

SSA

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Mao Tsetung's Poems Published in English

An English edition of Mao Tsetung's poems, a volume containing 39 poems, has just been published by the Foreign Languages Press in Peking and distributed abroad by Guozi Shudian (China Publications Centre).

Chairman Mao's sublime poems reflect the tempestuous and earth-shaking class struggle and the struggle between the two lines in different historical periods of the Chinese people's revolution, including the period of the socialist revolution, and the international communist movement over the past 50 years. Profoundly significant for political and ideological education, the poems are a tremendous revolutionary inspiration and a sharp weapon for opposing the bourgeoisie, imperialism and modern revisionism. They are not only deeply loved and widely read by the Chinese people but also appreciated and admired by the proletariat and revolutionary people throughout the world. The publication of these poems in English will meet the long-felt demand of readers abroad. Translations of Mao Tsetung's poems in other languages will also be published in due course.

This translation of Mao Tsetung's poems in English is issued in the following editions: Octavo special de luxe editions with two different bindings, hardback and paperback editions of ordinary book size (28mo or 20.9 × 13 cm.), and a pocket edition. On the pages before the table of contents are an autographed photograph of Chairman Mao on Lushan Mountain and facsimile of his poem "Loushan Pass" to the tune of *Yi Chin O* in his handwriting on traditional Chinese paper.

Sung Hsin-ying

Forging Ahead

Smoke and dust rose above the green grassland as a long, long convoy of trucks loaded with equipment and rolled steel rumbled and roared along a winding dirt track. It stretched so far that each end was out of sight and if one truck should stop for one moment it would hold up all the rest behind it. Communicating with their horns, the drivers reminded their colleagues ahead with short sharp toots, "Hey, mates, the equipment on my truck is badly needed at the work site." Yet all the trucks were loaded with materials urgently needed. The general headquarters of the new oilfield had issued an order: All the thousands of workers taking part in the coming battle, as well as the hundreds of types of equipment and the hundreds of thousands of tons of rolled steel, must be at the new oilfield within twenty-four hours when all thirteen construction projects would start together. This was a time when every minute counted. And so this long stream of vehicles had suddenly appeared on this twisting track.

A husky man and a girl stood side by side behind the cabin of the last truck which was loaded with steel plates. In his forties, the man with his strong build and ruddy cheeks gave one the impression of

a man of steel who could take any difficulties in his stride. Under shaggy eyebrows his eyes flashed exultantly as he watched the convoy sweep forward through the grassland. Clapping one big hand on the girl's shoulder he exclaimed, "Look, Little Chang! It's like the advance of an army."

The girl, in her mid-twenties, had a round pretty face and two short plaits. She looked the picture of youth and vitality in her bright red track suit, printed on which in white was the name Petroleum College. Leaning on the cabin roof and standing on tiptoe she was gazing rapturously ahead. Now she turned with a smile to answer her companion, "I couldn't have come back at a better time — just in time to join in this concerted battle. It's simply wonderful!"

Arching his eyebrows the man reminded her, "Don't rejoice too soon. Heavy loads are waiting for you, as I've told you."

The girl threw out her chest like a tomboy. "One ton or two! I'm ready!"

"Good girl." The man laughed.

Shading their eyes, they looked around. After a while, Little Chang said eagerly, "Look, Commissar Kao. Judging by the conditions here, we'll have to use the air-lifting method in building our floating-roof tanks."

"You mean water is scarce here?"

"Yes, that's the objective situation. So we can't use the water-lifting method here. And, what's more important, we must find a new way to get greater, faster, better and more economical results so as to speed up our victory in the coming battle."

"Does that mean, Little Chang," he asked in pleased surprise, "you still have that souvenir I gave you?"

"Sure!" The girl bent down, pulled out a pencil-box from a basin in a string bag and produced a pencil stub no bigger than her little finger. "It's here, Commissar Kao," she said. "At college, it always reminded me of what you and the workers said to me when you saw me off. It gave me the strength to weather storms and overcome difficulties. Today, under the leadership of the Party and with the guidance of the veteran workers, I want to use it to blaze a new trail!"

The man laughed approvingly.

As the contours of the work site came indistinctly into view in the distance, he rapped hard on the cabin roof.

The driver braked and stuck out his head; but before he could ask what they wanted, the man jumped down with the girl following. Both strode towards the work site.

The man, Kao Chien-yeh, was Party secretary and political commissar of the work site. The girl, Chang Chi-hung, was a worker who had been recommended to go to college three years ago. She had to run to keep pace with Kao's long quick strides. Like a ball of fire the August sun beat down on them while the humidity in the air made them feel as if they were in a big steamer.

Kao stopped suddenly, put down the bundle slung over his back and stepped over to a man squatting beside a pool smoking a pipe. Little Chang couldn't see who it was as he had his back to them.

Kao had spotted that it was Shih Ta-hai, known as Old Stony, a veteran worker and Little Chang's former master. He slapped him on the back, saying, "You must have something on your mind, mate, to come and smoke alone here." Squatting down and dipping his fingers into the water, he added, "This is the problem, right?"

Old Stony knocked his pipe against his shoe, saying, "Yes, we're forced to find a new way out, Old Kao."

"But there are stumbling-blocks on the way, eh?" Kao pointed to Little Chang then. "Look, who's here?"

Old Stony exclaimed, "Oh, so Little Chang's back!"

Little Chang threw her string bag on the ground and skipped over eagerly to grasp her master's big hands. She had so much to say after three years of absence that not knowing where to start she just smiled foolishly at him.

His heart warmed by the sight of his former apprentice, Old Stony looked her up and down, smacking his thick lips. Then he grabbed her string bag and blurted out, "Let's go!" Kao and Little Chang burst into laughter.

Chatting as they walked the three of them soon came to the work site. Equipment was piling up there as trucks brought more and more in. The iron arms of cranes swung up and down, directed by blasts

of whistles. From the piles of equipment hung slogans: "Conscientiously study the theory of proletarian dictatorship!" "All join in the fight to open up a high-yield oilfield." The whole work site was vibrating with excitement.

Chang Chi-hung's old friends greeted her and carried her off while Old Stony found her somewhere to stay. And Kao strode towards the command post, a row of five wooden huts a hundred metres to the north of the work site. Outside the Party committee office stood a group of young people from an oilfield elsewhere who wanted to take part in the building of this new one. Having received a talking-to from Li Kuang-chun who was in charge of the work site, they were upset and angry.

Short round-headed young Li Ching-sheng, son of Li Kuang-chun, shook his fist fuming, "He won't take us on. Let's go talk to Commissar Kao."

The other young men, irritated by Ching-sheng's father, all vented their anger on him.

"Your old man insists on 'picked troops' for this campaign. Why be so choosy? He just wants to keep us out."

"What if Commissar Kao won't take us either?"

These remarks made the blood rush to Ching-sheng's face. Shaking his fist again he cried, "I bet he will. Doesn't he always say young people should brave storms? He's bound to agree."

Kao overheard this exchange as he was striding over. He clapped Ching-sheng on the shoulder. "You rascal! Trying to pick fault with me?"

Ching-sheng challenged him, "Tell us point-blank, Commissar Kao! Will you let us join in the battle?"

Sizing him up, Kao laughed. "Think you're tough enough, lad?"

Ching-sheng threw out his chest and thumped it with his fist. "Hear that? Doesn't it sound tough?"

"All right!" Kao chuckled. "But you must get your leadership's consent first and hand over the work you've been doing to someone else."

Ching-sheng grinned. "We have the consent of our Party branch, and our Youth League called on everyone to do the work of two

people so that one could come to work here. You can hold me responsible if there's the slightest slip-up."

"Good. I'll talk to Old Li and ask him to take you on." Kao waved the young people away and they ran off laughing.

Li was telephoning when Kao opened the door. Thinking that it was the young people coming to plead again, he was on the point of snapping at them when he turned around to see Kao. Placing the receiver back on its cradle, he greeted him with a smile. "Well, Old Kao, you're here at last."

Kao ran his hand over his sweating neck. "I waited for our own college graduate," he answered cheerfully.

"Our own college graduate?" Li was bewildered.

"Quite a coincidence!" Kao laughed. "Chang Chi-hung has graduated from college and come back."

"Chang Chi-hung?" It took Li some time to recall who she was. "Oh, that young daredevil. Let's hope three years of schooling have managed to cure her of her recklessness."

Kao pulled out a bun from his pocket. Half went into his mouth in one single bite. "I like the girl's spirit," he countered laughingly. "Know what she told me as soon as she stepped off the bus? During their open-door schooling* she learned quite a bit about building floating-roof tanks. What ideas do you have about building the two tanks, Old Li? We don't have enough water to use our old water-lifting method."

Li was about Kao's age but half a head shorter. The most striking thing about his face was the furrows on his broad forehead, so deep that they seemed to have been cut out with a knife. Kao's mention of building the tanks made them wrinkle a little. "Water?" he said with a smile. "That's no problem. Engineer Chao has been working for two days and nights on a construction plan. He'll submit it pretty soon."

Surprised, Kao asked, "Engineer Chao? Hasn't he just gone to the May Seventh Cadres' School?"

*One of the main characteristics of our proletarian educational revolution is that the students take part in class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment in society for a period of time in order to integrate theory with practice,

"Oh, I called him back." Li pointed outside in high spirits. "Look how many people we have working here. If there's no one with technical know-how, we'll be in a fix. We must make good use of Engineer Chao — put the best steel on the edge of the knife, so to speak."

Kao puckered up his brows.

Remembering something, Li looked at his watch. "Goodness, I'd almost forgotten. The general headquarters is calling an emergency meeting at one o'clock. There's only fifteen minutes to go now. Old Hsin is chairing the meeting and he'll put us on the spot if we're late."

"Where is it being held?"

"In No. 1 Auditorium."

No. 1 Auditorium meant the open air — all the oil workers knew that. The meeting was to mobilize everyone before the start of the battle.

2

In front of the general headquarters, a folded tent on which two cups had been placed served as the table for the chairman of the meeting. There were no banners nor slogans. Yet the atmosphere was solemn and everyone had turned out, those at the back standing on small hillocks or trucks. Those in charge of the thirteen projects had gathered like long parted comrades-in-arms to brief each other on how their work was going.

Kao and Li arrived two minutes before the meeting started. Sitting on his safety helmet Li straightened up to get a better look and saw Hsin Kang, Party secretary of the general headquarters, discussing something with a worker. He turned to tell Kao, "When Old Hsin asks about our work, let me do the talking. You let that tongue of yours run away with you."

"Fine," Kao agreed promptly. "But show some guts when you talk."

Understanding each other perfectly, both burst out laughing.

The audience quieted down when Hsin Kang stood up on the dot and raised his hand. After looking around he announced in a booming voice, "Comrades, we are calling on you to launch a big tough battle. . . ."

Hsin Kang, although in his sixties, held himself as straight as any younger man and was fit and vigorous. Coming from a petroleum division of the army, he still had the working style and way of talking of a PLA man.

Sweeping one arm forcefully he went on, "The oil deposit under our feet is so large and rich it's an important discovery. This is going to be a high-yield oilfield — a fruit of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius and another great victory for Chairman Mao's policy of **'maintaining independence and keeping the initiative in our own hands and relying on our own efforts'**."

The audience broke into thunderous applause. In his excitement Kao pounded Li on the shoulder. "Hear that, Old Li?" he cried. "Isn't it fine?"

Wincing, Li glared at Kao and thought, "Still his old self although he's a leader now."

Kao was chuckling like a small boy.

Hsin Kang went on, "We oil workers have come to search for the gold bricks which are beckoning to us right now. The crux of the matter is whether or not we can take class struggle as the key link and work according to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line; whether or not we have the nerve to pick them up at top speed."

Hsin Kang paused, his eyes sweeping over the audience who followed the direction of his glance, knowing that he would soon be calling on the section leaders to speak.

Li glanced at Kao. Although he had just warned him off he still felt nervous.

"Who's here from the work site?" Hsin called.

Li sprang up like a jack-in-the-box.

"Your two floating-roof tanks are the keystone of the construction in its first stage," said Hsin, "Where can the oil be put if there are

no big storage tanks? The speed of your work directly affects the whole construction."

Li knew he had to say something. A habitual frown appeared on his brow as if he was pondering his superior's question though he already had his answer pat. After a while he raised his head resolutely and announced, "General headquarters can rest assured, all the staff and workers of our work site are ready to go all out."

A burst of applause made him nod complacently.

Kao could not sit still any more. However resolute Li's answer might sound, in Kao's ears it rang hollow. He protested to Li, "You can't be that non-committal concerning work, Old Li. You should say something definite."

Shrewd Hsin Kang had already seen through Li Kuang-chun. Shaking his head, he said, "You're hedging. Of course you should work hard. But what I'm asking you is whether you can finish good quality tanks on time in an economical way?"

Li threw out his chest. "Sure. If you guarantee to supply ten thousand cubic metres of water."

Kao's eyes nearly popped out with indignation. "Is that the way to solve our problem?" he thought. "By demanding help from the leadership? That won't do."

Hsin Kang laughed. "This Party secretary of yours is not a treasure-box which can supply all your needs. I still want to know what you mean to do if there's not enough water."

Li stammered, "Well. . . . As we're a key project. . . ."

Unable to keep quiet, Kao sprang up and cried, "We'll rely on the masses. We can do without water." He startled not only Li but everyone present.

Hsin Kang nodded. "Well, tell us your idea."

Stepping forward a little Kao declared, "Our workers have been putting their heads together. We'll overcome the water shortage by blazing a new trail in building the storage tanks."

"Good. That's the spirit." Hsin Kang nodded again. "Water can't hold us back when the masses are a sea of wisdom. Go on, Kao."



Kao had aroused Hsin Kang's interest as well as caught the attention of everyone present. When he brought up the air-lifting method, Li anxiously reached out to tug the back of his jacket. Kao turned to smile at him, then went on in a resonant voice, "Air-lifting needs no water, economizes on material and raises efficiency. This is just a tentative plan of ours at present, but it reflects the demands and hope of the workers."

"That's right. In our joint battle, we should stick to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line by pooling the masses' wisdom." Hsin Kang added, "I want to repeat that when we follow a correct line, every step yields results. Let's applaud the work site's spirit of

relying on the masses in blazing a new trail." Applause broke out among the audience once more. To be put on the spot like this made Li even more frantic. He was on the point of protesting when Hsin Kang called out, "The drilling team..."

While the section leaders one by one guaranteed to complete their work on schedule, a cold wind sprang up and a heavy rain began to fall, spattering the clothes of the people attending the rally. Ignoring it Hsin Kang continued talking, raising his voice above the sound of the storm.

Everybody there was concentrating so hard on catching each word Hsin Kang said that they were quite oblivious to the rain. But the hearts of all were attuned to the thunder and revolutionary storm of our times.

Li paid no attention to the rain running down his spine. For Kao's proposal, like a bolt from the blue, had completely upset his plans. He glared angrily at his old friend with whom he had worked for more than twenty years. When Li was promoted to be a team leader while Kao remained a rank-and-file welder, Li was sorry for him because Kao was a good worker and he told him his blunt way of talking had spoiled his chances. Kao had laughed sheepishly on hearing this comment. But the surging waves of the Cultural Revolution had washed this big worker into a leading post. And during the last stage of the Cultural Revolution, when Li resumed his former post he found himself working with Kao. At first all went well, but gradually they differed more and more often. Today, they were at loggerheads again.

Kao guessed what Li was thinking from his telltale face. But this was not merely a personal difference between them. Before he sprang up to speak, his mind had been busy. He had even recalled the day when the revolutionary committee was set up and Old Stony, gripping his hand, urged him, "Now that you're in a leading position, Old Kao, mind you always take the stand of the workers and act as their spokesman." When he stood up to speak just now, he seemed to see many enthusiastic workers behind him, backing him up. No, he must not give way on questions of principle. As a Party

member and secretary of the Party committee, it was his job to help Li straighten out his thinking.

Summer storms stop as abruptly as they break out. By the time the meeting ended the rain was lighter. And now the clouds were blown away by the wind and a fiery sun beat down on the earth again.

Side by side, Kao and Li slogged back through the mud. Kao soon took off his shoes and walked bare-footed while Li's shoes became two big clots of mud. But he trudged on in silence, regardless.

Kao glanced at him. "What's on your mind, Old Li?" he asked. "Better get it off your chest."

"What do you expect me to say now?" Li snapped back. "Didn't you guarantee to get the job done on time? We're not three-year-olds, Old Kao. We shouldn't let a little praise go to our heads and then go and make all sorts of promises. How can we get those tanks up without water? Can we do it with our own spittle?"

Kao patted Li on the shoulder. "Why not drop the idea of water-lifting, mate? Revolution means forging ahead, we can't trail along in the old rut all the time. Where would that lead us?"

Li shrugged. "Air-lifting isn't a new road but a blind alley, I tell you. It's never worked!"

Kao said firmly, "That's not the way to look at things. We didn't fail last time, only Engineer Chao and you forbade us even to try."

"Facts will prove that I was right to make that decision," Li retorted hoarsely. "As one of those in charge I couldn't let you make such fools of yourselves."

"Who are you calling fools?" It cost Kao an effort to control his temper. "The masses had reasons for daring to bring this up. And we're even better equipped now that we have our own college graduate. When Chang Chi-hung was having open-door education in factories she learned something about this effective, economical method. If the masses rally round to work with her, I think we can bring it off."

"Chang Chi-hung?" Li was not at all happy. He was thinking, "How can we rely on her? Haven't you heard? Sending students to factories is substituting labour for study; and college students today aren't up to the standard of the old technical secondary

schools." Aloud, he said, "Forget about her. Engineer Chao has never built such big tanks with the water-lifting method, let alone the air-lifting method — why, that's still something only in the air."

"I'm not saying Chang Chi-hung can work miracles," cut in Kao, "but we have a leading group made up of workers, cadres and technicians. And there are the broad masses of workers in our work site too. If they all work with a will, they can move Mount Tai. If the masses are united, I'm sure we can scale any hazardous heights. The key question is whether or not we have the masses in mind."

A group of boisterous youngsters now overtook them. At sight of his son, Li's face fell and he scolded, "Why are you still here?"

Ching-sheng looked at Kao and retorted confidently, "Why shouldn't I be here? Commissar Kao let us stay."

"What?" exclaimed Li. "Why humour them, Old Kao?"

Solemnly Kao countered, "More than that, Old Li. They should be encouraged."

The work site was just ahead. There, the atmosphere was as lively as at the rally. At the place where the floating-roof tanks were to be built a group of people were holding a heated discussion.

"As soon as Young Chang came back she became a good adviser to our political commissar."

"She's got the right idea. She didn't waste her time at college."

Kao took Li's arm and said impulsively, "Come! Over there are the paths for us to climb mountains and a bridge to cross the river."

