinel* and *Angry Waves of the Yangtse* (a collective work done with other comrades), he has produced more than six hundred paintings and sketches reflecting the class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment in the countryside. He has also done much work on exhibitions held in the commune and county for class education and learning from Tachai. However, he considers all these achievements only as a new starting-point for continuing the revolution. When praised, he always replies, "I'm still a long way from meeting the demands of the Party and the poor and lower-middle peasants."

Despite his successes, he has persisted in taking part in collective farm labour, and in doing paintings for the peasants and pictures for the production team's wall bulletin. The peasants said: "He comes when he's wanted, he's not afraid of trouble." And he himself said, "In order to take over the field of art in the countryside for socialism, we must fight for it with more and more revolutionary paintings."

The movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius launched and led by our great leader Chairman Mao shook China's vast countryside like spring thunder, and all poor and lower-middle peasants plunged into the struggle.

Immediately after the Spring Festival of 1974, Wang and the local peasants joined in studying the important instructions and other documents connected with this movement issued by the Central Committee of the Party and Chairman Mao. They also organized mass criticism meetings and went to exhibitions for class education. Exposure of the ugly nature of Confucius and the heinous crimes of Lin Piao heightened Wang's feeling of proletarian indignation.

Late one night, when snow was falling, Wang again studied Chairman Mao's great work *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*. Then and there he resolved: "Right! I must take up my brush, join in the struggle and steel myself in the movement." The next day he

wrote out several dozen quotations from Chairman Mao and collected many moving incidents from the mass struggle including the bitter denunciation made by an old poor peasant at a mass meeting, the heroic deeds of some local girls fighting to transform nature, and the gigantic changes in the collective economy after the Cultural Revolution. Contrasting these realities with the reactionary talk of Lin Piao and Confucius, he wrote an outline for some cartoons, read it out to the local peasants and asked for their opinions. Then working hard for two days, he drew more than thirty cartoons which he pasted up in the reading room at the brigade office, himself acting as the commentator for the spectators who gathered. The villagers said of the cartoons: "They've got a lot of spirit. They've brought out the reactionary features of Confucius and Lin Piao." Many people from nearby brigades also came to see the pictures, some travelling by barge along the rivers and canals. All said they had learned a lot from them.

Wang Meng-chi debunked the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, the idealist fallacy of "inborn genius" peddled by Lin Piao, the latter's vicious attack on the policy of sending young students to the countryside and other such counter-revolutionary rubbish. He did it by contrasting all these things with his own experience.

When Wang was a schoolboy he didn't draw at all well, but within a few years of coming to the countryside, he had turned into a fairly promising amateur artist. People asked him the "secret" of his rapid progress. Wang replied: "The renegade and traitor Lin Piao used to boast that he had a head different from that of other people, that he was especially smart. My experience is totally different. I had no sudden 'inspiration', I don't have any special method. The life and struggle in the countryside are the endless sources for my art. I gradually learned how to draw pictures and made a bit of progress only by persistently taking part in struggle, learning from the masses and painstaking practice. Whatever I have been able to achieve is the result of the education I received from the peasant masses and the Party."

HSU HSIA-LIN

Confucius' Reactionary Ideas About Music

For more than two thousand years the retrogressive ideas of Confucius have permeated every part of China's ideological sphere, whether politics, philosophy, history, law, literature or music, and poisoned the minds of the people. Confucius is therefore the best negative example to help us see how reactionary classes used literature and art to try to turn back the wheel of history. So it is important that we repudiate Confucius' ideas about music in our proletarian revolution in literature and art.

Confucius paid great attention to music, for he realized that there was a close relationship between it and politics, that music could have a great effect on society. He continually used music as a tool and peddled his reactionary ideas of music in his efforts to preserve the moribund slave system of the Western Chou Dynasty and promote the political line of the slave-owning class.

At the end of the Spring-and-Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.) the landlord class was just emerging and the new feudal system was about

to supersede the old slave system. This class struggle was reflected in the tendency of the new landlord class to break with the traditional rites and music. People had begun to feel bored with the ancient music and to favour new music. Always against progress, Confucius quickly perceived this as a signal of the decline of the slave-owners' rule. "When the world is following the right way, the son of heaven controls the rites and music and punitive expeditions; when the world is not following the right way, the vassal states control them," he declared. He considered the so-called son of heaven, the head of the slave-owning aristocracy, the natural supreme ruler who should also control music. His wish to make music serve "the right way" was part of his attempt to preserve the declining old order even after "the rites and music have crumbled and fallen".

When Confucius saw that the nobles of the clan of Chi in the State of Lu used the eight-person *yi* dance in their court, a ceremonial form previously used only by the king of Chou, and songs which had been used only during sacrifices by the king, he was bursting with anger and shouted: "If this is to be tolerated, what else couldn't we tolerate?" He kept on harping that he at least would follow the Chou tradition. In his view, the reactionary slave system that existed at the beginning of the Western Chou Dynasty was sacred and inviolable. If the strict divisions of rank and status within the slave-owning class, that is, between the big and small nobles and between the son of heaven and the vassal states, were altered, it would be tantamount to insubordination and high treason. In this way his ideas about music were part of his programme for the restoration of the slave system, and represented the interests of the slave-owners.

All contending classes understand that if they want to seize political power and consolidate it, they must first control ideology. The use of music figured prominently in the many programmes Confucius advanced for ruling the country and the people.

The Analects contains the following entry: "When Confucius went to Wucheng, he heard the sound of string music and singing. He smiled and said: 'Why use a knife for the slaughtering of an ox to kill a chicken?' Tzu Yu then said to him: 'Formerly I've heard you say that if a noble person practises the true way he is kind to his subjects, while if a low person practises the true way he is more easily

controlled.' Then Confucius said: 'Listen, my pupils, what he has said is right. I was only joking with my remark just now.'

Confucius' pupil Tzu Yu was serving as governing official at Wu-cheng. He wanted to educate the people with music from the Chou Dynasty so that they would be easy to control and willing to be slaves. By his first remark about killing a chicken with a knife intended for killing oxen, Confucius meant that since this was such a small county town and there were few "noble" men and mostly "low" people, there was no need to have ancient music. Tzu Yu, however, was an apt pupil of his master. He knew that to subdue people, one must first conquer their minds, and the use of music was a necessary stratagem to protect his counter-revolutionary rule.

Lenin has pointed out that the bourgeoisie tried **"to reduce even universal education from top to bottom to the training of docile and efficient servants of the bourgeoisie, of slaves and tools of capital. They never gave a thought to making the school a means of developing the human personality"**. This was also true of Confucius, who wanted to train slaves for the slave-owners. The reactionary ideas about music he formulated were used to control the masses.

Confucius also advised the reactionary ruling class to use counter-revolutionary dual tactics, both "the rites and music" and "tortures and punishment". "If you don't have rites and music, tortures and punishment will not be effective. If the latter is not effective, the masses will not behave themselves." Rulers could use these two to complement each other to control their subjects. Confucius not only understood the role of force, but also the importance of controlling the people in spirit. His use of music helped to carry out the will of the reactionary ruling class and enslave and oppress the people in an even more subtle and treacherous manner.

Historically, different classes have differed in their views of the cultural heritage. Chairman Mao has taught us: **"Respect for history means giving it its proper place as a science, respecting its dialectical development, and not eulogizing the past at the expense of the present or praising every drop of feudal poison."** Confucius, living in an age when the slave system was collapsing, was mortally afraid of the progress of history. His political stand for re-

storation of the Chou Dynasty slave system was the starting point for his die-hard conservatism. He gave an explicit statement of those ancient ways he wanted followed: He wanted "to use the almanac of the Hsia Dynasty, ride in the chariot of the Shang Dynasty, wear the hat of the Chou Dynasty and play the Shao music". He praised the Shao music of the early Western Chou period to the skies, saying it was "the most beautiful and the most beneficial". It was said that when he heard this music in the State of Chi, he was so entranced that for three months he did not know the taste of meat. It was consistent with his reactionary stand that he should be so entranced by music which was controlled by the ruling class and eulogize the slave-owners.

On the other hand, Confucius was most vehemently against contemporary folk music which reflected the thoughts and feelings of the masses but ran counter to the ideas of the slave-owners, and he wanted to prohibit it altogether. He claimed that the folk music of the State of Cheng was licentious, that it had spoilt the classical music, and said it should be banned. In his eyes, the "rustic and vulgar" music of Cheng was a threat to the classical music of the reactionary ruling class. Since then Confucians have always condemned folk music as "music of rebellion". They invariably express open, undisguised hatred for the music of the masses.

This Confucius who talked so much of humanity and love of fellow men actually behaved most ruthlessly to suppress all music which did not serve the slave system. In the spring of the year 501 B.C., at a conference of the State of Chi and the State of Lu at Chiaku, the ruler of Chi offered a performance of music from its border regions. Confucius, who was acting prime minister in the State of Lu, denounced and dismissed the programme. Then the ruler of Chi offered some court music, but Confucius, claiming the music was insulting, ordered to have the musician put to death at once. As this bit of history shows, Confucius could be ruthless in suppressing music in order to preserve the old order.