Stubbornly, Li wrenched free. "We must get Engineer Chao's opinion first."

"No. This should be discussed and decided by an enlarged meeting of the Party committee."

"As you like."

Li turned abruptly and walked in the opposite direction.

3

After supper before the time set for the meeting, people began to come to the office of the Party committee. As they all knew what

the meeting was about, they began exchanging views the moment they saw each other. Their voices rose as more and more people came in and joined in the argument. Finally they broke up into groups to air their views hotly.

Kao who had come early sat at a long table in the middle of the room, his notebook open before him, listening attentively to what was being said and taking notes now and then. Now Li entered with Engineer Chao. As the meeting had not yet started, for not everyone had arrived, they both sat down opposite Kao.

Chao, who was in his fifties and very short-sighted, wore glasses with thick lenses. His eyes were bloodshot from working late for many nights in a row. Staring at his folder on the table, his chin propped on one hand, he listened quietly to the arguments with an air of aloof detachment.

Unable to contain himself any longer, Li stood up abruptly and exclaimed, "I admit that water-lifting is old and large floating-roof tanks have been built with that method before. But the fact that we're building even bigger ones means we're taking a step forward. There's nothing backward about it."

The door opened to admit Chang Chi-hung who announced clearly, "Commander Li, I've made investigations and there isn't an adequate water supply near our work site."

"Water, always harping on water!" said Li, frowning. "Haven't I told you that you don't have to worry about that? No housewife can cook without rice. When the state wants us to cook such a big meal of course we'll be given the rice. If there's not enough water we can write a report to the higher-ups."

One of the Party committee members put in, "What about subsidiary tools — winches, jibs, chain blocks and so forth?"

"Oh, I've sent in a request for those already," Li said smugly. Old Stony who was smoking in one corner knocked his pipe against his shoe and commented caustically, "I say, Old Li, why not send in a request for two ready-made floating-roof tanks?" Everyone burst out laughing.

Kao raised his hand for silence. Then placing his hand on the table he declared loudly, "The line we're following is more important than

the amount of water we have. That's the crux of the matter. This is a question of line. Just now somebody said quite correctly that even if there were enough water the masses shouldn't be stopped from blazing a new trail. But some people don't believe air-lifting is a way out. Why don't we ask Little Chang to explain it to us? Then we can discuss whether it would work or not."

Excitedly, Little Chang raised the red notebook in her hand. "Air-lifting is quite simple really," she said. "It just means substituting air for water, and we don't have to ask the higher-ups for air. All we need is a compressor. Suppose I compare it with building. Instead of building from the bottom up as we do with the water-lifting method, we'll build the top floor first, then lift it up and build the lower floor next. Not having to work high up in the air will save us a lot of trouble."

When Little Chang finished her brisk explanation, Li sneered, "It sounds very simple, doesn't it? Have you ever tried this method, Engineer Chao? Have you ever heard of it?"

Engineer Chao coughed drily. "As a scientific hypothesis it sounds quite original. But science doesn't depend on human volition. I'll make a comparison too. The roof deck is not a balloon. It's made of dozens of tons of steel."

Little Chang broke in, "We've figured it out. All we need is a strong enough air-stream plus hermetic sealing."

"More problems will arise if we do get the tanks up."

"We've thought about that too — balancing, raising, lowering and alignment. The masses have thought of various solutions."

Chao snorted. "I'm not trying to scare you. But unless you respect its laws science is quite ruthless. People may get killed. That's more serious than failing to build the tanks." He shook his head repeatedly.

Li chipped in, "Engineer Chao has worked in the scientific and technological field for dozens of years. We should pay heed to what he says." Taking over Chao's folder he patted it and said, "For two whole nights he's been working on the water-lifting method, which is safe and sure..."

Somebody commented, "But without water, it becomes an ox without legs. Can't budge an inch." Laughter broke out.

Little Chang cried, "You can't deny that air-lifting is a new method. You just won't believe that we can overcome the difficulties which may crop up, and you're unwilling to take any risks."

Angrily, Li said, "Why allow your fancy to run wild when there's a safer way of doing things? I won't let you endanger the project."

The room buzzed with comments.

"He's right. Air-lifting is risky."

"What's there to be afraid of? We must dare to scale the heights."

When the comments subsided, Kao stood up. In a firm voice he reasoned, "Making revolution is not taking unnecessary risks, but we must have daring instead of getting cold feet and holding back for fear of danger. If we stay where we are, posers will always be posers. I bet that water-lifting had to overcome many difficulties too before it came into being." Unconsciously, he glanced at Chao. "Of course we must be scientific. But who understands science best? Not a handful of experts but the broad masses who are the main force in the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment. They are the creators of science. In the past, the water-lifting method embodied the wisdom of the masses. Today, I believe, the wisdom of the masses will bring off air-lifting too. They will continue to create more new things in the future as well. This is how history including the history of science has developed."

More animated discussion took place.

"He's right."

"We'd better do nothing if we're afraid of difficulties and risks."

"I think we should try air-lifting."

Li hastily put a stop to this by saying, "Now, now. Let's start our meeting and talk it over."

"What?" Old Stony glared. "We may as well adjourn now."

All looked around. By now everyone had come and most of them had expressed their views. Although no one had declared the meeting open the discussion had been heated and successful. They burst out laughing.

The drive to solve the technical problems involved in building floating-roof tanks made vigorous headway with the support of the masses. Kao, Little Chang and Old Stony, the nucleus of the drive, were rushed off their feet. Every time the technical group held a meeting so many people dropped in that Kao decided to post a notice on the door of the canteen stating the agenda, place and time of the next meeting, adding in big characters, "Everybody is welcome."

That morning, in her tent, Chang Chi-hung was drawing blueprints for the new tanks with the pencil stub given her by Kao three years ago. Often she stopped to think, resting her temple on one hand.

The door flap of her tent was raised and a smiling face looked in. "Comrade college graduate, is Commissar Kao here?"

Turning, Little Chang laughed. "Can't you see by looking around, Ching-sheng? Why do you ask?"

Ching-sheng walked diffidently in. "Well, I also wanted to know how you're getting on."

"Don't worry." Little Chang patted the blueprints. "We'll show each draft as we finish it to you all, to solicit opinions. What do you want Commissar Kao for?"

"Business, of course." Ching-sheng blinked. Then he confided softly, "He promised to tell us stories about the Taching oilfield* before we start building our tanks."

"You asked him to do that?"

"Naturally." Ching-sheng raised his head.

Standing up, Little Chang placed a hand on his shoulder as if she were his big sister. "But can't you see, Ching-sheng, how busy he is these days? How can he attend to everything at once? He's up to his eyes in work."

"Well. . . ." Ching-sheng scratched his head.

"Suppose I tell you a story, will that do?"

*In the early sixties, when our economic construction encountered temporary difficulties, guided by Chairman Mao's directive on "Maintaining independence and keeping the initiative in our own hands and relying on our own efforts", the Taching workers built up a big modernized oilfield in less than three years. Taching has been a model in industry ever since.

Ching-sheng slapped his thigh. "Fine. But you never worked at Taching, did you?"

Little Chang batted her eyes and showed him the pencil stub. "I can tell you its story."

"Does it have a story?" he asked in surprise.

The tent quivered as Kao marched in.

They greeted him warmly.

Kao smiled at them, picked up a blueprint from the wooden boxes which served as desk and studied it carefully. Suddenly his lips parted in laughter.

"What's this big question-mark here?" he asked. "Is it a poser?"

Little Chang nodded.

"Come out and have some fresh air," he urged her. To Ching-sheng he said, "Will you go and ask your father and Engineer Chao to come to a meeting at the tank foundation?"

Ching-sheng hurried off.

As he approached Engineer Chao's wooden house, seeing the window open he called from outside, "Dad, Engineer Chao! Commissar Kao wants you to go to a meeting."

Inside, Li and Chao were talking at a table. Li dismissed his son with an impatient wave of the hand, saying, "All right."

After the boy had left, Li said to Chao, "It seems to me Old Kao's still acting the way he did in the Cultural Revolution."

Chao leaned back in his chair, his arms folded, with an air of omniscience. "I can't help that," he said. "I can't go against my scientific conscience to humour him. I objected to air-lifting in the past. I object to it now and I shan't change my mind."

Li stood up to pace the room. "Haven't you heard anything recently from your friends in Peking, Engineer Chao?"

"Yes, they say there's a new wind blowing — there's to be an all-out drive to boost production." Chao rubbed his hands excitedly. "Very encouraging!"

"Hmm." Li halted. "Seems the situation is changing."

Chao nodded in agreement. "That's a sure thing. After so many years of chaos since the Cultural Revolution, it's high time everything returned to normal."

Li sighed. "But Kao still sticks to his old way of doing things during the Cultural Revolution. He's for ever waving his arms and yelling: Charge! As if production could be raised by holding up fists and shouting slogans. . . ."

Chao sighed too. "I was criticized in those days for taking the road of bourgeois specialists."

"That shouldn't scare you," Li said. "We need specialists, be they socialist or bourgeois. It's specialization that matters. I think you should do a rush job to finish the plan for water-lifting. I'll get the necessary material." Patting the folder on the table, he added, "We'll let them go ahead with air-lifting for the time being but later on we'll save the project with this."

His spirits rising, Chao took up a pen, then frowned as he heard a sudden noise from the work site. Li slammed the window shut and pulled the curtain. The room dimmed instantly.

4

A golden ray of sunlight slanting in from the edge of the curtain fell on Chang Chi-hung's face. Jumping out of bed, she combed her hair in front of a mirror, left her tent singing happily and walked over to Kao's tent. Her hand was reaching for his door flap when she thought better of it. Commissar Kao had spent several strenuous days helping them draw up their plan. Now that it had been ratified by the general headquarters the construction of the tanks had started. That afternoon, they were going to trial lift one of them. She must not let him go to the work site to weld and hammer any more that morning. He should have a good long sleep.

Little Chang turned around and, picking her way through the piles of equipment, made for the work site. As she passed by a stack of red bricks she heard voices behind it and walking over found Kao in the middle of a group of youngsters. He had been telling them how the people in Taching ran their enterprise according to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Ching-sheng was urging him to tell them more. "Ask your father to tell you a story, Ching-sheng," suggested Kao.

Shaking his head, Ching-sheng grumbled, "Him? He'd shoo you away if you asked him, saying that our team leaders and political instructors tell such stories every day and they're printed in the papers too. Go and read them yourselves, he says."

Kao frowned. After a pause he said, "Use your brains a little. When Chairman Mao calls on us to learn from Taching, why is it that some people are no longer interested in the Taching spirit? Let's discuss this phenomenon thoroughly when we study the theories of proletarian dictatorship this evening."

The young people started airing their views right away. Kao sat down beside a stack of bricks and listened with narrowing eyes. Soon, his eyes closed completely and he dozed off with a smile on his face. Little Chang was touched. She was on the point of reminding the youngsters to lower their voices when Ching-sheng turned to address him. Quickly, Little Chang shushed him, pointing to Kao.

The youngsters fell silent, respect in all their eyes as they looked at their sleeping political commissar. Then one by one they slipped away to the work site.

Kao's face had grown thinner. Little Chang turned towards the floating-roof tanks and left him there to sleep.

Like two huge iron rings laid on the ground, side by side in one corner of the work site were the foundations of two enormous tanks, so huge that they took fifty men with outstretched arms to encircle them. The sides had been welded to over the height of a man, to heighten them further air-lifting would be needed. Dozens of welding rods were sputtering golden sparks. Their hissing combined with the roar of the welding sets to make a deafening din, even when someone stood more than ten metres away.

Li Kuang-chun drove up no closer than this in a truck. Laying down her hammer and wiping her sweat, Little Chang walked over only to find that the materials being unloaded from the truck were the scaffolding, jibs and chain blocks needed for water-lifting.

Fanning himself with his helmet, Li told the driver, "Hurry up and bring over the rest as soon as possible. Otherwise, if they change

their minds I'll have to do a lot more talking. Oh, Little Chang, can you spare some men from the tanks?"

She shook her head.

Frowning, Li looked at the tanks under construction. "It's hard to tell whether air-lifting will work or not," he said. "Can't rely solely on that. Have to walk on two legs, so to speak, to be ready for all eventualities."

Little Chang glanced at him disapprovingly, thinking, "The air-lifting method was decided on at the enlarged Party committee meeting. Why make preparations for water-lifting too?"

"How are you getting on?" Li asked casually, climbing up a ladder at the side of a tank. Little Chang followed him. The roof deck placed in the ring was 30 metres in diameter and divided into about a dozen compartments. The only entrance to each of these compartments was a manhole. Dense smoke and hot air were now billowing out from these manholes while several welders were working on top of the roof deck too.

Li smacked his lips, thinking, "Quick work. Let's see if it's up to standard." He walked up to a welder, squatted down beside him and knocked away the slag to reveal a fine, neat bead. Satisfied, he patted the welder on the shoulder, saying loudly, "Not bad, mate."

Little Chang burst out laughing.

The welder raised his head and took off his helmet, disclosing a sweaty round face. Li gaped foolishly when he saw it was his son Ching-sheng.

Straightening up, Ching-sheng thumped his chest. "Am I up to those 'picked troops' you talk about, dad?"

"You! . . ." Li bit off the retort which was on the tip of his tongue while Ching-sheng laughed gleefully.

Li turned to ask Little Chang, "Where's Old Kao?"

Hesitantly, she replied, "What do you want him for? He's having a nap over there."

The wrinkles on Li's brow deepened as he thought, "Really, Kao! You were the one who insisted on this air-lifting, yet when the crunch comes you let things take their own course."

Little Chang guessed from his expression what was in his mind. Disgusted she turned to descend.

But just then Ching-sheng walked up to one of the manholes and hammered three times, shouting, "Come out, Commissar Kao. You've been in there an hour already."

Startled, Little Chang hurried to the spot. Acrid smoke and gusts of hot air belched out of the manhole followed by a steaming, dripping head completely begrimed and blackened. Then Kao raised himself with an effort halfway out. He was covered with rust, his old canvas overalls half soaked with sweat. He put out three fingers to indicate to them that he had welded all but three joints.

Even Li was moved. In this hot weather, with the heat from so many welding rods, the steel plate he was standing on was scalding. The temperature must be much higher in the small compartments where the welders had to work in cramped, awkward positions. A slightly-built youngster like Ching-sheng could stick it out there only half an hour at the most.

"Commissar Kao, you didn't sleep then?" Little Chang felt a lump in her throat.

"I did for a while," said Kao as he climbed out.

"Commissar Kao, you..." Ching-sheng pointed with dismay at his chest.

Kao patted Ching-sheng with his brawny hand. "What do you take me for? I'm heftier than you, but I can go in and out just as well."

"I'm not letting you go in there again," muttered the boy as he jumped grimly into the manhole.

Although Kao made so light of the matter, Little Chang saw that not only were his overalls charred at his chest but he had several burns on his neck as well. Her eyes brimming with tears, she snatched up the welding rod Ching-sheng had put down and set to work with a will. Molten iron splattered the steel plate as her heart burned even more hotly.

Kao and Li walked around the roof deck before descending one after the other. Taking Kao to where there was less noise Li told

him, "I've got the equipment for water-lifting. Won't you think it over again?"

Biting his lips, Kao replied, "We're trying out air-lifting this afternoon."

The furrows on Li's forehead deepened.

"Your way of looking at the two different methods is wrong, Old Li," Kao told him earnestly.

"Just because I don't agree to air-lifting?" Li smiled sardonically.

"No. This isn't simply a choice between different methods, it's a question of what road we're following, on whom we're relying and how we're running the enterprise. Are we running it according to the revolutionary or the revisionist line?" Kao jerked his head at a steel plate, indicating that he wanted Li to help carry it to the work site.

Taken aback, Li shook his head and smiled wryly, then turning round, picked up one end of the steel plate. But when he tried to move off he could not budge and, turning his head, he saw that he and Kao were facing in opposite directions. At once he turned round. As they moved towards the tanks he told Kao, "I don't want to argue. But I want to remind you, Old Kao, that as leading cadres we must keep abreast of the times. There's a lot of talk going round. Hasn't it reached your ears? The stress now is all on the 'four modernizations'* which means that enterprises must be well run. I think this point should be stressed. And running an enterprise means raising production. It's not like holding a mass criticism meeting, where everybody can get up and have his say. That kind of working style should be changed."

"One...two." They laid the steel plate down. Kao turned around. "Changed? How should it be changed? There is a new wind blowing, but is it an east wind or a west wind? We must give that some thought. What's the way to run an enterprise well? Different classes have different criteria for that."

*The modernization of agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology.

"Are you implying I belong to a different class?" Li's lips quivered. "I know which class I belong to. Facts will prove which of us is right, which wrong." With an angry sweep of his arms he went off to a production meeting in the general headquarters.

That gave Kao food for thought. He recalled how Li had suppressed the workers' attempts to try out air-lifting before the Cultural Revolution. Then his mind flashed back to the tumultuous years of the Cultural Revolution, after which he considered the ill wind which had recently been fanned up in the country. It seemed to him that the Cultural Revolution had not come to an end. A severe struggle was impending. His blood boiled as he watched Li's retreating figure. When Little Chang called him he didn't even hear.

"Are we trying air-lifting this afternoon, Commissar Kao?" she repeated, raising her voice.

"Sure. That's for certain," he answered through clenched teeth.

Kao's flaming eyes and agitated expression startled Little Chang. What's come over him? she wondered.

That afternoon workers and cadres came from nearby work sites to watch the trial lifting. The production meeting of the general headquarters adjourned, all those attending it—except Old Hsin who was busy—coming to watch. People crowded around one tank.

"Make way, please!" Ching-sheng and a few other young men squeezed in with a drum and gongs.

Dozens of welding sets hummed. At one-metre intervals all around the tank stood workers with welding rods and hammers, ready to tack weld as soon as the tank was lifted to the prescribed height.

Kao, Old Stony, Little Chang, Li who had returned from general headquarters, and Engineer Chao who had been fetched by Kao formed an inspection team which inspected the workers at their posts then crawled into the tank through the air duct. Placed on blocks of wood a metre above the ground, the roof deck looked like a huge piston on the tank. It was pitch dark inside. Kao switched on his flashlight. Here workers stood around the wall too. A telephone

had been installed in the middle to make contact with those outside when the blowing started.

After the inspection, Kao tried the telephone and then solicited Li's and Chao's opinions. Chao, who had come against his will, had no interest in this trial. He had trailed along with the others, taking only cursory glances at the preparations, so naturally he had no opinions to offer. Li's inspection was meticulous, especially concerning safety measures about which he had plenty to say. Now that he was powerless to prevent this trial, his main concern was safety.

When they came out Kao thrust the signal flag into Little Chang's hand and said to her, "Here you are." She was to direct operations.

"What? . . ." Little Chang gaped.