In his essay *Confucius in Modern China* the great writer Lu Hsun made fun of those who tried to make portraits of Confucius. "Since Confucius left no photograph," he wrote, "we naturally cannot tell what he actually looked like. . . ." However, if we depict him as he de-

scribed himself: carrying an ancient almanac of the Hsia Dynasty, riding in a rickety Shang Dynasty cart, wearing an old hat from the Chou Dynasty and playing some Western Chou music, this would show the ancient die-hard in his true form. As Lu Hsun pointed out: "To preserve the old culture is to keep the Chinese people for ever as slaves for some masters, to make them go on suffering, suffering." Confucius' music was the dirge of a moribund society.

China's past reactionary ruling classes upholding the worship of Confucius to control the people have also used music to eulogize their reigns so that it served as a tool for political retrogression. Thus Chou Yang, a running dog of the renegade Liu Shao-chi, advocated "learn from the ancients". Unless we did so, he said, we would be "unworthy descendants" of our ancestors. He claimed that "there is a big storehouse in the backyard of that Confucian shop, holding thousands of years of China's cultural heritage". He said we should go into that storehouse and "completely take over" the heritage. That would mean letting ancient kings and ministers and other monsters clutter up our socialist stage. These die-hards like Chou Yang were against portraying heroic images of our workers, peasants and soldiers, against using the art of music to serve our proletarian politics and the needs of our masses. The traitor Lin Piao was also a faithful follower of Confucius who tried to restore the old order. He attempted to make use of music and advocated reactionary songs which served his counter-revolutionary revisionist line. The common aim of these people was to bring back capitalism in China.

As Engels said: "Tradition is a great retarding force, is the *vis inertia* of history, but, being merely passive, is sure to be broken down." Confucius' reactionary ideas about music have already been repudiated by history. Under the advancing wheels of history, Confucius and all his followers through the centuries, including political swindlers like Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao, can never escape their doom.

A New Lesson (woodcut)
by Chou Hsiu-feng ▶



CHRONICLE

Model Revolutionary Theatrical Works Further Popularized and Developed

China's model revolutionary theatrical works, whose birth was a brilliant achievement of the revolution in literature and art under the guidance of Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art*, have grown in popularity and number during the current movement to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius.

The original group comprised eight works, namely, five modern revolutionary Peking operas *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*, *The Red Lantern*, *Shachiapang*, *On the Docks* and *Raid on the White Tiger Regiment*, two modern revolutionary dance dramas *Red Detachment of Women* and *The White-Haired Girl* and the revolutionary symphonic work *Shachiapang*. Added to the list in recent years were the piano composition with Peking opera singing *The Red Lantern*; piano concerto *The Yellow River*; the Peking operas *Song of the Dragon River*, *Red Detachment of Women*, *Fighting on the Plain* and *Azalea Mountain*; and the symphonic composition *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*. Two new dance dramas, *Ode to Yimeng* and *Children of the Grasslands*, are also being experimentally performed. Several more theatrical works are under preparation or revision.

In order to popularize these accomplishments of the socialist revolution in literature and art, most of them have been made into colour films. Two recent ones, *Fighting on the Plain* and *Azalea Mountain*,

are now being shown in all parts of China. The two production groups, after a careful sum-up of past experience in transferring the model works to the screen, tried earnestly to achieve the highest artistic standards. So these film versions have given effect to the principle "be faithful to the stage, transcend the stage", thus further raising the quality of the film versions of the model works.

The model revolutionary theatrical works have also greatly helped the transformation of many of China's local opera forms, and experiments were made to transplant the model works. *The Red Lantern* has been transplanted into the form of Hopei clapper opera, *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* into *pingchu* opera, *Shachiapang* into Hunan and Kwangtung operas, *On the Docks* into *huaichu* opera, *Song of the Dragon River* into Shansi opera, all being well received by worker, peasant and soldier audiences. People of the minority nationalities in Sinkiang, Inner Mongolia, Kwangsi and elsewhere are also staging them in their own languages and art forms. The Uighur opera *The Red Lantern* has won wide acclaim among the many nationalities of the vast Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Professional art troupes in all parts of the country and amateur artists in factories, mines, villages and army units are performing the model works too. Some do it at full length, others select separate scenes or arias. All this facilitates their popularization throughout the country.