Kao looked encouragingly at her. "If we dare to build a tank as big as this one, you must have the courage to command." He crawled into the tank.

"All right." The girl jumped excitedly on to the command platform. The flag in one hand she picked up the telephone receiver and cried, "Hello, Commissar Kao. Shall we begin?"

"Yes!" Kao's resonant voice was heard over the phone. With hundreds of eyes gazing at her, Little Chang waved the flag.

The compressor revved. A great blast of air entered the tank. At once the outflow from beneath the tank whipped up the sand and gravel all around. The workers, sand swirling in their faces, held their welding rods and hammers ready.

Li's eyes were fixed on the roof deck. After lifting ever so slightly it sank back and lay still.

One minute, two minutes. . . .

"How are things inside, Commissar Kao?" Little Chang shouted into the phone. There was no answer. Beads of sweat rolled down her cheeks.

"Commissar Kao! Kao!"

"Stop! Stop the compressor!" Li frantically stamped his foot.

Almost simultaneously a worker's voice was heard over the phone. "We're all OK in here. Commissar Kao says stop the compressor."

When the compressor was turned off a buzz of comments broke

out. Jumping down from the command platform Little Chang disappeared into the tank.

A great weight lifted from his mind, Li heaved a sigh of relief and fished a cigarette out of his pocket. As he was about to light it, he looked up and met Engineer Chao's eyes. Returning the cigarette to his case Li called, "Will you come over, Engineer Chao?"

5

"What did I tell you? I knew how it would end. Although I'm not one to boast, having managed production for ten years and more I could at least foresee the result of this attempt. Good thing the tank was not lifted. If it had tipped and killed a few men, Kao would have been in big trouble." Sitting in the office, Li rapped his desk irately with the knuckle of his middle finger.

Chao chipped in, "What can you do with people who defy the laws of science?" He drew on his cigarette. "Not that we want to bet or compete with him."

"You're right," agreed Li. "Otherwise we wouldn't lift a finger to help now. But we're responsible to our country. Now that they've found themselves in a blind alley we'll build the tanks with the water-lifting method."

Chao nodded. "I'm afraid Kao will be stubborn."

"I'll not humour him this time even if he's more stubborn than the god of heaven or the dragon king." Li pounded the desk with a fist. "You go and notify Kao to dismantle the air-lifting equipment while I'll get Old Hsin. Wait for us if Kao won't comply." He went hastily to the general headquarters.

Chao arrived at the tank as Kao and the others emerged from the air duct, all covered with dust. They were immediately encircled by those waiting outside.

"Why did you stay so long in there, Commissar Kao? What happened?"

"What's our next step? We're waiting for your directions."

In high spirits Kao said, "Wait a bit. We had a little discussion in there just now. We'll solicit your opinions in a minute."

Engineer Chao walked over. Softly he said to Kao, "We'll find time to summarize the lesson we've learned later, Commissar Kao. Right now we're pressed for time. Commander Li says we must dismantle all the air-lifting equipment right away."

The masses exploded.

"Dismantle the equipment? What are you trying to do?"

"You're holding up the battle for the oilfield."

Ching-sheng elbowed his way forward. Pointing at Chao, he said, "You're a queer sort, hiding in your office when everybody else is fighting to bring air-lifting off. But now you bounce out to demand that air-lifting be called off."

Blood rising to his face, Chao stretched out both hands, palms upward. "I didn't call it off — it ended in failure."

"You're wrong there, Engineer Chao. Far from failing, the air-lifting has succeeded." Chao turned to meet Kao's resolute, solemn eyes. Waving his arm Kao announced in a loud voice, "Comrades, we made an analysis just now in the tank and found that we need stronger wind and better sealing. If we conquer these two problems, air-lifting is sure to succeed. Ching-sheng, beat the drum — we're on the road to victory."

"Right." Snatching up the drum-sticks Ching-sheng beat hard. The clamour of the drum and gongs filled the air.

Chao shouted hoarsely, "Don't persist in your error, Commissar Kao. Believe me, I'm out to help you be more scientific."

Kao replied coldly, "I can't accept this help of yours. You want me to give up my belief that history is made by slaves, a basic tenet of Marxism-Leninism, and surrender to your view that history is made by heroes."

"You!" Chao turned pale with anger. Pointing at Kao with a trembling finger he cried, "You're too arrogant. It's true I was criticized in the Cultural Revolution. You were a rebel then, now you're high and mighty. But I still earn my living with my technical know-how." He turned away in a rage.

"Halt!" Old Stony sprang up like a tiger, his eyes burning with indignation. He would have rushed up to stop Chao if Kao hadn't restrained him.

Stamping his foot in fury, Ching-sheng shouted, "Why did you let him go? If you can swallow his attacks, we can't. We should have it out with him."

"No, that wasn't a personal attack," replied Kao. "And he isn't the only one who opposes us."

"I know. He has the support of my father." Ching-sheng's boyish face was grave. "My father hasn't changed a bit for all the criticism the masses gave him in the Cultural Revolution."

"Your father isn't at the bottom of this either, Ching-sheng. The fact is an ill wind has sprung up to negate the Cultural Revolution."

Looking around, Kao raised his voice to declare, "Comrades, the struggle ahead of us is not just a dispute over what method to use, nor is it a contradiction between individuals. It's a struggle for power between different classes, involving the question of what line to follow. It is another upsurge of the Cultural Revolution."

Deeply stirred, Little Chang took the pencil stub from her pocket and walked up to Ching-sheng. Slowly she said, "Let me tell you its story now, Ching-sheng. All right?"

Ching-sheng was bewildered.

Kao nodded gravely. "Go ahead. Tell it to everyone."

Little Chang turned to the crowd. In a voice full of emotion she recounted, "Comrades, before the Cultural Revolution, in one concerted battle, Commissar Kao, my master Old Shih and several other workers submitted a plan for air-lifting to speed up construction. But our present commander, Li, without so much as glancing at it said, 'Nonsense! If you can draw up plans, what's the use of engineers and experts?' Throwing this pencil stub on to the floor, Engineer Chao jeered, 'Try if you can lift this pencil.' That was how they suppressed the proposal of the workers. And that project finished three weeks late. . . ."

"When I went to college Commissar Kao told me this story and gave me the pencil stub, saying, 'Be a good proletarian fighter and occupy the position of higher education.' When I came back after graduation, Commissar Kao asked me as soon as he saw me, 'Have you heard any strange talk?' 'Yes,' I said. 'Some people are saying the level of the worker-peasant-soldier students is too low. I want to do a

good job to prove them wrong.' 'It's not a question of level,' said Commissar Kao. 'When we get to the root of it, the overthrown class is fighting to make a come-back.' Well, I've seen that today for myself. We of the working class must hold our position firmly for ever and ever!"

A bright sun lit up the work site, and the hearts of everybody there were ablaze.



At dusk, when the production meeting at the general headquarters ended, Li wanted to have a talk with Old Hsin; but the latter had gone straight off on a tour of inspection without so much as having a drink of water. So Li found the head of the co-ordination department who, after much persuasion, promised to report what had happened to Old Hsin. After reiterating how urgent this was, Li left with a spring in his step. "Have you thought better of it now, Old Kao?" he wondered. "Or are you still clinging stubbornly to your mistake?" He went straight towards the tanks.

All around the tank people were hard at work, shovelling and tamping earth. Others were tinkering with the compressor. This unexpected sight set Li fuming again.

Ching-sheng spotted his father first. Putting down the hammer in his hand, he walked over to tell him, "We've found out why we weren't able to lift the roof deck the first time. We've worked out how to handle it now. Old Shih's idea of sealing the bottom with clay is simple and effective and..."

He wanted to tell his father the good news in as few words as possible, to make him realize that it was wrong to oppose the air-lifting method.

"Seal it with clay? Nonsense. We're not making clay figurines." Turning away from his son, Li shouted, "Old Kao! Where's Old Kao?"

Kao, his face and hands smudged, stood up from beside the compressor.

Li strode over. "Old Kao! Why must you insist on this air-lifting business, Old Kao? It passes my understanding."

Calmly Kao retorted, "Your question should be why don't I follow your political line of letting experts run our enterprise."

This was hitting Li where it hurt. The resentment pent up in him for years erupted in an angry explosion. "What! Again? Let experts run our enterprise! Well, who do they run it for?" he almost screamed. "They run it for the country, the four modernizations, and the concerted battle! And they're the ones who should! Don't think that everything before the Cultural Revolution was wrong."

The masses crowded around indignantly.

"What kind of talk is this!"

"He's trying to negate the Cultural Revolution."

Controlling his emotion with an effort, Kao said slowly to Li, "Was that how you looked at the Cultural Revolution when you made a self-examination in front of thousands of people a few years ago?"

"He acts one way to your face and another behind your back." Squeezing through the crowd, Ching-sheng pointed at his father. "As soon as he got home after making that self-criticism he said that the masses had misunderstood his good intentions."

Solemnly Kao said, "Being a Communist, Comrade Li Kuang-chun, you should have a correct attitude towards the Cultural Revolution, the masses and yourself. The Cultural Revolution was a class struggle to overthrow and discredit everything revisionist. We'll never allow bourgeois ideas to take command again. It's good neither for you nor for the revolution if you hang your head during a movement but afterwards put on your old airs again. We won't allow you to turn back to the old road. If you try, we'll struggle against you to the end."

Without so much as a glance at Li, Old Stony walked up to Kao and told him, "The compressor has been fixed."

"Get ready for the next trial!" Still fuming inwardly, Little Chang flashed the signal flag. The workers rushed off to man their respective posts.

Little Chang walked over to the compressor and waved the flag to have the current switched on. She had chosen to watch the compressor as its revolving speed had been increased. For fear of an accident Kao moved to her side. "Let me do the watching, Little Chang."

"No." Tears of excitement in her eyes, she persisted, "Give the order, Commissar Kao."

Knowing he could not dissuade this fiery girl, Kao shouted, "Switch on the current."

As Old Stony reached out his hand Li shoved him aside, blocking the switch with his body. His chest heaving with rage, his face con-

torted, he cried, "I forbid this! What are you trying to do? Have you all gone crazy? I can't let you ruin the concerted battle."

Chao appeared beside Li. The corners of his mouth twitching, he shouted, "Well, well! The commander's orders have to be obeyed!"

Kao marched over. This hefty fellow with a blazing temper could easily have pushed them both aside. Instead, he stared calmly at them for several minutes before saying slowly, "You're not just out to stop air-lifting. No, you want to topple the working class so that we all become the slaves of you 'heroes' again. Let me tell you something. Our country and our enterprises were won with the sweat and blood of the working class. It's the workers who are the masters, who can run their own country and their own enterprises. Other comrades are welcome to join in their work but they aren't allowed, no matter on what pretext, to grab state power or power over our enterprises."

"Well said!" a resonant voice cried from the crowd. Old Hsin had arrived unnoticed some time ago. Elbowing his way forward, he said, "The four modernizations have to be realized but no one is allowed to negate the Cultural Revolution and turn back the wheel of history on the pretext of carrying out modernization."

Kao turned to Li. "Didn't you tell me there's a new wind blowing? Let it blow. It won't hurt us. Neither can it stop us from continuing the revolution. Our working class is upholding the red flag and forging ahead through the storms of class struggle."

Little Chang tossed the pencil stub at Chao's feet. "Do you want to throw this pencil in our faces again? To put the clock back, Engineer Chao? Can't be done!"

Old Hsin gripped Kao's hand. "I've come to see how you do the air-lifting, Old Kao."

Kao grasped his hands. Then he shouted, "Start the compressor!"

Old Stony gravely switched on the current. As the compressor roared, the roof deck lurched and rose up with the huge tank on it. The next second, from the circumference of the tank came the sounds of hammering while dozens of welding rods spurted golden flames.

The tank having left the ground loomed proudly on high. Wild applause broke out. . . .

Silently Li squeezed out from among the joyful crowd and walked towards the office. The din of the gongs and drum seemed to be pounding on his heart and lungs. He could hardly believe in the scene he had just witnessed. Suddenly he fell flat on his face, tripped up by one of the jibs he had brought to the site.

Gritting his teeth, he scrambled up rubbing his bruises. A big hand helped him up. He turned and saw Kao Chien-yeh with a grave-faced Old Hsin behind him.

One beautiful sunlit morning more than a fortnight later, exciting news was broadcast by the general headquarters: The workers and staff of the work site had finished the two floating-roof tanks in only seventeen days, becoming the vanguard in the first stage of the concerted battle. And this had ensured the completion ahead of time of all the thirteen projects.

Looking at the vast new oilfield, we saw it criss-crossed with new asphalt roads like a chess-board with the cream-coloured sheds housing Christmas trees as chess-pieces. Derricks rose into the clouds while pipelines extended over rivers and dykes. The two floating-roof tanks stood like two grand high-rise buildings on the grassland. The oil which had been buried underground for tens of millions of years was gushing out with tremendous force. The second stage of the concerted battle was starting. A big convoy of trucks was advancing now towards another new oilfield.

Illustrated by Hsiao Ying-chuan

A Sixth Sense

Some people say that a ping-pong player needs a sixth sense. For only one with a sixth sense has quick reactions and can tell how the ball coming over the net has been cut and whether it will swerve to the left or right.

Ling Yao, sports teacher and vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of Huangshan Primary School, believed that children with this sixth sense were the smartest, and that Yuan-tan who played table-tennis with his left hand was just such a boy. When Yuan-tan was told to coach his classmates in ping-pong he would simply demonstrate how to hold the bat and hit the ball, then say, "All right. Go ahead and practise. It's practice that makes a good player." After that he would leave them to concentrate on his own training.

Another boy called Ming-ming was different. When he coached other children he went through every single motion with them, so that he often had no time to practise himself. Yuan-tan frequently advised him, "You should play with people who are better than you are; that's what Teacher Ling says. If you just practise with begin-

ners, how can you improve?" But Ming-ming didn't see eye to eye with him. Once he let a ping-pong player from a rival school, Taishan Primary School, watch his game for a long time until the other boy learned the knack of the "top spin" for which Ming-ming was noted. Ling Yao scolded Ming-ming for this but praised Yuan-tan for his smartness. Both boys were on the school team.

But Tang, vice-head of the workers' propaganda team sent to help run this school, took a different view of the matter. He said, "A player must have a good basic training, and the most important basic training is ideological. In this respect Ming-ming's better than Yuan-tan. If we don't watch out, young Yuan-tan may take the wrong road, the one advocated by Tsui Ta."

Tsui Ta had been the headmaster of their school before the Cultural Revolution. Because he carried out a revisionist line he was criticized by the whole school and transferred to another job. When Ling Yao heard Tang's remark he laughed and said, "Impossible. What a fantastic notion!"

One day in May, seven or eight children marched in orderly formation along a tree-lined avenue. They were the table-tennis team of Huangshan School on their way to Taishan School to play a friendly match. Behind them came Tang and Ling Yao, the latter in high spirits, his sports teacher's whistle hanging round his neck. Suddenly he called loudly, "Let's have a song. And put pep into it!"

As the children started singing at the top of their voices, Ling Yao glanced at Tang beside him. Normally Tang would have joined in the singing but today he seemed lost in thought, his lips clamped together. In the chequered shade cast by the trees his face looked rather grim.

Tang was a worker nearing forty from a bean-curd plant. Soon after coming to this school, in addition to helping with the administration he made time to play ping-pong with the children. He said to Yuan-tan, "Come on, you teach me. I'd like to play with my left hand too." Before long he became pretty good at it, sometimes even beating Yuan-tan. A few days before this, Ling Yao had been notified by the municipality that the city was choosing a table-tennis team made up of workers to go abroad, and they wanted Tang to take part

in the tournament. Ling Yao had the impression that Tang had been a good player but recently his playing seemed to have gone off. He passed the notice to Tang, eyeing the latter's left hand in a puzzled way. Tang seemed to sense Ling's unasked question, but he simply smiled and said, "I'm no good now. Too old to compete with those youngsters."

Tang was knocked out in the second round of this tournament and therefore not selected for the team. People felt sorry for him but also wondered, remembering that he had played much better before. The fact is he used to play with his right hand. But when he saw Yuan-tan playing with his left hand, he had decided to use his left hand too, to bring more variety into his game. That was why he had made the switch and spent quite a bit of time practising with Yuan-tan.

As Tang got to know Yuan-tan better, he sensed something not quite right in the boy's way of thinking. One day, Yuan-tan's class went to learn from the workers in Tang's bean-curd plant. Tang was back in the plant working with the others that day. When Yuan-tan saw Tang in a vest and apron, sweating as he added lye to the boiling bean-milk, he called out in surprise, "Master Tang, is this the kind of job you do?" Startled by the boy's reaction Tang wondered: Why does he feel like this? In the future when he becomes an athlete will he play ping-pong for the revolution or from some selfish motives? So he answered gravely, "Yuan-tan, this job's very important. I'm adding lye to curdle the bean-milk, so as to produce all sorts of bean-curd. The quality of our products depends on this process."

On Tang's way back from that tournament in the city, he passed a market-place next to Huangshan School and noticed a cook who was frying bean-curd there suddenly clap the lid on his pan and exclaim, "Hey! Where's all this dust coming from?"

Another cook looked up and said, "It's blown over from the school."

Tang looked up too and saw a dustpan on a window-sill on the third floor pouring rubbish down to a dustbin below. Some of the dust had been blown towards the market-place.

Tang ran into the school and knocked into Yuan-tan, who was rushing out followed by the monitor of his class. The latter complained to Tang, "He always disappears when it's his turn to clean up. This time we caught him but he told another boy, 'You sweep the floor for me and I'll teach you how to serve in ping-pong.' He emptied rubbish out of the window too."

"Why should I have to sweep the floor?" cut in Yuan-tan resentfully. "Teacher Ling's told me to practise more and not take part in other activities because we'll soon be playing Taishan School for the championship, and I'm our chief player."

While listening to this, Tang watched the boy's expression and it struck him that Yuan-tan already considered himself a cut above others. He himself had come with the workers' propaganda team to help this school with the revolution in education. Apart from organizing criticism meetings and introducing reforms, their main task was to train these youngsters to be worthy successors to the revolution. The Party expected him to do his job here just as well as he had in the bean-curd plant. So he said sternly, "Yuan-tan, if you look down on manual labour and just concentrate on improving your game, you'll never become a really good ping-pong player."

This incident caused a lot of talk. Many of the children said Yuan-tan wasn't fit to represent the school in the coming match. Ling Yao was worried. He thought: Why make such a fuss over a trifle? This boy Yuan-tan's smart, with quick reactions, a promising player. How can we drop him from the team? So he went to see Tang and said, "This time he was wrong and I shall criticize him, but we must still let him play. After all he's our school's 'secret weapon'. He may very well turn into a first-rate player."

Now Huangshan School had had two "secret weapons": Ming-ming and Yuan-tan. But as Ming-ming had let the rival school know of his top spin, Ling Yao no longer considered him a "secret weapon". Yuan-tan, however, had never revealed his best strokes because for a long time Ling Yao had not let him take part in important matches outside.

Hearing this, Tang realized why Yuan-tan felt so cocky. He decided he must disarm this "secret weapon".

To Ling Yao's surprise, Tang said nothing about the dustpan emptied out of the window. Instead, he cited various examples of good sportsmanship which he had noticed in the tournament. In conclusion he said, "Now everywhere on the sports front people are criticizing the wrong tendency of putting the winning of medals before everything else, at the expense of sportsmanship. We must catch up with this movement too. I suggest that tomorrow, before our final match with Taishan School, we have a friendly contest with them to exchange experience. How about it?"

This proposal did not please Ling Yao at all. But since Tang had worded it in such a way, he did not want to make it seem that he was all for winning medals. He therefore had to agree.

The next day when they set out for this friendly contest, Tang was puzzled to see that Ling Yao appeared in high spirits, whereas the day before he had looked worried. This was what made him so thoughtful on the way.

Then he glanced at Yuan-tan in front. The boy had a notebook in one hand and a big towel over his shoulder, as if he had come not to play but to help other players. This was certainly unusual, for normally Yuan-tan never liked to carry anything for the team. So as soon as the singing stopped, Tang stepped up to the boy and asked, "What strokes do you plan to teach them presently?"

With a quick glance at Ling Yao, Yuan-tan replied, "I shall do my best to learn from them."

This answer only confirmed Tang's suspicions that Ling Yao was up to something. And he noticed now that the boy had not brought his ping-pong bat with him! As if he had suddenly remembered something, Tang halted and told Ling Yao, "The rest of you go ahead. I want to go back to fetch something. I'll join you later."

The fact is that after agreeing to this friendly contest Ling Yao had been distinctly worried. If Yuan-tan's best strokes became known before the finals, they might not be able to beat the other school. So he said to himself: Why not just go and size up the other team without showing our own strength? He had heard that one of the Taishan School team used a tennis-grip instead of the pen-holder grip favoured by most Chinese players, and that boy might prove a formi-

dable opponent to Yuan-tan. Laughing up his sleeve Ling Yao thought: How could I be so dense? Why didn't I think of this earlier? Then he told Yuan-tan not to take his ping-pong bat with him, thinking that even if Tang caught on it would be too late to do more than criticize them. As Tang walked back he said cheerfully, "Let's sing another song: *The Little Ping-Pong Ball*. Ready! Go!"

Teacher Wang, the coach of Taishan School's table-tennis team, knew Ling Yao very well. When he saw him he said cordially, "Old Ling, that was a fine proposal of yours — to exchange experience with us before the finals."

Ling Yao mumbled some polite response, but from time to time eyed Yuan-tan, warning him to keep away. So the boy sat down in an inconspicuous spot. When play started he concentrated on watching the boy with the tennis-grip. Ming-ming, not knowing Ling Yao's plot, went over presently to Yuan-tan to take the towel to wipe his face. He asked in surprise, "Why aren't you playing? Why haven't you changed?"

Yuan-tan grinned. "That's none of your business."

Ling Yao, sitting behind Yuan-tan, signed to Ming-ming to stop asking questions.

Just then Teacher Wang of the other school came over. "I've heard you've a good left-hander," he said to Ling. "Why isn't he playing today?"

"A good left-hander?" Ling hedged, then chuckled. "Who told you that?" As Wang did not pursue the subject he hoped to let the matter drop, but seeing Ming-ming on the point of speaking he hastily pointed at Yuan-tan and said, "Well, here he is. Right in front of you. Yuan-tan, say 'hullo' to Teacher Wang."

Ming-ming left as Yuan-tan stood up politely to greet Teacher Wang. Then he said with a sudden show of consternation, "*Aiya!* I've forgotten my bat!"

Ling Yao pulled a long face. "You little rascal!" he scolded. "How could you be so careless? Missing a good chance like this to learn from others! Does a soldier forget his rifle in a battle?"

Yuan-tan listened in sheepish silence. And Wang, to console him, suggested, "We've some pretty good bats, why not use one of ours?"

Yuan-tan shook his head vigorously. "See?" cut in Ling Yao. "He's too pig-headed to use any bat but his own. It's really too bad, too bad."

As Wang was about to leave them, disappointed, someone behind him said, "Here's Yuan-tan's bat." It was Tang who had hurried back from fetching it in time to see the act put on by Ling Yao and Yuan-tan.

He cast an angry glance at Ling and thought: Is this the way to train youngsters? How can a teacher working for the Party encourage such wrong ideas? Handing the bat to Yuan-tan he told him sternly, "Remember! You must stick to the right political orientation. Playing for selfish motives will get you nowhere."

Yuan-tan thought resentfully, "In ping-pong it's skill that counts. What has politics got to do with it?" He changed his clothes then and went off reluctantly with Teacher Wang to play.

As Tang sat down on the seat vacated by Yuan-tan and watched the boy's receding figure, he had a mental picture of another boy, Pi-pi, who had been just as good a player as Yuan-tan. Soon he was deep in thought.

A burst of clapping aroused him. He saw that Yuan-tan and the boy who used the tennis-grip were about to have a game. Tang turned to watch them.

Yuan-tan had been elated on hearing applause. He threw back his head, a smug look on his face, then glanced at Ling Yao for his "remote control".

Sitting behind Tang, Ling gestured with his right hand as if tossing up a ball, then shook his other hand vigorously in disapproval.

Yuan-tan caught on at once. He had a trick in serving of tossing the ball high in the air then smashing it as it was coming down, which made it hard for his opponent to return the ball. He nodded to show that he understood and would not use this service.

But Tang, who had noticed this, turned his head abruptly.

Ling Yao, caught unawares with both hands raised, at once made a show of clapping. More sure than ever that something fishy

was going on, Tang remarked sarcastically, "He seems to understand your every gesture."

The two players were well-matched and it was a good game. Yuan-tan used his head and played skilfully, sending the ball first into one corner and then into another of his opponent's side of the table, while the boy with the tennis-grip returned each stroke coolly and calmly. Usually those who use the tennis-grip prefer bats faced with rubber-topped sponge on both sides; but as this boy's bat had them on one side only, Yuan-tan never knew how hard each stroke would be and often lobbed his return too high or too far. In this way he fell a few points behind his opponent. Had he now used his special serve he could have got even; but he deliberately refrained, as if he had no such trick up his sleeve. Tang realized then what Ling Yao had been signalling. He thought: How can you do such a thing, Ling Yao? Sports are an important means of training youngsters as successors to our revolutionary cause. But what you're doing is like hoarding and speculation in capitalist business. Are you trying to cheat the Party and the people?

Ling Yao had never guessed that the boy with the tennis-grip would use a bat faced with sponge on one side only. He told himself: We must find a way to cope with that; otherwise when the finals are played we'll suffer for it. It's lucky I tipped off Yuan-tan so that he still has a trump-card up his sleeve — his special service.

A sudden cry rose from the crowd as Yuan-tan tossed the ball several feet high then leaned sidewise waiting for it to come down.

Ling Yao nearly exclaimed in dismay.

The next second Yuan-tan, with a clever flick of his wrist, sent the ball spinning over the net. His opponent, trying to return it, hit it off the table.

The onlookers cheered. And when Yuan-tan served again in the same way, winning another point, they applauded wildly.

Yuan-tan raised his head proudly. While deliberately avoiding Ling Yao's eyes he was looking at someone else who had just come in. This was a man in his late twenties, a tall strapping fellow wearing an open-necked blue and red track suit. One could see at a glance that he was a professional coach. This man seemed to be

searching for someone, and as soon as he spotted Tang his face lit up. Tang saw him by following the direction of Yuan-tan's eyes and thought he looked familiar. Could it be Pi-pi? He paid no attention, however, as he was more interested in Yuan-tan's behaviour. Why had the boy disclosed that serve of his against Ling Yao's instructions? Had it anything to do with this new arrival?

Tang's guess was correct. Because Huangshan School had become well-known for its high standard of table-tennis in recent years, professional coaches often went there in search of young talent. Whenever one came Ling Yao would signal secretly to the players to do their best, so gradually some of the youngsters had developed a sort of sixth sense about it. Yuan-tan had used his special serve to impress this newcomer. For six months ago when a coach came to their school to select good young players he had sprained his ankle, and although he wanted to play all the same Ling Yao stopped him, promising, "You'll have plenty of chances later." Now Yuan-tan felt his chance had come, and he promptly seized it. Ling Yao, not having noticed the coach's arrival, was worried because now the other school knew about their "secret weapon".

As Yuan-tan prepared to serve in the same way a third time, Tang suddenly sprang to his feet and shouted, "Stop!"

Thinking Tang had some instructions for him, Yuan-tan started towards him; but instead Tang beckoned to the other boy.

Tang whispered something to him, then took his bat and made a few motions with it, after which he sat down again. All present were puzzled. However, when the other boy successfully returned Yuan-tan's next service, they realized that Tang had explained to him how to do so. At once loud applause broke out.

Ling Yao was angry and frantic. The thought uppermost in his mind was: Yuan-tan is finished. He leapt up exclaiming to Tang, "But look, why don't they tell us how to cope with that boy's special bat?" He raised his whistle to his lips intending to stop the game.

Tang felt the time had come to speak to him seriously. Pushing Ling Yao back on to his seat he demanded, "Are we playing ping-pong on a commercial basis?"



Glancing at Yuan-tan who was now badly flustered, he went on earnestly, "Look, what are you training Yuan-tan into? He thinks himself superior to other children, refuses to work with his hands, and has no sense of sportsmanship. All this is no accident. Comrade, our own world outlook is influencing the boys all the time. We're responsible for their future, for the way they turn out, and for whether or not they carry on the revolutionary cause. The Party has given us the important task of educating the young. We must live up to the Party's trust and not act from mixed personal motives."

Ling Yao felt his head in a whirl. He asked himself: What personal motives have I? I'm working for the honour of the school!

By now Yuan-tan was completely demoralized, thinking: This time I'm done for. What coach will pick me now? It's all Tang's fault. Finally he lost to the other boy by eight points. The winner came over after the game to shake hands, but Yuan-tan threw his bat away and rushed out in tears.

Ming-ming picked up the bat and started after him, but Tang intercepted him and took it himself. He found Yuan-tan skulking in a corner of the courtyard, sobbing. Tang sat down on a rock near by and asked, "What's the idea? Don't you want your bat?"

"I . . . can't beat him anyway," sobbed the boy. "I don't want to play any more."

"Have you worked it out? Why did you lose today?"

Yuan-tan said nothing, thinking to himself: It was all your fault, wasn't it?

"Seems to me you lost not because the secret of your special serve was exposed, nor because you weren't in good form today, but because you haven't grasped the correct orientation. You let self-interest spoil your game."

Still Yuan-tan said nothing, thinking: How can you tell how I feel when I play?

"I could see it quite clearly," continued Tang with a smile. "At first, doing as Teacher Ling said, you didn't use your special serve. Later, when you saw that coach watching, you decided to show off, right? So when you saw me explaining how to return that serve of yours you got flustered, thinking that now you wouldn't be able to shine. With such ideas in your head of course you couldn't concentrate on the game. Naturally you lost."

Yuan-tan was flabbergasted by Tang's analysis. He had stopped crying and raised his head to listen.

"It's all right to want to become a good ping-pong player. The question is: Are you training in order to serve Chairman Mao's line in sport better, to win glory for the Party and the people, or to become somebody superior, entitled to special privileges? So when people say you're smart and a promising player, that's not the whole

truth. It depends on in what way you're smart. If you're just smart at getting ahead, at seizing every chance to better yourself and doing nothing that doesn't benefit you, you'll be taking the wrong road, won't you? You mustn't be a smart individualist, Yuan-tan!"

Yuan-tan bit his lower lip, his mind in a turmoil. Tang's advice was so different from that given him by Ling Yao.

Looking at Yuan-tan, Tang remembered Pi-pi in the past. "Just now you threw away your bat," he said. "Would you like me to tell you a story about another bat?"

Yuan-tan moved closer, blinking away his tears, and listened intently.

It had happened before the Cultural Revolution when Tang was still a young worker in his twenties. One day during a break he had noticed a mischievous boy peeping through a gap in the fence separating his plant from Huangshan School. This boy, Pi-pi, squeezed through this gap followed by two of his friends. They walked over to the big table where Tang worked and showing him their ping-pong bats asked politely, "Uncle, can we play ping-pong here?"

"Don't you have a ping-pong table in your school?" he countered.

"Only one. And the big boys always play on it after class," Pi-pi answered.

Tang had noticed before when walking past that fence that the school's wall-newspapers kept exhorting the students to study hard to win fame and praised those who buried themselves in books and vied for top marks, ignoring politics. This struck him as wrong. These boys' apparent rebellion against the rules pleased him. He quickly cleared the table for them and fixed up the net, telling them with a smile, "It's all right for you to play here, but you must teach me to play ping-pong too. OK?"

Pi-pi and his friends readily agreed. But as soon as they saw Tang play they felt real fools. He hit so hard and accurately too, returning smashes with such beautiful precision, compared with him they were just beginners.

Tang taught them conscientiously and patiently, and even gave Pi-pi the bat he had used for years. Carved on one side of it were the words: "Play for the revolution." Pi-pi was delighted.

One day when Tang was coaching them along came Tsui Ta, the head of Huangshan School whom the boys often talked about, followed by the sports teacher Ling Yao.

Tsui Ta always laid stress on high standards in teaching and wanted their school to catch up with Taishan School which had often been commended in this district, so that he would be praised too by the district head. He therefore always insisted that students must do more homework and spend less time on games after school. Now Pi-pi's teacher had reported that Pi-pi always disappeared after class and went somewhere to play.

He had told Ling Yao to come with him to track the boys down.

When Tsui Ta saw Tang with his white apron smelling of bean-milk, he ignored him as a mere menial and bore down upon Pi-pi. "Give me your bat," he said sternly. "Other boys who do better in exams don't fool around the way you do. Why come to such a filthy place to play?"

Tang expostulated, "A boy must play sometimes. Do you want to turn out little bookworms?"

Tsui Ta frowned contemptuously at him. "You seem to sympathize with them," he sneered. "I'd have you know teaching isn't like making bean-curd. We have a systematic scientific curriculum, see?"

"Do you know how to make bean-curd?" retorted Tang with a smile. "I doubt if you do. Your curriculum seems to be fettering these children."

Tsui Ta was furious. Not knowing how to refute Tang, he turned and said, "Teacher Ling, confiscate their bats. In future they're forbidden to come and play here."

As a sports teacher, Ling Yao's status on the staff was low. When the curriculum was overcrowded the head would always cut out sports, leaving Ling Yao to do minor chores — a state of affairs which he very much resented. When he heard Tang answer Tsui back he felt secretly pleased, so instead of doing as he was asked he said,

"Headmaster, our sports facilities are rather poor. It's not a bad idea for them to come here to practise ping-pong. Why don't we make a door in the fence and fix up an electric bell so that they won't be late for classes. . . ."

Tsui Ta brushed this proposal aside impatiently, saying, "How can you suggest such a thing? Are we running a school or a sports club?"

Tang chipped in, "Seems a good idea to me."

Red with anger Tsui Ta turned and left them.

After that the boys made the young worker Tang their hero. They often said, "If we had a head like Tang that would be fine! We wouldn't have to copy texts all the time, and we'd have more sports."

So Pi-pi and Tang were good friends — until something happened to put an end to their friendship.

In the juvenile table-tennis tournament Pi-pi won first place in their district and then third place in the city tournament. After his victory, walking on air, he went to tell Tang what had happened. "I got a big cup, as big as this," he gloated, gesturing with his hands. "Then reporters came and took my picture — I could hardly open my eyes for all the flashes. Then, you know, the head took me by car to have a slap-up meal before taking me home. He patted me on the back and told me that the district authorities promised to buy our school a new ping-pong table, and other awards would be given me if I do still better in future. . . ."

Tang listened to this with a blank look on his face, then asked, "Pleased with yourself, eh?"

Pi-pi answered unthinkingly, "I certainly am."

Tang sighed.

"Why," asked the boy in surprise, "aren't you pleased too?"

"No," said Tang. "I'm worried as to what effect this will have on you."

Sure enough, influenced by Tsui Ta whose favourite he now was, Pi-pi gradually changed completely. He started to look down on his classmates and then on Tang who had taught him how to play. Eventually he tossed away the bat inscribed "Play for the revolution"



which Tang had given him, and bought himself a new bat faced with sponge. He even told people he was ashamed to admit that he'd learned ping-pong from a bean-curd worker, and he stopped going to see Tang.

When Tang heard this, he was very much distressed. "The boy's just a tender bud and now it's been trampled by Tsui Ta and the others."

Whenever Tang recalled all this he felt sad. So he told Yuan-tan this story, hoping that he would not turn out another Pi-pi but would develop in a healthy way.

After hearing him out Yuan-tan was silent a while. Then he said penitently, "Yes, Master Tang, I was wrong. I swear I won't follow Pi-pi's example."

Tang smiled with relief but simply said, "Good boy."

"Look, Old Tang, who's here!" Ling Yao shouted from a distance. With him was the young coach in red and blue.

When the young man came closer he asked, "Master Tang, don't you remember me?"

"Aren't you Pi-pi?" exclaimed Tang after a close scrutiny.

Pi-pi, now a table-tennis coach in an athletics college, looked very moved. He said, "If not for the Cultural Revolution, I'd have gone further down the revisionist path. Now whenever I coach youngsters I tell them of the lesson I've learned and urge them to play for the revolution, on no account to repeat my past mistakes." With that he took a ping-pong bat out of his knapsack. "Look, this bat is a constant reminder to me," he declared.

It was a much worn and quite ordinary bat, its handle indented by the grip of fingers, with an inscription on the back. It was still in good condition, though. When tapped it gave a clear, ringing sound.

Yuan-tan took this bat and looked at it curiously. When he saw the words "Play for the revolution", he hardly knew what to say. Just then Teacher Wang and the boy with the tennis-grip as well as Ming-ming started beckoning to him. Tang smiled and nodded to them, telling Yuan-tan, "Run along. Teacher Wang wants you."

Yuan-tan ran over cheerfully with his own bat while the boy with the tennis-grip and Ming-ming came to meet him. Then they went with Teacher Wang to the ping-pong room, their young faces radiant.

As for Tang, he was overjoyed both by Yuan-tan's realization of his mistake and Pi-pi's return to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

Pi-pi told him, "I heard you'd given up playing with your right hand so as to help train that boy. And just now I saw how you helped the other school. This is sportsmanship of a high order. I'd like, on behalf of my college, to ask you to come and speak to our young players."

Tang hastily declined. "Don't exaggerate," he said. "It was nothing."