In the course of popularizing and developing the model works the playwrights, composers and actors made a point of going to factories, villages and army units to perform for the workers, peasants and soldiers, to learn from them, and to join them in criticizing Lin Piao and Confucius. They were warmly welcomed by the masses. Late in 1972 and early in 1973, tours to various parts of China were made by the China Dance Drama Troupe, the Central Philharmonic Society, the Peking opera troupes of both Peking and Shanghai and *The White-Haired Girl* company of the Shanghai School of Dancing. Their travels covered the provinces of Shensi, Shansi, Shantung, Anhwei, Heilungkiang, Liaoning, Szechuan, Hunan, Hupeh, Chekiang, Kiangsi and Kiangsu. Altogether they gave over 120 performances attended by some 300,000 workers, peasants and soldiers. The Peking Opera Troupe of Shantung Province performed *Raid*

on the White Tiger Regiment and selected scenes from other model works before 170,000 spectators during its four-month tour.

These literary and art workers held firm to the slogan: "Perform revolutionary dramas, be revolutionaries yourselves!" During their tours they immersed themselves in the life of the people, humbly accepted re-education from the workers, peasants and soldiers and worked seriously at remoulding their world outlook. They repeatedly studied Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art* and thought back over the sharp struggles between the two lines that have occurred on the front of literature and art. This further strengthened their determination to serve the workers, peasants and soldiers.

To speed the work of popularization, they went on to coach other troupes in staging the model works. The *Fighting on the Plain* company helped thirty local troupes in this way over a short period. With great enthusiasm, the *Song of the Dragon River* company of the Shanghai Peking Opera Troupe helped the Shansi Opera Theatre to transplant this work into their own medium, which greatly raised the performing level of the Shansi art workers. The China Dance Drama Troupe was very serious and strict in giving tutoring to help artists in various places to improve their performance. They not only passed on their stagecraft, but also shared with the local artists the practical experience they had accumulated in developing the dance drama *Red Detachment of Women*, helping them to better understand and apply the principles that guided the creation of the model revolutionary theatrical works. These principles comprised the "Three Prominences" (giving prominence to the positive characters in relation to all the roles, to the heroic characters among the positive roles, and to the main hero among all the heroic roles) and "Three Correctnesses" (in presenting sentiment, character and the trend of the times).

China's revolutionary literary and art workers are determined to continue their advance under the guidance of Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line in literature and art and to produce still better works for the workers, peasants and soldiers.

Vigorous Spare-time Literary and Art Activities in Peking, Shanghai and Tientsin

Guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line on literature and art and inspired by the model revolutionary theatrical works, amateur writing and acting by workers, peasants and soldiers are developing with revolutionary vigour in Peking, Shanghai and Tientsin.

In Peking, these activities have expanded since the beginning of this year with the deepening of the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius. Prior to May Day, many theatrical festivals were held at the district, county and grass-roots levels. Over 1,300 items presented by 530 spare-time troupes during the May Day festivities were chosen from the repertoires of these festivals. Varied in form and theme, they are stirringly militant and have a strong flavour of everyday life. Many district and county literary and art troupes learned from *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*, *Song of the Dragon River* and *Fighting on the Plain* and other revolutionary Peking operas and staged them in whole or in the form of excerpts. They toured numerous agricultural production brigades, popularizing these works.

Seven different concerts were presented by the Workers' Palace of Culture and the Municipal Cultural Bureau of Shanghai in the first quarter of this year. All the new songs were selected from among more than 900 originating at grass-roots levels. The themes of the concerts were, respectively, the criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius, and the praise of self-reliance, the people's militia of the cities, the educated young people settling in the countryside, the revolution in education, the workers on the docks and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Full of life, too, were spare-time literary and art activities in Tientsin where a city-wide month-long festival was held between March 24 and April 28, with nearly 10,000 amateur artists from more than 300 units in and around the city taking part. They put on more than 400 items, four-fifths of which were composed by workers, manifesting the broad mass character of literary and art activities among Tientsin's working class.

Party organizations in Peking, Shanghai and Tientsin pay great attention to the leadership of spare-time literary and art activity,

organizing those active in it to study Marxism-Leninism and Chairman Mao's writings and giving them ideological and political education. To guarantee healthy and correctly orientated growth, they also help the spare-time writers and artists to use Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yen'an Forum on Literature and Art* as a weapon in the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, and in repudiation of the revisionist line in literature and art and its influence.

Peking Literary and Art Workers Discuss Yen'an "Talks"

On the eve of the 32nd anniversary of the publication of Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yen'an Forum on Literature and Art*, a discussion devoted to this work was held by a group of literary and art workers in Peking, including writers, actors and workers in the fine arts. Their spirited contribution dealt with the significance of again studying the *Talks* during the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius.