Ling Yao was suddenly struck by an idea. Turning the bat over he noticed the finger-marks on it; and when he tried the pen-holder grip with his right hand, his thumb and first finger fitted those marks exactly. "That's right. I seem to remember you used to play with your right hand!" he exclaimed. "It must have been difficult to switch to your left, and you did it just to help Yuan-tan without his knowing."

Tang smiled. "Why should he know? Teacher Ling, you often talk of a sixth sense. What do you mean by that?"

Ling Yao answered promptly, "Quick mental reactions and quick movements."

"Do we teachers need a sixth sense?"

"Well, for us it doesn't matter so much. We're out of the running."

"No, you're wrong there," said Tang. "We need to have quicker reactions than the ping-pong players themselves."

Ling Yao looked puzzled at this.

Tang continued, "We are shouldering the serious task of training youngsters to succeed to the proletarian revolutionary cause. So in politics we must have quick perception and sound judgement. We mustn't just be interested in whether the players have quick perception and quick reactions. What is much more important is for us to be quick to detect the ideological tendencies in these youngsters and in our own minds."

Yuan-tan came back at this point to announce cheerfully, "Teacher Ling, Master Tang, the boy with the tennis-grip has let me into the secret of how to cope with that special bat of his."

Tang laughed and replied, "You must first of all learn from his good style, Yuan-tan. Understand?"

The boy nodded then went back to the ping-pong room.

Ling Yao told Tang contritely, "If not for your 'sixth sense' and timely warning to me, goodness knows what sort of person I'd have trained Yuan-tan to be."

"Yes," said Tang, "in a school if we aren't on our guard all the time against bourgeois ideas, the children will go astray. We must do our best to remould ourselves and train ourselves to distinguish right from wrong, so that we can bring up the younger generation according to the requirements of the revolution and consolidate the proletarian dictatorship."

In the courtyard pomegranates were in full blossom in the sunlight. The flaming splendour of their flowers cast a glow over everyone's face and the whole school grounds.

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

SKETCHES

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A Visit to Wupao

Late last autumn we visited Wupao, a county town on the west bank of the Yellow River and the northeast border of Shensi Province, about two hundred kilometres from Yen-an. Here the Yellow River dips south and forms the boundary between the provinces of Shensi and Shansi. This county was part of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region set up by the Chinese Communist Party during the War of Resistance Against Japan (1937-1945).

This county's eight hundred thousand *mu* of farmland lie in the rock-ribbed, jagged hills of the north Shensi loess belt and are scattered like patches over some two thousand hilltops and three thousand slopes. This is a dry region: not only are rainfall and water resources insufficient, but much of what little water there is runs off into the gullies. Erosion is severe. With such poor conditions could Wupao catch up with other parts of the country in a short time? The people of Wupao have answered that question in the affirmative with facts.

Arriving at Wupao

When we first reached this small county with some sixty thousand inhabitants, we expected Wupao town to be seething with activity like the turbulent Yellow River. Much to our surprise, the town itself, political, economic and cultural centre of the county, turned out to be an extraordinarily quiet place. Except, that is, for the tumultuous river, the roar of which was punctuated by the chug of mini-tractors and the whirr of an occasional lorry on the broad asphalt highway along the river bank.

We walked past several high buildings to a cul-de-sac in the east end of the town. There, on a slope, nestle the three rows of ordinary cave dwellings that house the county Party committee. On entering the gate we were struck by the peacefulness of that courtyard planted with vegetables and flowers. An old man was sweeping the brick-bordered path while the buzzing of the bees among the flowers added to the serenity of the place.

Noticing that nearly all the doors were padlocked, we wondered where the cadres had gone. We went round to the second row of caves where fortunately someone was working in the general office of the Party committee. He told us that the Party secretary had left to attend the National Conference on Learning from Tachai in Agriculture. Most of the other county cadres were out with the peasants, harvesting the autumn crops, ploughing fallow land, or planning improvements to be undertaken that winter. Those who had remained in town were going in turn every day to level a rocky hill and fill gullies, so creating a new stretch of arable land northeast of the town. The cadre showed us the work schedule — three four-hour shifts beginning at six in the morning. The people in the county's financial, commercial, banking, postal and bookselling sectors worked the first shift, those in Party and political work, the second, and the cultural and medical workers, the third. This arrangement did not interfere with their regular jobs. His words brought home the fact that the people of Wupao were launching a fierce struggle against nature.

Deeply impressed, we left and set off on a tour of this developing town. Immediately we spotted two striking slogans chalked on a wall: "Cadres should always take the lead!" "The landscape can only be transformed if men change and the leaders must be the first to change!" This bore out our first impression that the people of this town on the Yellow River were militant and enthusiastic.

The dull roar of the river echoes day and night throughout the town. The turbid upriver waters come rolling down to Chuntu in Shansi where they dash against towering cliffs and are forced through a gorge with a ninety-degree bend. This abrupt change of direction sends the undercurrent rushing towards the north bank where foam-crested waves pile up endlessly day and night, licking the shore and swallowing the fine sandy soil.

In appearance the quiet little town is quite ordinary. Three main streets transect it. Along them are office buildings, bookstores and theatres and a shopping centre. On slopes behind these streets are row upon row of the cave homes so typical of north Shensi. They make a charming picture with strings of red dates and peppers, golden corn-cobs and millet ears hanging beside every door, adding a rustic touch.

We were gazing at this charming scene when suddenly in the distance cutting the silence bicycle bells began to jingle. Nearer and nearer they came until a number of bicycles began whizzing past one after the other. Each rider carried a shovel over his shoulder, the blade bright from use. Then people in grey or blue jackets began streaming out of the office buildings. Some were wrapping a white towel round their heads and all carried a similar spade or mattock. Needless to say, this was a group of cadres going off to the work site. As they marched off into the distance, silence reigned again.

But before long there was the tramp of many feet, mingled with singing and laughter, along the riverside highway. The street became alive once more as the first contingent returned from the work site. Grey-haired cadres marched in ranks beside younger ones and Red Guards, wearing scarlet armbands, all laughing and chatting. No one looked the least bit tired. Their faces shone with happy in-

volvement and the sense of pride of lively, earnest people determined to turn their county into another Tachai.

That evening we strolled down to the riverside in the moonlight. We had never been so close to the river before. As we gazed at it, it seemed that our hearts beat in the same rhythm as the waves, there was much we wanted to say. But that evening we could only exclaim: "Great as you are, old river, there's another force more powerful than you. It's a human stream that's now flowing onward beside you."

A Veteran Boatman

Later we visited Chuankou where the Yellow River is still very turbulent as it rolls to the east, wave upon wave. But at the ferry itself all was quiet. The majestic cliffs stood silent and staunch before the onslaught of the foam-capped waves that flowed like perpetually unfolding scrolls. Occasionally a wooden boat or two moved across the water. This quiet scene rekindled flaming memories in our minds of the War of Resistance and the War of Liberation.

We remembered how countless Eighth Route Army men, equipped with swords, rifles and grenades, had crossed the river at this very spot. Their militant song "Defend the Yellow River! Defend north China! Defend the whole country!" rose to the sky as the boats carried them to the opposite shore, on their way to the Taihang Mountain base in Shansi. Thousands of cadres too, with Chairman Mao's books in the pockets of their homespun clothes, had bid farewell to the people of the border region, ferrying the river to thrust boldly into the enemy rear.

On March 23, 1948 this insignificant place, hardly as well known as Tungkuan Pass and the Sanmen Gorge, became important in the golden chronicle of China's revolutionary history. It was actually here that Chairman Mao crossed the Yellow River on his way east. In commemoration of that historic day, a reddish brown stone tablet on a wide platform was erected at the ferry.

We climbed on to the stone-paved platform and stood gazing a long while at the churning waters. As we recalled those eventful

months and years, we became all the more eager to talk to Hsueh Hai-yu, a veteran boatman on the Yellow River and now Party secretary of Chuankou Production Brigade.

We found him without too much difficulty, a lean man as solid as a rock. He was wearing the usual white towel round his head and a black padded coat over a white shirt with a blue cotton belt. His eyes were bright and full of spirit but his speech was unhurried and calm. However, each word carried weight and he drove home his point as forcefully as the waves that dashed against the sheer cliffs. As he spoke, he puffed at a pipe no longer than the spread of his big rough hand. And he smiled often, a wide grin that crinkled his forehead and the corners of his mouth, each wrinkle the record of a battle on the stormy Yellow River.

For three generations the men of the Hsueh family had rowed the ferry boat over the rapid waves day in and day out in the teeth of death. One winter's day at dusk when Hsueh's grandfather was still far out on the river, there was suddenly a heavy snow-storm. The howling wind sent huge chunks of ice skimming over the churning water. The lean old man grappled bravely with the current, but strain as he might, his small boat still swivelled on the water like a frail leaf carried by the wind. His whole ragged family gathered weeping at the dock to watch, hoping desperately for his safe return. Chanting hoarsely the old man pulled on the oars with all his might, but a block of ice overturned the boat and Grandpa Hsueh vanished into the muddy waters.

So then Hsueh's father began as ferryman battling the river. Though he strained at the oars every day, never could he turn the tide of his own bitter life so filled with hardships. After years of strenuous work, he fell ill. But by then young Hsueh, having grown up on the river, was a full-fledged boatman.

Hsueh's warm personality masked a will as determined as the raging river. But tempered by storm and hardship, he became stolid, profoundly calm and steady like the strong current running beneath the surface waters. He took over the rudder and oar from his father and proved an excellent steersman.

It was just at that time that the rudder of history was set to steer a new course — Chairman Mao had led the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army to north Shensi. Fired with enthusiasm for the revolution, Hsueh became the leader of his village youth organization. He and the other boatmen now threw themselves heart and soul into battling the mighty river, struggling from dawn to dusk to transport charcoal, porcelain, grain, oil, and salt for the revolution.

In 1947 when the Kuomintang reactionaries drove into north Shensi and rode roughshod over the whole area, the people along the banks of the Yellow River took up arms and carried stretchers to fight the enemy. When the call was issued to hide everything from the invaders that could possibly be hidden, they concealed all the ferry boats among the thick reeds along the east shore.

But what if our own army wants to cross? wondered Hsueh, now company commander of the Self-defence Corps. Under cover of darkness he rowed his boat back to the west bank and waited there day and night, armed with three hand-grenades. During his long vigil, his thoughts turned to the past. For generations his little boat had ferried people who could do nothing to change their miserable lot in life. Now they were the masters of the Yellow River!

Then came a glorious, joyous day — March 23, 1948. That morning the Party gave Hsueh, now political instructor of the boatmen's union, the task of ferrying a leading cadre accompanied by a large party. Hsueh's heart throbbed with excitement. He wondered for an instant if he, a twenty-four-year-old, could shoulder such a heavy task, but then he thought, "As a Party member, I must carry out my mission." So he started making all the necessary arrangements. He numbered each boat and organized the two hundred-odd boatmen who gathered from near and far into squads. The leading cadre would board Boat No. 2 which they had made more comfortable by fixing planks in the bottom and spreading a new straw mat over them. The boat was to be manned by eight tested Party members, assisted by four other poor boatmen with Hsueh himself in charge.

At noon, Hsueh walked a kilometre to the next village to meet the leading cadre. When Hsueh caught sight of him, his heart

skipped a beat. Wasn't that man dressed in a suit of grey homespun the very person he'd been dreaming about day and night? Wasn't it Chairman Mao himself? No doubt about it, Hsueh thought, recalling the many pictures he'd seen.

When Chairman Mao arrived at the ferry after his dusty journey, he sat down on a rock near the bank and chatted with the boatmen. After half an hour, he went aboard Boat No. 2.

Hsueh took the helm, his heart filled with joy. He could hardly believe that history had bestowed such a glorious task on a poor boatman like himself. Was such great happiness really his? Gazing at the deliverer of the Chinese people, he could only murmur to himself, "You're our guest, Chairman Mao, and we didn't even offer you a bowl of water..."

Halfway across the river, Chairman Mao stood up to gaze back at the west bank, a look of infinite yearning clouding his face. After thirteen years among the people of north Shensi, he was leaving. Hsueh looked on, his eyes brimming with tears. He wanted to slow down the boat so that Chairman Mao could linger a little longer in north Shensi, so that the folk there, and the mountains and rivers too, could enjoy his presence a while longer; but then Hsueh realized he must put on speed, for Chairman Mao was directing the revolution, the people's great cause. He could not afford to lose a minute, no, not even a second.

Having reached the east bank, Hsueh and all the other boatmen clustered round Chairman Mao and insisted on accompanying him. It was only after Chairman Mao had repeatedly asked them to turn back that very reluctantly they consented to stop. Chairman Mao waved goodbye to the boatmen, as well as to the people of north Shensi, her mountains and rivers. His outstretched hand signified a farewell to the red base and, like a guide-post, pointed out a new and brighter way, the socialist road. It was to be infinitely more tortuous and difficult than the road they'd travelled until then, but, worthy of Chairman Mao's expectations, the people of north Shensi stepped out boldly along it.

In 1971, fifty-year-old Hsueh was appointed secretary of his brigade's Party branch. On learning the news, Hsueh left the commune office

and instead of going home headed for the river. He sat down on the rock where Chairman Mao had once rested, with the rushing water foaming and splashing at his feet. His heart beating in rhythm with the waves of the river, Hsueh stretched out his hand to touch the cliff hard as iron. Here, he had pushed his boat off to glide over the waves on missions for the revolution. Close by, he had been sworn in as a Party member before the red flag with its hammer and sickle. And right here, he had ferried Chairman Mao across...

At dusk as the rush of water became a roar, he stood up and walked along the stretch of barren land on the river bank. He gathered up a handful of the yellow earth and pressed his hand to his breast, thinking, "Our next task is to transform this barren bank into good farmland. What better place to start than right here where Chairman Mao once walked?"

No sooner decided than begun. He returned, armed with his sledge-hammer and spike, followed by every one of the one hundred and seventy able-bodied villagers. They pledged to create three hundred *mu* of high-yield fields by building an embankment that would run two kilometres along the river. The stone for the dyke was to be hewn from the cliffs half a kilometre away and transported on their shoulders to the riverside.

What a feat! A hundred and seventy people would build that long dyke with nothing but hammers, spikes and a few small rubber-tired carts. It seemed almost a miracle. But the people of north Shensi have the will to work wonders.

We went to the work site where we saw a high wall as strong as iron stretching along the Yellow River. Every day, every hour it grew longer. As the peasants strained and sweated to add inch upon inch to the wall, the river retreated, step by step. Soon they would wrest a good crop from this parched, cracked earth.

We saw for ourselves with what energy Hsueh was leading the brigade members to follow the example of Tachai, the red banner unit on the agricultural front. During the day he threw himself into the work at the building site and in the evenings he went to meetings or joined the night shift. His wife grumbled and wanted

to know if he still thought of their place as a home. To this he replied jokingly, "You'd better consider yourself an innkeeper."

Whenever there were storms or flood waters, Hsueh was at the riverside to keep the embankment from being washed away. Sometimes he would plunge into the river and, struggling against the strong current, would stop a breach with his body. All the able-bodied peasants followed suit each time.

One night during the early spring flood waters, the whole village was sleeping to the rhythmic pounding of the waves. Hsueh, however, rose to go and have a look at the brigade boat moored outside the village. A chill wind beat against his face as he felt his way down to the shore. The night was so dark he couldn't even see his own hand before him. The track was so rough he was liable to stumble at every step. And yet he saw his way clearly, advancing confidently, for the Yellow River was so close to his heart and there, at the little ferry, was a beacon that to him would always be shining. When his groping hand closed round the boat, he stripped to the waist and took it to a safe place.

The evening before we left Chuankou, we went down to see how work was coming along on the dyke. Though it was a freezing October night, the villagers' enthusiasm knew no bounds. The thundering Yellow River accompanied their seething activity like battle drums.

From a distance the clang of hammering sounded as crisply in the night air as the crackling of dried beans being roasted. Under the dim lights the work site was swarming with people, breaking up the rocks and carting them.

"Where's Old Hsueh?" we asked a girl hauling a cart our way.

"On the boat," she answered with a smile and pointed down the rocky bank.

We peered down and finally made out Hsueh standing on a rock shaped like a boat. He and seven or eight young men were hammering steel wedges into a cleft to split the rock in two. Grand, powerful work-chants rose to the sky.

The Plateau Turns Green

A late autumn drizzle fell over the long, broad highway flanked by sturdy poplars. As we walked along, we admired the glossy, wet leaves already turning yellow shimmering in the breeze like orange tongues of fire. Ahead, the highway bordered by the golden foliage narrowed to a ribbon, then to a fine brown thread until it finally vanished among the poplars. But further ahead appeared once again the sandy yellow expanse of barren, undulating mountains typical of the north Shensi loess plateau.

Yet the verdant landscape near us was real. The poplars, the green locust-trees on the slopes beside the road, the osiers bordering the terraced fields, and those mulberry trees with only a sprinkling of green leaves left were not a figment of our imagination.

Then we took the narrow path that led to Fengchiayen, a mountain village in the centre of Wupao County. This village of fifty-eight households has a total population of two hundred and thirty, but only seventy-five have full labour power and most of them are women. However, Fengchiayen Brigade had planted over seven hundred *mu* of grain and afforested six hundred *mu* of mountain slopes with willows, locust, mulberry, walnut and fruit trees, as well as grapevines and shrubs. More than two hundred thousand trees planted in all!

With so little manpower how had they managed to plant so many trees? We knew that water was scarce in this village 1,028 metres above sea level. There are a few brooks in the area, but the nearest stream is over two kilometres away. So there wasn't even enough water for the villagers and their animals. Given those conditions how had they succeeded in growing so many trees?

"Afforestation is a revolution in itself," replied the brigade Party secretary. Then he told us their story.

As early as 1958, the brigade, with the help of the county forestry department, had decided to begin afforesting the barren slopes. The locust-trees they planted grew well. But when Liu Shao-chi's sinister revisionist wind began blowing in 1962, the afforested land was distributed among the different households. The brigade members

planted crops between the trees, then, eager to increase their output, they began furtively hacking at the roots. When trees withered one after another, they uprooted them. In less than six months, to use the villagers' own words, "The green mantle was stripped from the mountains." Fengchiayen was once again a scene of desolation.

Then in 1969, during the Cultural Revolution, a new Party committee was set up. In their first meeting, the new cadres discussed what they'd learned from the two-line struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

"We concluded that since the masses trusted us, we had to shoulder this heavy responsibility," the young Party secretary told us. "We decided to go all out in answering Chairman Mao's call to learn from Tachai and advance along the revolutionary road."

They began immediately by improving the soil and building up terraced fields on the mountain slopes. That autumn they harvested twice as much as during the previous year. From then on, they were self-supporting — never again did they have to buy grain from the state. However, when in 1972 a serious drought hit the region and their yield fell to the level of 1968, they realized they could never succeed without irrigation. But where would they get the water from?

The brigade members answered that by building a dam and a reservoir. Recalling their past efforts at afforestation, they said, "Water comes from trees as well as from the earth. If we plant many trees, we'll have a forest, and forests transform natural conditions and provide shelter against dust storms. In this way we'll conserve both water and soil and prevent drought."

"Yes, but trees take a long time to grow. It won't solve our immediate problem," someone put in doubtfully.

"All the more reason to make a start right away," said the brigade leader.

But how many trees should they plant? The Party branch suggested a target of 50,000 saplings before the end of the year, some two hundred trees per villager. The proposal created a sensation. The poor and lower-middle peasants were all in favour of it but some people with old ideas raised a number of objections: Have we got

enough manpower? And even if we succeed in planting that many saplings, who will take care of them? And how about our crops? If we plant mulberry trees and willows in the fields, won't they encroach on the crops? Which is more important, the crops or the trees?

"We'll have both!" the Party secretary replied. "Without afforestation we'll never be able to improve our grain yield. We mustn't forget Chairman Mao's instruction, '**Take grain as the key link and ensure all-round development.**' Of course we're short of hands, but we can learn from Tachai. We'll work hard and sweat plenty. Each will do the work of two. We'll do two days' work in one."

So all the villagers went to the fields or into the mountains, working day and night to harvest the crops and plant saplings. By the end of autumn, they had reached their target of planting 50,000 saplings.

"The results obtained by these three years of continuous hard work have silenced all objections," the young Party secretary told us with a smile. "Our villagers have been toughened by the experience and it had no adverse effect on the crops. On the contrary, our total grain yield rose to 170,000 catties in 1973 and to 180,000 in 1974, over three times that of 1968. Our target for 1975 was 1,000 catties per person. However, we had a terrible drought in midsummer. But we still managed to get 140,000 catties."

Following the increase in production, the brigade was transformed. They now had proper transportation, mechanized mills and a pumping station so that they no longer had to carry drinking water by shoulder-pole all the way from the gullies.

"Just you wait. In 1980 you won't recognize our village," the Party secretary said proudly. "Besides increasing our grain yield, the trees will provide more products for the state: all the dates, timber and firewood for example, to say nothing of the silkworms with the mulberry leaves."

Inspired by this fine prospect, we reflected that the significance of their undertaking lay not so much in the increased production as in the example they were setting in water and soil conservancy for

the loess plateau: the whole Yellow River valley could be transformed in this way. We all know that each year the Yellow River carries off 1,600 million tons of soil and sand. In tiny Wupao County alone 4,646,000 tons of soil are lost annually through erosion. But if every village puts a green mantle on its mountains like this one, the Yellow River may one day be yellow no longer. This may sound like a fairy tale, but it is becoming a reality here in Fengchiayen, thanks to the plans worked out by these experts.

"Would you mind telling us how you managed to keep alive over ninety per cent of your saplings?"

"You'd better ask that fellow over there about it," the Party secretary chuckled.

He was referring to twenty-one-year-old Feng Chih-lo, a school-leaver who had returned to work in the brigade in 1974 and was now a member of the local Party committee in charge of afforestation work. This reticent, shy youngster sat very straight as he outlined their afforestation methods. In answer to our question about the saplings' survival rate, he merely said, "You have to take great care of them." Then he paused and added, "We have an old peasant adviser. He can answer all your questions."

The peasant adviser was old Feng Teh-chu, sixty-six this year. He was formerly a Red Armyman who had joined up in 1935 and had been wounded in the arm. He became a member of the Chinese Communist Party in 1946. He had served as Party branch secretary during the agricultural co-operative movement and when their people's commune was first set up. Now chairman of the poor and lower-middle peasants' association, he'd been in charge of several afforested slopes since 1973.

Everyone warned us that we shouldn't count on finding him at home since he left before sunrise every day no matter what the weather, and only returned after dark. They said we would have to comb the mountain to find him.

The next day we got up very early but discovered he had already left for the mountain. We decided to go up after him. As we climbed, we admired the slopes covered with knee-high clover and patches of acacia shrubs in the gully. Fields of saplings dotted

the ridges and the mountain peak itself was like a chequer board with its alternating squares of poplars and locust-trees. We were amazed to see that there wasn't a weed in sight. Moreover, the hundreds of *mu* that comprised the old man's "territory" were spread with dry leaves and some compost ringed each sapling. How soft and springy the ground was! He obviously turned it frequently. As we skirted a small terraced field, we spotted some villagers loading potatoes on a tractor.

"Look, there he is." Young Feng pointed to an old man carrying a basket full of potatoes. Short and thin, he was dressed in a black padded jacket with a white belt. His head was covered by the characteristic white towel, and round his neck hung a pipe and a pouch of tobacco.

We went to see him that evening. His wife left her washing up to greet us: "He's full of pep and never lets up, not even for New Year. He just gulps down his dumplings and leaves before dawn as if it were an ordinary day."

The old man smiled deprecatingly. "I'm a Party member and a Red Armyman so I must set an example," he replied simply. He leaned over the kerosene lamp to light his pipe, then looked up, his eyes bright. "Our Party organization has assigned me to look after these saplings, so I must look after them well. This is just like carrying out orders in the army. As long as there's a breath of life in me I must learn from Tachai. I must never forget the revolution."

Our interview over, we walked slowly back, impressed by the sincerity and simplicity of the old veteran's words.

We had been told that when visibility was good the Yellow River could be seen from the hill before our cave. Next morning, as the village bell rang to signal the start of work, we got up and climbed the hill, only to find the river shrouded in mist. However, we could see the whole village clearly, as well as the verdant ridges and slopes of the mountain. The forest in the distance was hazy, like a veil of pale green gauze flung over the earth. We turned to gaze at the nearby saplings, so full of vigour and erect, and thought how in

ten, twenty, or thirty years, the sougning of trees would be heard here instead of the howling of spring dust-storms and splendid forests would gleam like emerald.

Gleaming Pearls in the Valley

On the map Hsinchiakou Commune looks very much like a mulberry leaf. Streams and brooks converge from the north and run through its centre to form the Chinghokou, the largest stream in the county. Its tributaries, large and small, are the finer "veins" of the leaf. So the commune has the best natural conditions in the area.

We knew that in recent years the whole county had been giving priority to transforming this stream and completing two reservoirs, Hsinchiakou and Chingchiakou. Now that only the trunk canals remained to be finished, we decided to make our long-planned visit.

We trekked across parched hills and eroded ridges without seeing a drop of water. Then we reached Chinghokou. We saw first only a small stream in the gully. The refreshing gurgle from the stream and the occasional dripping of water from the aqueduct spanning the gully dissipated the impression of barrenness our journey had left us. As we walked on taking in the delightful scene, the gully curved sharply and seemed to stop. Our path was cut off as if we had entered an earthenware jar laid sideways on the ground and had come up against the bottom. What was blocking our way turned out to be a tall dam on which five dazzling characters were painted, "In Agriculture Learn from Tachai." It was the Hsinchiakou Reservoir.

We gazed amazed and delighted at the vast expanse of emerald water behind the forty-metre-high dam. We were so moved that we all began to try to think of a metaphor that would fully express its beauty. Almost simultaneously we exclaimed, "A gleaming pearl!" It well deserves that description, not only for its rippling green water encircled by ribbon-like foothills, but especially for its significance. It crystallizes the sweat and hard work of the Wupao people.

Chingchiakou Reservoir lies just to the west. From the air, the two reservoirs, separated by a spur of land shaped like a fish's back, look like twin jade lotus blossoms.

They were begun in the winter of 1972 and are now nearing completion. When finished they will irrigate 3,000 *mu* directly and another 3,000 *mu* by a pumping system. The canal is 38 kilometres long and provides water for 82 square kilometres of farmland, one-fifth of the county's total area. It is a great achievement indeed for a county of only 60,000 inhabitants, and the building contingent was made up of 1,000 peasants sent by various brigades.

But there was no one in sight at the Chingchiakou Reservoir except for eight bulldozers rumbling back and forth on the spillway. The whole area was enveloped in a stillness not unlike the lull between two battles. How we regretted having missed the heroic builders. But later on, we were to have an unexpected opportunity to meet a dozen young shock workers from Hsinchiakou Brigade.

But first we'll describe Hsinchiakou Brigade. It is located in a small village beside the reservoir with unique scenery. We followed the west trunk canal to the entrance of the village then climbed down the embankment and walked along the stream. After rounding a bend, we spotted two multiple-arched stone bridges, each a dozen metres high. As we approached, however, we realized that the narrower one was Bumper Harvest Aqueduct. We crossed the bridge to the sound of water purring along and came to a small winding street flanked by long rows of stone cave dwellings with porches and eaves. Their high back walls rose right on the bluff of the river.

In the old days this was a poverty-stricken place of course, and for quite a few years after Liberation small trade continued to represent 70 per cent of the villagers' activity and farming only 30 per cent. After the victory of the socialist transformation movement the villagers began to take up farming seriously, particularly in the last decade during the movement to learn from Tachai. But class struggle here was complicated since the village had formerly been infested with Kuomintang troops, ward chiefs, evil gentry and local gangsters. Besides, those villagers who had engaged in small trade for a long period could not shake off their old habits



nor change their idle ways. And so agricultural output did not increase for some time.

However, the Cultural Revolution and the mass movement to learn from Tachai enabled the people to overcome their former apathy. The genuine poor and lower-middle peasants rose up; then group after group of educated youth returned fully determined to transform their village. Hsinchiakou underwent a radical change.

The evening we arrived in Hsinchiakou Commune, the Party secretary said, "You have missed seeing the builders of the reservoir. Go and have a look at the dam near the village. They built it in nine months, that group of youngsters, and now they're busy level-

ling hills and filling in gullies to build up fields at the foot of the dam. Their work is a continuation of the great battle at the reservoir, though on a smaller scale of course." He added that the construction of the dam had immediately transformed the village and boosted confidence. We had already noticed that no one was hanging around the streets now. The villagers left home early and returned late fired with the Tachai spirit. The shock team, for example, had set off to work at half past three that morning!

We were stirred and all the more sorry that it was too late to visit the dam at once. How did they do it? How could sixteen girls and five young men construct in only nine months a twenty-metre-high dam requiring 38,000 cubic metres of earth and stone?

We were still pondering that question when suddenly our cave door flew open. Amidst peals of laughter, seven or eight young people swarmed in, each pushing and encouraging the others. Old Hsueh, deputy Party secretary of the commune, followed close behind, for he was now working in the brigade to familiarize himself with local conditions. Smiling, he declared, "Here are the crack troops!" There was a hearty burst of laughter from the plump healthy youngsters before us, the backbone not only of the shock team, but of Hsinchiakou Brigade as well. Li Ching-ching, a quiet twenty-one-year-old girl with arched brows and large eyes, had returned to this village from middle school in 1973. She was now member of the brigade's Party committee, head of the women's organization and leader of the young people's shock team. The tall young man with smiling eyes, T'ien Hsing-kuo, was a year younger and had

likewise graduated from middle school and returned in 1973. He was now chairman of the brigade's revolutionary committee and member of the Party committee. The others, all nineteen or twenty, were leading members of the Youth League or of the poor and lower-middle peasants' association.

Before we could even open our mouths to speak, they all began talking at once, their words pouring out like water from a breach in a dyke.

"We're all old schoolmates. We've been together since senior or junior middle school, and even in some cases since primary school. When we graduated from middle school, we answered Chairman Mao's call and came back together."

"That's why our team's so united. We see eye to eye with each other and work with one heart."

"There were things we didn't like when we first came back."

"So we took them by storm!"

"We did it by setting an example of hard work. Our county had just begun building a reservoir near our village. From morning till night, trucks roared back and forth, workers drove piles into the ground or chiselled stone; the sound of blasting and singing was everywhere. The work site was a sea of people and flags. We thought our brigade should build a dam so as to transform our fields. We talked the matter over among ourselves and agreed."

"But some people were against it. They said, 'How can we compare with them, when the whole county has been mobilized to build the reservoir? Our one hundred-odd brigade members can't build a dam alone. Besides, their dam is on the side of the gully but ours will be right across it!'"

"We refused to give up and started writing posters to refute those objections."

Their posters proved most effective. Those who didn't like hard work as well as those with conservative ideas admitted defeat. After the question had been discussed in brigade meetings for several evenings, the Party branch decided to support the youngsters' proposal and organized them into a shock team. The following day they began the battle.

It was hard going at first. None of them would ever forget the time they carried rocks weighing a hundred pounds each for the foundation. Their backs and shoulders were rubbed raw in places; feet were bruised and fingers crushed; legs became swollen but their courage never failed. Though they were ready to drop when they came back at night, they returned to the battlefield at sunrise every day.

"We've had some real disasters," one of the girls admitted.

For example, having discovered a defect in the sluiceway, they had to begin all over again. In freezing winter weather, they waded into icy water to retrieve thousands of pieces of rock. Stopping only to blow on numb fingers or warm frozen arms, they gritted their teeth and kept on for six days and nights until the sluiceway was rebuilt properly.

Early in April last year, a sudden rainstorm lasting twenty-four hours caused Chingchiakou Reservoir's temporary check dam to collapse and the flood waters poured down in torrents. The shock team and the other brigade members rushed to the work site and jumped into the flood waters to dig a diversion channel. But it was too late; their dam was washed away completely. The young shock team members stamped their feet in anger; some of the girls cried in frustration.

And how could they be expected to hold back their tears? This dam had cost them so much hard work. Besides, they had to endure the taunts of those who had been waiting for such a chance to gloat. However, not a single one wavered. They put up more posters and pledges one after the other to silence those who could only make disparaging remarks.

Working day and night, they rebuilt the sluiceway and continued till they completed the dam in June. As the dam rose, their confidence grew. People no longer regarded them as rash youngsters but as pathbreakers who had foresight. So they were put in leading posts.

Early last summer there was another downpour, but this time the dam stood the test of the torrents. However, the shock team went

through some tense moments. The youngsters dashed to the dam in the pouring rain, slipping and sliding along a mountain path turned into mud. It was so treacherous, it seemed to be covered with oil. They fell repeatedly, but got up each time, tempering themselves in the storm.

The day before we arrived, a youngster gave his life at the work site. The memorial meeting became a rally to express the resolve of the other young builders who, having buried their comrade-in-arms, wiped away their tears and returned to the place where he had been killed. They threw themselves into their work until dark. The next morning without consulting each other, they all returned to work at half past three. . . .

That night as we closed our eyes we seemed to see the green water, the dam and the saplings round the reservoirs. Then we remembered the name we'd given them, "gleaming pearls". Which were the gleaming pearls, those reservoirs or those wonderful youngsters we'd just met?

Our Age Is Advancing

Though motor roads lead to most of the mountain villages in Wupao County today, we decided to tour on foot the 400-odd square kilometres that comprise the county. We wanted to see for ourselves every hill and gully, every slope and valley transformed by the sweat and blood of the Wupao people.

Within a radius of several kilometres around each village, there was not a trace of the former desolation. Almost every hill had been terraced all the way to the top and every gully had large or small embankments to retain water and soil. It was a magnificent sight. With their big, callused hands, the Wupao people had changed the whole landscape. Every inch of land testifies to their inexorable drive, their determination to conquer nature stemming from the movement to learn from Tachai. Our first impression was now confirmed — all Wupao County is a battlefield.

None of those who took part in the battle here will ever forget the history of Wupao: How this place looked before the great socialist revolution, what difficulties they had to overcome to transform nature. It was the Tachai road pointed out by Chairman Mao that gave the Wupao people infinite courage to forge ahead.

For the last ten years, the people of Wupao have followed the Tachai road faithfully, ready to give their all, even their lives. They have transformed more than 900 hills and 1,400 gullies and created more than a hundred thousand *mu* of good land through irrigation, terracing, or building embankments. In addition, more than 60,000 *mu* have been afforested, bringing 43 per cent of the total erodible area under control. In 1974 the total grain yield was 53 per cent higher than in any other year in the history of the county. "We'll never again live on grain supplied by the state; we've thrown that label into the Yellow River for good!" the Wupao folk declare proudly.

Yes, everything has changed in Wupao County, the hills and the streams and, above all, the people. It has become one of China's advanced counties in learning from Tachai.

When we returned to Wupao town, we once again found the local Party committee office locked up. The day before, they had heard about the decisions taken during the National Conference on Learning from Tachai. So the Party secretary and members of the Party committee had gone to the various communes. We stood lost in thought before the padlocked door, stirred by the enthusiasm and spirit of these cadres whom we had no chance to meet.

The day before our departure, we decided to visit the old quarter of Wupao town. As we went up the parapet of the walled town gazing at the turbulent Yellow River below and the mountains in the distance, we reflected on the past and present. During the last half century, our people, under the leadership of the Party and Chairman Mao, have stormed so many reactionary strongholds. Now, in the age of the new socialist revolution, our people armed with Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought are continuing to smash the ideological fetters of feudalism, capitalism and revisionism and marching towards

communism. Our age is advancing towards this goal like the Yellow River rolling swiftly forward.

The east gate of Wupao town is called "Listening to Waves Gate". As we stood there on the wall, we seemed to hear not only the roar of the Yellow River but also the footsteps of the 60,000 people of Wupao County forging ahead on the road of socialism.

Illustrated by Huang Chia-yu



Chairman Mao with the People of the Ching Kang Mountains (New-Year picture) by Tsou Liang-tsci

POEMS

*Liu Teng-han and
Sun Shao-chen*

A Path Through the Forest

A path through the forest,
Full of fallen leaves and silky-smooth mosses,
Winds along
Into the distant clouds.

Every day lumbermen commencing their work
Use this path;
Carrying heavy loads on their shoulders,
Their breasts glisten with sweat.
Above them the moon sets, the sun rises;
As they carry on through spring mists and autumn frosts.
Some may ask: Is this too hard a life?
The men only point to the endless
Dense forest. . . .

Countless feet have trodden on these fallen leaves;
The footsteps of former revolutionaries have left their mark.
Wild flowers blossoming among the weeds
Remind the men of former heroes' sweat and blood.
As they climb these green hills and valleys,
The past is re-enacted before their eyes —
“Little red devil asleep on your straw-sandal pillow,
What do you see in your dreams?”
“Ah, I see red flags unfurling everywhere
In the spring sunshine,
Young fir saplings planted on the southern slopes,
Pine-trees planted on the northern hills. . . .”
“What were the last words of the veteran Red Armyman,
As he prepared to hurl his hand-grenade?”
“Ah, when the whole of China turns red,
We shall come back here to fell these trees,
All these thousands of towering pines,
Pillars that will prop up the heavens. . . .”