This work of Chairman Mao's, they said, sums up China's experience in the struggle between the two lines in ideology since the May 4th Movement of 1919. It makes a profound criticism of the world outlook and the literary and artistic theories of the reactionary exploiting classes and provides the Party with a comprehensive proletarian revolutionary line for literature and art.

Art and literature are important components of the superstructure. The struggle between the two classes and two lines has always been very acute and complicated in this field. Confucius, who lived over two thousand years ago, used literature and art in his attempt to restore the slave system. Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao used them to create counter-revolutionary public opinion for the promotion of their revisionist line and the restoration of capitalism. To use the *Talks* as a weapon in thorough repudiation of the reactionary outlook on literature and art from Confucius all the way down to Lin Piao is an important task in the current movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius and in the revolutionization of the superstructure.

Hao Jan, author of the novel *Bright Sunny Skies*, said that it was for the evil purpose of deceiving the people so as to realize their vicious aim of restoring capitalism that Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao went back

to the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius for aid in spreading the "theory of the dying out of class struggle" and the landlord-bourgeois "theory of human nature". Revolutionary literary and art workers, on their part, must learn the spirit of revolutionary criticism from Chairman Mao's *Talks*, and join with the workers, peasants and soldiers in deepening the criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius and of the revisionist line. In their literary creation they must adhere to the Marxist viewpoint of class struggle in observing life, gaining knowledge of life and reflecting the historical law that socialism will eventually replace capitalism and the proletariat will surely defeat the bourgeoisie. In their works they must strive to create images of proletarian heroes who are faithful to the Party's basic line and are daring and skillful in the fight against the class enemies.

The playwright Kuo Chi-hung from the Peking *Pingchu* Opera Troupe, the worker-poet Li Hsueh-ao and the young painter Chao Chih-tien told the meeting that they would persist in the direction pointed out by the *Talks* and "for a long period of time unreservedly and whole-heartedly go among the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, go into the heat of the struggle". Through such struggles, they said, they would study society, study Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought, remould their world outlook and shift their stand to the side of the masses so as to create new socialist works needed by the workers, peasants and soldiers.

Peasant Artists of Huhsien Active in Criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius

Huhsien County in Shensi Province is known all over China for the paintings of its amateur peasant artists, who number more than 550 in its villages. Diligently studying Marxism-Leninism and Chairman Mao's writings in the course of the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, and joining actively in this struggle, they have produced 3,000 posters and sketches. These expose the heinous, criminal nature of Confucius' "self-restraint and return to the rites" and Lin Piao's ambition to restore capitalism, and deepen the mass indignation against them.

Tu Chih-lien, a peasant artist who was once a hired-hand, says: "In the old society I was cruelly beaten and forced to go hungry.

After Liberation my life changed radically. Chairman Mao's revolutionary line on literature and art broadened my mind and I learned to paint for the revolution. Among my paintings are *Grasping the Rifle to Safeguard the Motherland*, *A Family Studying the Communiqué* and *Building a Reservoir*. My experience in artistic creation has been noted in the press and many of my paintings reproduced. The Party shows great concern for us peasant artists. After enduring all the hardships of the old society we live joyfully in the new. The renegade and traitor Lin Piao peddled Confucius' idea of 'self-restraint and return to the rites' in a vain attempt to return to the old society in which I would be an exploited hired-hand again. I'll never let that happen."

Other peasant artists declared, "The peasant paintings of Huhsien could never have developed so well today were it not for the Cultural Revolution. Lin Piao's anti-Party clique viciously attacked the Cultural Revolution. Their purpose was to restore capitalism. We won't allow them to carry out their plots. We're determined to use the brushes entrusted to us by the Party and people to laud the great achievements of the Cultural Revolution and to safeguard Chairman Mao's revolutionary line as long as we live."

Spare-time Singers from Hsishuangpanna

Guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in literature and art a great many spare-time folk singers are emerging in the Hsishuangpanna Autonomous *Chou* of the *Tai* nationality in Yunnan from the midst of its commune members, "barefoot" doctors, young school graduates and local cadres. They have composed many songs in the course of revolutionary struggle, full of warm praise for the wise leadership of the Party and Chairman Mao, the fine unity of the nationalities in building up this border area and new-born socialist phenomena such as the co-operative medical system and running of schools by the poor and lower-middle peasants. Many of these songs have been printed in the newspapers.

The Hsishuangpanna folk singers have also written hundreds of songs devoted to criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius. Performing them among the masses, they have given a powerful impetus to the movement.



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