Here along this path,
These footprints
Are records of past struggles;
Each layer of autumn leaves
Is a page of past revolutionary history.
Now along this path footsteps echo like thunder
For revolution advances like a tidal wave.
Our new lumbermen are worthy successors to former heroes;
Their footsteps are linked by the same red line.
Early martyrs shed their blood, now workers shed sweat;
Young saplings have become a mighty forest.

Our lumbermen know well how the pioneers toiled;
The bright highway has been made by many feet;
Our lumbermen know well the glory of struggle;
For sturdy pine and bamboo are strengthened by storms.
Our forerunners trod many thousand mountain passes,
“What narrow paths, deep woods and slippery mosses!”*
Today we've come to Tien An Men
The brightly-lit boulevard with its marble pillars.

Listen to our lilting work chant
Re-echoing in the valley.
The path calls us
To follow closely in the footsteps of our forerunners.
Onward!
Let's crush the poisonous roots of the bourgeoisie beneath our feet,
And march on to the glorious road of communism!



*From *New Year's Day* — to the tune of *Ju Meng Ling*, a poem written by Chairman Mao T'stung in January 1930.

*Liu Teng-han and
Sun Shao-chen*

Sending Down the Rafts

We bid farewell to the green hills
And leave our forest hamlets;
With the speed of lightning,
Our rafts fly on to the distant horizon.
There's a thunderous roar of waves around us;
Wind and rain wash us clean of dust;
Trees wave from the banks to wish us well,
Urging insistently, "Faster, faster!
Faster, faster,
Our motherland is waiting for good lumber
In the big drive for production."

Circling hidden reefs,
Sliding beneath overhanging cliffs;

As the sun rises the river reflects its glory.
At the swing of our punting pole the mountains give way;
As our oars strike waves flee in fright.
When we chant a thousand hills turn green;
The river widens, mountains are dwarfed.
Songs pour from our hearts like a spring tide,
Ever expanding the river's vast waterways.

On we speed to the great steel centres
And the deep coal mines;
Every length of fine lumber on our rafts
Is needed for the construction of our motherland.
Avenues of new homes will be built,
Thousands of galleries in the mines
Will need our logs for props.
The strong backbones of our lumbermen
Will prop up the very arch of heaven.

We bid farewell to our green hills
And leave our forest hamlets;
Like prancing steeds our rafts speed on
Towards the far horizon.
Thunder rumbles in the gorges with our passing,
On wind and rain we'll reach the four corners of our land.
We order the reefs to stand aside
We must speed on, faster, faster —
For our beloved motherland
Is waiting.

Peng Yu-teh

Spring Night in a Mountain Village

Now the rally for spring ploughing's been called,
Tonight, no one can sleep in our village.
Though the ice hasn't melted, there's spring in the air;
Battledrums are sounding everywhere.

At the end of our village the women's brigade
Is carting manure through the snow.
They go like arrows leaving the bow,
Returning like wild swans in orderly flight.
We feel the warmth of spring in their song:
"We are the harbingers of spring!"
They've melted the ice on the path with their feet;
On snowy banks wild plum-trees blossom.

From our village workshop where tools are made
Comes the din of steady hammering.
While the Party secretary holds the tongs,
The brigade leader wields the hammer.
Around the walls in neat rows
Gleam hoes and sharp harrows;
All ready and waiting for the call to work.

Beneath a dim lamp in the livestock shed,
The old stockman is wiping his sweaty brow
As he carries loads of extra fodder
And fills the troughs with fresh water.
The sound of contented munching at the manger
Fills his kind heart with joy,
Then he says in his quiet way,
"Pal, you'll have to work extra hard tomorrow!"

Right after midnight the young ploughboy
Eagerly watches and longs for the dawn;
Beside the window he tries out his new whip;
Crack! It splits the night like thunder.
Alarmed, his mother says to him:
"Be quiet you madcap!
You'll wake your granny."
But opening granny's bedroom door
She sees the bed is empty;
Granny has already disappeared!

In the brigade leader's home,
Enthusiasm bubbles up like a new found spring.

Both an old granny in her seventies
And a little girl of eight
Insist he adds their names to the list of workers.
The old woman says:
“In agriculture, we must learn from Tachai.
We must make a greater contribution to humanity.
If you leave me out, an old poor peasant,
You’ll find you’re on the wrong line!”
The little girl also remarks loudly:
“We must build Tachai-like counties everywhere,
Grow more grain and prepare against war!
If you look down on our Children’s Corps
You must have wrong ideas in your head!”

Although a bit flustered by their clamour,
The brigade leader chuckles and agrees with them.
He gives them an answer on the spot:
“Yes, in agriculture we must learn from Tachai.
In our brigade every single one must pitch in!”
The sound of their laughter floats through the window,
The noise of their clapping rattles the door.

It’s a fine spring night in our mountain village
Our hearts are all seething with enthusiasm;
With hearts loyal to the revolutionary cause
We’re determined to follow Tachai’s pathway.

Shih Hsiang

Following in the Footsteps of Our Forerunners

The Golden Sand River Ferry

Here the water falls from a sheer cliff,
Each bank a high precipice,
Below a whirlpool spins its wheel,
For miles the roar of angry waves reverberates.
 Out on manoeuvres our troops must cross the river,
 Although there’s a bridge they prefer to use the ferry.

Low over the water like a stormy petrel,
A ferryboat skims the waves;
A youngster guides it by its broad rudder,
As he slices each wave with a long oar,
 Calling out gaily to the armymen:
 “PLA comrades, please come and use my boat!”

In the full flower of his youth he stands,
Wearing a blue jacket and blue turban on his head,
The usual clothes of a Tai youth.
But he speaks with a Shanghai accent!
 "Do you know that old Tai boatman
 Who once helped our Red Armymen to cross this river?"

"Yes, he's at a Party committee meeting
And I'm his new apprentice now.
Although my old home is in Shanghai
I've come as a student to work on this ferry.
 You must excuse me if I lack my master's skill
 For I've not been long on this new job."

Above the din of rushing water we hear him laugh;
To wipe his brow he tosses off his blue Tai turban.
Ah! Look, our ferryman's a girl with bobbed hair!
She rows on full of youthful energy, saying,
 "My dad said that I should come here to work
 And follow in the footsteps of our Red Armymen."

So, once again we cross the Golden Sand River,
The ferryboat flies from bank to bank.
On our way we go, continuing our march,
To fight for revolution like our forerunners.
 We youngsters follow the trail of the Long March
 Pointed out by Chairman Mao; we'll keep the red flag flying.

Crossing the Tatu River

Each wave tosses its snowy mane
Then races madly on;
After breaking camp our troops march swiftly on
With increasing speed.

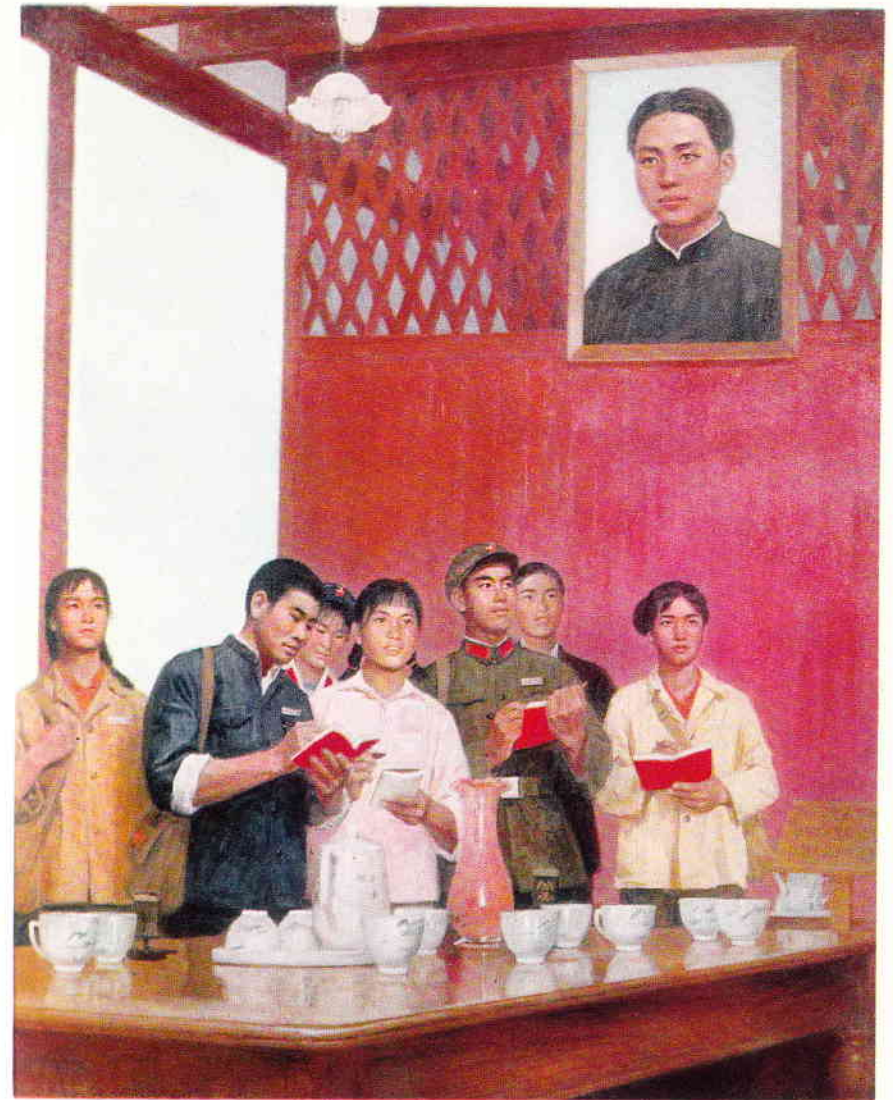
On our left the fathomless water,
On our right the towering peak;
Rugged and tortuous the way between,
A dangerous path, but what have we to fear?

When our Red Armymen first stormed this Luting Bridge
They'd marched eighty miles the preceding day.
Now we're battling imperialism and revisionism,
We too must seize the day, seize the hour!

Each man passes like a shadow
Swift as the lightning's flash;
The drumming of their footsteps resounds
Like a sudden summer downpour.

At dusk, peaks and river fade;
Clouds and trees melt into the distance.
When night falls, all is pitch dark,
Then each man carries a flaming torch,
A string of red stars between mountain and river,
A fiery dragon flying through space.

Battling against time we go forward
Speed wins new victories.
As the bugle sounds under the morning sky,
Our red flag flies over Luting Bridge.



A Lesson on the Party's History
(oil painting) by *Wu Chien*

Climbing the Snow-Clad Mountain

A glistening peak, a pillar propping up the sky;
A dazzling blade, a sword piercing heaven's splendour,
A crest of snow rearing its head in space,
A thousand feet of ice in a single precipice

Who can follow the path amid such snow?
Who can scale a peak of ice as smooth as glass?
"Joyously crossing Minshan under a thousand *li* of snow."*
Who is singing? The words re-echo in a thousand valleys.

Now our troops are here for exercises,
Following the trail of the Long March;
For us this mountain fastness is a yardstick
By which to appraise the length of our determined strides.

We drink a bowl of steaming pepper soup,
And swallow a fistful of snow,
Remembering when our Red Army men scaled these heights
We too are filled with courage, our hearts afire.

It's no hardship to be a thousand feet above sea level;
At two thousand feet our legs are strong and steady;
Three thousand feet above sea level we have our wits about us;
At four thousand feet our vision is still clear.

*From *The Long March*, a poem written by Chairman Mao Tsetung in October 1935.

Sudden sunshine, sudden rain and battering hail;
Then lightning flash and peals of thunder.
In one day all seasons converge to test us;
Spring, summer, autumn and winter we pass safely through.

Hand in hand we ascend the windswept height,
Shoulder to shoulder we scale the sheer cliffs;
Through snow we scramble, crawl over ice,
Our lusty singing shakes the earth.

From the summit we gaze afar,
Peaks follow peaks in endless ranks.
Onward! We are the new generation of Red Armymen,
No perilous heights can ever deter us.



LU HSUN'S WRITINGS

Waiting for a Genius

— *A lecture delivered to the alumni of Peking Normal
University's middle school on January 17, 1924*

I am afraid my talk will be of no use or interest to you, for I really have no special knowledge; but after putting this off so long I have finally had to come here to say a few words.

It seems to me that among the many requests shouted at writers and artists today, one of the loudest is the demand for a genius. And this clearly proves two things: first, that there is no genius just now in China; secondly, that everybody is sick and tired of our modern art. Is there really no genius? There may be, but we have never seen one and neither has anyone else. So judging by the evidence of our eyes and ears we can say there is not — not only no genius, but no public capable of producing a genius.

Genius is not some freak of nature which grows of itself in deep forests or wildernesses, but something brought forth and nurtured by a certain type of public. Hence, without such a public there will be no genius. When crossing the Alps, Napoleon once declared, "I am higher than the Alps!" But we must not forget how many

troops he had at his back while making this grandiose statement. Without these troops he would simply have been captured or driven back by the enemy on the other side; and then, far from seeming heroic, his behaviour and boast would have appeared those of a madman. To my mind, then, before we expect a genius to appear, we should first call for a public capable of producing a genius. In the same way, if we want fine trees and lovely flowers we must first have good soil. The soil, actually, is more important than the flowers and trees, for without it nothing can grow. Soil is essential to flowers and trees, just as good troops were to Napoleon.

Yet judging by present-day pronouncements and trends, the demand for genius goes hand in hand with attempts to destroy it — some would even sweep away the soil in which it might grow. Let me give a few examples:

First, take “restoring our national culture”. Although the new ideas have never made much headway in China, a pack of old men — young ones too — are already scared out of their wits and ranting about our national culture. “China has many good things,” they assure us. “To run after what is new instead of studying and preserving the old is as bad as renouncing our ancestral heritage.” Of course, it carries enormous weight to trot out our ancestors to make a point; but I cannot believe that before the old jacket is washed and folded no new one must be made. As things stand at present, each can do as he pleases: old gentlemen who want to restore our national culture are naturally at liberty to pore over dead books by their southern windows, while the young can have their living studies and modern art. As long as each follows his own bent, not much harm will be done. But to rally others to this banner would mean cutting China off for ever from the rest of the world. To demand this of everyone is even more fantastic! When we talk with curio-dealers, they naturally praise their antiques, but they never berate painters, peasants, workers and the rest for forgetting their ancestors. The fact is they are far more intelligent than many traditional scholars.

Then take “extolling original work”. Looked at superficially, this seems quite in keeping with the demand for genius; but such is not the case. It smacks strongly of chauvinism in the realm of ideas,

and thus will also cut China off from the current of world opinion. Although many people are already tired of hearing the names of Tolstoy, Turgenev and Dostoevsky, how many of their books have been translated into Chinese? Those who look no further than our own borders dislike such names as Peter and John and will only accept Chang the Third or Li the Fourth, and so we get original writers. Actually, the best of them have simply borrowed some technical devices or expressions from foreign authors. However polished their style, the content usually falls short of translations, and they may even slip in some old ideas to suit the traditional Chinese temperament. But their readers fall into this trap, their views becoming more and more confined, until they almost shrink back between the old traces. When such a vicious circle exists between writers and readers for the abolition of all that is different and the glorification of the national culture, how can genius be produced? Even if one were to appear, he could not survive.

A public like this is dust, not soil, and no lovely flowers or fine trees will grow from it.

Then, again, take destructive criticism. There has long been a great demand for critics, and now many have appeared. Unhappily, quite a number of them are carpers rather than critics. As soon as a work is sent to them, they indignantly grind their ink and lose no time in penning a most superior verdict: “Why, this is too childish. What China needs is a genius!” Later even those who are not critics learn from them and raise the same clamour. In actuality, the first cry of even a genius at birth is the same as that of an ordinary child, it cannot possibly be a beautiful poem. And if you trample something underfoot because it is childish, it is likely to wither and die. I have seen several writers reduced to shuddering silence by abuse. There was doubtless no genius among them, but even the run-of-the-mill I would like to keep.

Of course, destructive critics have great fun galloping over tender shoots. The ones to suffer are the tender shoots — ordinary shoots as well as shoots of genius. There is nothing disgraceful in childishness, for childishness and maturity in writing are like childhood and manhood among human beings. A writer need not be ashamed of

making a childish start, because unless trampled underfoot he will grow to maturity. What is incurable is decadence and corruption. I would let those who are childish — some of them may be old people with childlike hearts — express themselves in a childish way, speaking simply to please themselves; and when the words are said or even published, there let the business end. No attention need be paid to any critics, whatever banners they carry.

I dare say nine-tenths of the present company too would like to see a genius appear. Yet as matters stand at present, it is not only hard to produce a genius but also hard to have the soil from which a genius could grow. It seems to me that while genius is largely inborn, anyone can become the soil to nurture genius. For us to provide the soil is more realistic than to demand the genius; for otherwise, even if we have hundreds of geniuses they will not be able to strike root for lack of soil, like bean-sprouts grown on a plate.

To be the soil we must become more broad-minded. In other words we must accept new ideas and free ourselves of the old fetters, so as to be able to accept and appreciate any future genius. We must not despise humble tasks either. Those who can write should naturally do so; others can translate, introduce, enjoy, read, or use literature to kill time. It may sound rather odd to speak of killing time with literature, but at least this is better than trampling it underfoot.

Of course the soil cannot be compared with genius, but even to be the soil is difficult unless we persevere and spare no pains. Still, where there's a will there's a way, and here we have a better chance of success than if we wait idly for a heaven-sent genius. In this lie the strength of the soil and its great expectations, as well as its reward. For when a beautiful blossom grows from the soil, all who see it naturally take pleasure in the sight, including the soil itself. You need not be a blossom yourself to feel a lifting of your spirit — provided, always, that soil has a spirit too.

Miscarriage and Extinction

Recently the vicious epithet “miscarriage” has been clapped on the work of young writers, and many people have joined in the ballyhoo. I am sure that the man who first used this epithet was simply talking at random, not with any malice aforethought. To join in is excusable too, for after all this is the way of the world.

The one thing I cannot understand is why we Chinese are so contented with existing conditions, so dead against any relatively new trends; so tolerant of the status quo, so hypercritical of anything new.

Gentlemen of superior intellect and great vision have instructed us: If you can't give birth to a sage, a hero or a genius, then don't give birth; if you can't write an immortal work, don't write; if reforms won't change the world overnight into a paradise, or at least into a better place for me (!), then on no account make any changes. . . .

Are such men conservative? No, we are told, they are not. In fact they are revolutionaries. They are the only ones with a programme of reform which is fair and proper, safe and balanced, peaceful and absolutely foolproof. Research on this is being carried out at this very moment in research institutes — only these researches are not completed yet.

When will they be completed? The answer is: We don't know.

To adult eyes, a toddler's first step is certainly childish, dangerous, awkward or downright ridiculous. But however foolish a woman may be, she always looks forward eagerly to her baby's first step and would certainly never hound him to death because he walks childishly and may get in some public figure's way. She would certainly never force him to stay in bed and carry on researches, lying down, until he has grasped how to run. For she knows that, in that case, he may live to be a hundred without learning to walk.

This is how it has been since time immemorial: so-called scholars have tried openly or under cover to hedge in the rising generation with prohibitions. In recent times, of course, they have been more polite; but anyone who tries to break out will probably be intercepted by academics and men of letters who will invite him to stop and take a seat. Then will follow reasoning: investigation, study, cogitation, self-cultivation . . . until finally he dies there of old age. Otherwise, he will be labelled a "trouble-maker". I, too, like the young people of today, once asked the way from dead and not yet dead teachers. All of them said: "Don't go north, south, east or west." But not one of them told me what direction to take. At last I discovered what was in their minds. It was simply, "Don't go anywhere at all."

To sit down and wait for peace and quiet, for progress, would of course be a fine thing if feasible; but I am afraid we would grow old and die before what we were waiting for materialized. To neither give birth nor miscarry but wait for the advent of a child prodigy would be most delightful too; but I am afraid we would end up with nothing.

If we think extermination preferable to bearing children who are not outstanding, there is nothing more to be said. But if we always want to hear men's footsteps, then I think miscarriage is still more hopeful than not giving birth, for it proves beyond a doubt that we can give birth.

December 20, 1925

Introducing Yi-Pa* Art Society's Exhibition of Amateur Works

Those who pride themselves today on their fine discrimination speak of "art for humanity". But in present-day society there cannot possibly be any art of this kind. Look, even those who speak of "art for humanity" have also divided men into the categories of right and wrong, or good and bad, and they bark and snap at those whom they have labelled wrong or bad.

So present-day art will always be despised, cold-shouldered or persecuted by some people while winning sympathy, backing and support from others.

The Yi-pa Art Society cannot be an exception to this rule either; for in this old society it is new, youthful and progressive.

Actually in recent years there have been no real artists in China. Those known as "artists" win a name not for their art but rather for their qualifications and the titles of their works, which they deliberate-

*An art society organized by students of the West Lake Art Academy in Hangchow, Chekiang. Since it was founded in 1929, the eighteenth year of the Republic, it was called Yi-pa (or eighteen) Art Society.

ly make exotic, ambiguous, bizarre or imposing, tricking and awing people into thinking them terrific. However, the age is progressing ceaselessly, and here now stand works by new, young and unknown artists whose sober outlook and determined efforts have enabled these vigorous new shoots to emerge from the brambles and grow steadily.

Of course, this work is very juvenile. But precisely because it is juvenile, herein lies the hope.

And this aspect is the only one I shall touch on here.

May 22, 1931



Keeping a Diary on the Long March (traditional Chinese painting) by Chen Yen-ning

Herein Lies the Hope

— Reading Lu Hsun's essays on his hopes for the young

“As long as I can raise one flower, I have no objection to serving as the grass that rots to form compost.” So wrote Lu Hsun in 1929 in his preface for *Modern Short Stories of the World*. This vivid simile shows his love and support for the new and the young as well as his self-sacrificing spirit, his eagerness to devote his life to the revolution. This spirit pervaded his whole glorious life.

Lu Hsun lived in an age when the old was being ousted by the new and a fierce struggle was raging between progress and retrogression in China. He took an active part in the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal movement which started on May 4, 1919 under the influence of the October Revolution, issuing a bold “call to arms” to promote a new literature and a new morality. He whole-heartedly supported the new revolutionary things that emerged in the course of this movement, and he fought stubbornly against all manner of reactionary groups and trends aimed at fostering the cult of Confucius and resuscitating the past.

The cultural revolution that arose out of the May 4th Movement was a thoroughgoing revolutionary movement opposing feudalism. It shook the very foundations of the old society and therefore aroused the frenzied opposition of the feudal retrogressive forces. In an attempt to stop the spread of revolutionary ideas, the die-hards viciously attacked the new movement, bringing various charges against new ideas and new phenomena in the vain hope of killing them in the cradle. Lu Hsun fearlessly fought back against those die-hards who defended the old institutions and old ideas, pointing out that "though they are clearly of this modern age, breathing the air of the present, they want to enforce mouldering Confucianism and a dead language and heap insults on the present." Such people glorified as the "national essence" all that served the needs of feudalism and imperialism, the old culture that advocated Confucian doctrines and the old educational system and old morality that poisoned the youth. Lu Hsun scathingly compared such a "national essence" with a tumour on a man's face and proposed that it should be ruthlessly removed.

After the May 4th Movement some comprador-bourgeois scholars with Hu Shih as their spokesman put forward the reactionary slogan of "restoring our national culture", advocating retrogressive Confucian doctrines in a futile attempt to check the propagation of Marxism in China and to stop intellectuals and students from joining the revolution. They spoke of the need for "genius" in China, using this as a specious pretext to criticize the original work of young people. To oppose this sinister trend, support new writings and encourage young people to express themselves boldly, Lu Hsun, when invited by the students of Peking Normal University and Peking University to give a talk in the Normal University's middle school in January 1924, entitled his talk *Waiting for a Genius*. He tore to pieces the idea of "genius" which those bourgeois scholars and savants had presented as so esoteric, pointing out, "Genius is not some freak of nature which grows of itself in deep forests or wildernesses, but something brought forth and nurtured by a certain type of public. Hence, without such a public there will be no genius." He made it clear too that the birth of a "genius" is inseparable from social practice, saying, "In actuality, the first cry of even a genius at birth is the same as that of an ordinary

child, it cannot possibly be a beautiful poem." Thus he argued that tender shoots — ordinary shoots as well as "shoots of genius" — must be protected, to enable them to grow through social practice, to grow to maturity, blossom and bear fruit.

In this talk Lu Hsun cuttingly debunked various fallacies aimed at impeding the growth of new things. He pointed out sharply that men like Hu Shih who advocated the study of the past and "trot out our ancestors to make a point", were really intent on "cutting China off for ever from the rest of the world" and stopping our society from making progress. He called upon young people to learn real knowledge from the current struggle and to create their own new art.

No new things can be perfect from the start. They have to develop from a childish stage to maturity. So the die-hards who oppose reforms and progress always raise a great hullabaloo criticizing new works as puerile. Lu Hsun forcefully refuted this, reasoning, "There is nothing disgraceful in childishness, for childishness and maturity in writing are like childhood and manhood among human beings." In *Miscarriage and Extinction* he angrily denounced the "back-to-the-past" bourgeois writers of his time who clapped the vicious epithet "miscarriage" on the works of young writers. "The one thing I cannot understand," he wrote, "is why we Chinese are so contented with existing conditions, so dead against any relatively new trends; so tolerant of the status quo, so hypercritical of anything new." He also pointed out that those "gentlemen of superior intellect and great vision" preached "If you can't give birth to a sage, a hero or a genius, then don't give birth; if you can't write an immortal work, don't write; if reforms won't change the world overnight into a paradise, or at least into a better place for me (!), then on no account make any changes. . . ." They presented their programme as "fair and proper, safe and balanced, peaceful and absolutely foolproof", setting themselves up as teachers and guides for the young. Lu Hsun indignantly exposed them as die-hard defenders of the old system whose so-called foolproof programme simply forbade people to walk, forbade the young to make revolution. He disclosed that reactionaries such as these did not want the newly born to develop but in reality hoped for its extinction.

Lu Hsun believed that we must be able to see that new young things represent the future, and we should not be overcritical because they are not yet perfect. In an essay on language reform written in 1935 he said, "Cultural reforms are as irresistible as the flow of a mighty river. If the flow could be stopped, it would become stagnant water. . . . Of course it would be good if it could flow on without causing any damage, but in actual fact such a thing can never happen. A torrent will never turn back to its old channel, there must be changes in its course; and no situation can remain static, there must be reforms. Again, there is no such thing as pure gain with no loss; all we can do is weigh up the gain and the loss." By this he meant that we must see the main trend and essence of a thing, not ignoring what is significant and exaggerating what is unimportant or letting minor defects alarm us. However many shortcomings a new thing may have, it represents the progressive trend in historical development and therefore has infinite vitality and a great future; whereas all reactionary, moribund things, however "perfect", can have no future and are doomed to perish.

Lu Hsun always did his utmost to protect the young shoots of revolutionary literature and art of the proletariat, as well as young writers and artists doing revolutionary work. On February 7, 1931 when Yin Fu and four other young revolutionary writers were secretly murdered by the Kuomintang, Lu Hsun in great anguish wrote an indignant protest against this fascist act. His essays *The Revolutionary Literature of the Chinese Proletariat and the Blood of the Pioneers* and *The Present Condition of Art in Darkest China* also denounced the crimes of the Kuomintang reactionaries before the Chinese people and people of the world. He warned young people never to forget the dastardly savagery of the enemy and encouraged them to go on fighting. When he wrote a preface for Yin Fu's poems, he paid this high tribute to the martyred young poet: "This book is a glimmer in the east, an arrow whistling through the forest, a bud at the end of winter, the first step in the army's advance, a great banner of love for the pioneers, a monument of hate for the despoilers." He praised this work in particular because "these poems belong to an utterly different world".

One typical example of Lu Hsun's loving concern for new art and young artists is the help he gave to the new Chinese woodcut art and woodcut artists. Traditional Chinese woodcuts had deteriorated due to suppression by the reactionary ruling class. In order to resuscitate this popular art form, Lu Hsun did his best to encourage young woodcut artists. He collected woodcut prints for them and gave them his own precious collection to learn from. He also helped to get their works printed, organized exhibitions for them, and wrote prefaces for their albums to arouse public interest. *Introducing Yi-Pa Art Society's Exhibition of Amateur Works* published in this issue was an example of this. In this short introduction Lu Hsun exposed the hypocrisy of the slogan "art for humanity" put out by reactionary bourgeois writers, and showed his clear stand, his unreserved support for the new, progressive works of amateur artists. He praised the unknown young artists "whose sober outlook and determined efforts have enabled these vigorous new shoots to emerge from the brambles and grow steadily". In the end he wrote with conviction, "Of course this work is very juvenile. But precisely because it is juvenile, herein lies the hope".

Lu Hsun's passionate support of the new and the young stemmed from the needs of the proletarian revolution. He said, "The old society is so strongly entrenched that unless the new movement has greater strength it cannot shatter it." That was why he urged, "We must build up a great contingent of new fighters." It was his earnest hope that "in future there will be endless contingents, their banners shading the sky". Under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party the new forces of the revolution formed a mighty contingent to wipe out the old man-eating social system and to build a new communist world. This was his main basis for supporting new forces.

Forty years have passed since the death of this great revolutionary, Lu Hsun. But his ardent championship of the new and the young has lost none of its splendour with the passage of time, and will always be worthy of our study and commemoration. Today, after the Cultural Revolution, new socialist phenomena have appeared on many different fronts in China. Some examples of these are: the integration of young, middle-aged and old cadres in leading groups; cadres going to cadre schools to steel themselves through manual labour; and school-leavers

going to settle down in the countryside. All these new phenomena embody communist features and reflect the basic interests of the Chinese working class and revolutionary masses; hence they are acclaimed and supported by our people. Yet Teng Hsiao-ping, the biggest unrepentant capitalist-roader in our Party, stubbornly promoted a counter-revolutionary revisionist line in opposition to Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line in order to achieve his aim of restoring capitalism in China. In late summer last year he fanned up a sinister Right deviationist wind to reverse the correct verdicts passed earlier on. He spread the ludicrous idea that "the present is not as good as the past", attacked the Cultural Revolution, vilified new socialist phenomena and faulted or tried to suppress everything new. This Right deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts is being counter-attacked today by the masses. In this situation, when we re-read Lu Hsun's essays supporting new forces and recall how Lu Hsun criticized and fought against the erroneous trends of his day, his writings help us to understand more clearly the reactionary nature of Teng Hsiao-ping's revisionist line and the threat it posed to our socialist revolution.

NOTES ON LITERATURE AND ART

Hsiao Fu

New Developments in Chinese Acrobatics

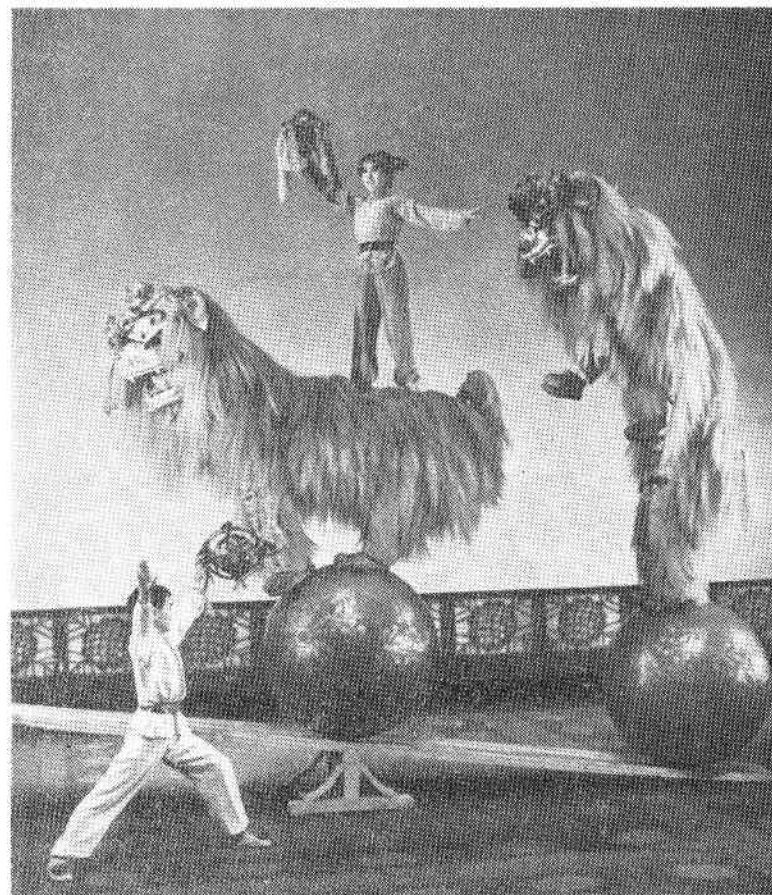
After the national dance festival, a festival of acrobatics was held in March and April in Peking. More than two thousand acrobats from different provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions and army units gave thirty-two performances in all, presenting more than four hundred items which were enthusiastically received by the worker-peasant-soldier audiences.

This festival was a grand review of China's revolutionary acrobatics since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. It was held at an excellent time when the literary and art front had won a great victory in the struggle to beat back the Right deviationist wind instigated by Teng Hsiao-ping. Taking class struggle as the key link, Chinese acrobats had taken an active part in this struggle. The festival showed the new flourishing of Chinese acrobatics under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in art after being steeled in the struggles of the Cultural Revolution and under the impetus of the revolution in art and literature exemplified by the model revolutionary theatrical works.

Chinese acrobatics have a history of more than two thousand years. Since the Cultural Revolution, guided by Chairman Mao's directives "Make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China" and "Let a hundred flowers blossom; weed through the old to bring forth the new", our artistes have critically assimilated the fine heritage of the past and introduced bold innovations as well as new socialist content, so that this ancient art has regained its youthful vigour. The items presented in this festival were qualitatively different not only from pre-Liberation acrobatics but also from items performed before the Cultural Revolution when acrobatics were under the domination of the revisionist line in literature and art. The spirited turns put on by various troupes made it clear that there has been a great improvement in technique and artistry, and that many new talents and new items have appeared. Thus this festival made a deep impression on people.

The *Lion Dance* is a popular traditional item with a long history. Since the Cultural Revolution it has been considerably improved. In this dance, four artistes masquerade as two lions while two others put them through various tricks — somersaulting and balancing — to reveal closely co-ordinated acrobatic skill. The two lions may prance about on stilts three or four metres high, or roll down from a high platform. The troupe from Honan Province made the lions walk on a rope and climb up to a platform seven metres high, their awkward yet difficult movements vividly showing the animals' naivety and courage. The innovators of this traditional dance have also paid attention to bringing out the agility and courage of the lion-trainers. For instance, one artiste in the Shenyang Troupe makes a back-somersault to land on the back of a lion and to ride it, vividly conveying the revolutionary spirit of Chinese youth and their daring to subdue all opponents.

Other traditional items such as group acrobatics showed bold innovations too, many individual feats having been refashioned to present beautiful and spectacular stunts. Some troupes had adapted gymnastic techniques. Thus one artiste turned a complete circle or two consecutive circles in the air as he somersaulted over other acrobats



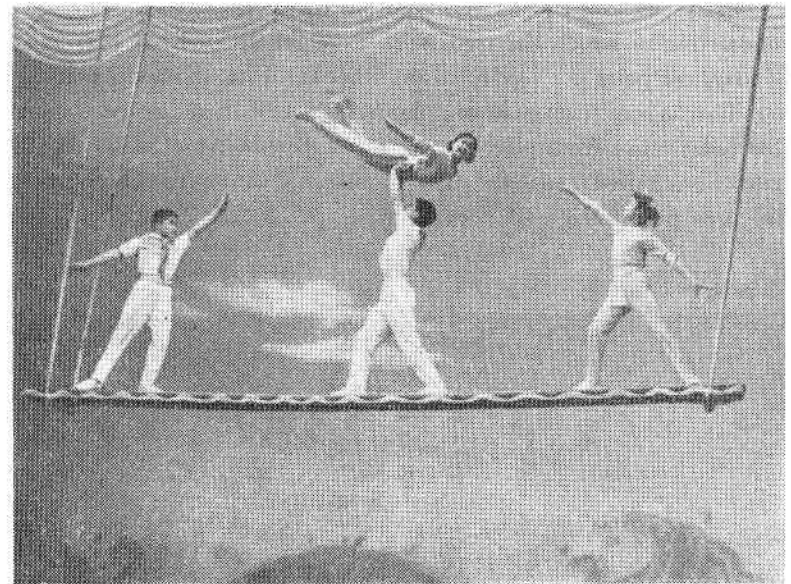
Lion Dance

standing on their hands on a vaulting-horse, displaying agility and fearlessness of a high order.

Women acrobats played an outstanding part in this festival. By mastering certain most difficult techniques they have greatly improved their art. For example, during recent years many variations of bicycle stunts have succeeded in bringing out the spirit of our age. Trick cycling may be a solo or joint performance. The cyclist riding a single-wheeled machine may perform juggling tricks such as kicking

bowls up on to the top of her head, or she may balance the bicycle on a high platform, on another bicycle, or on a tight-rope. The most popular item of this kind is probably collective riding on bicycles or single-wheelers. A group of girls on a single-wheeler, for instance, put on a skilful spirited performance, now forming a single row, now forming a flower pattern, now waving long silk streamers and joyously dancing the *Red Silk Dance*. In collective gymnastics five,

Trick Cycling



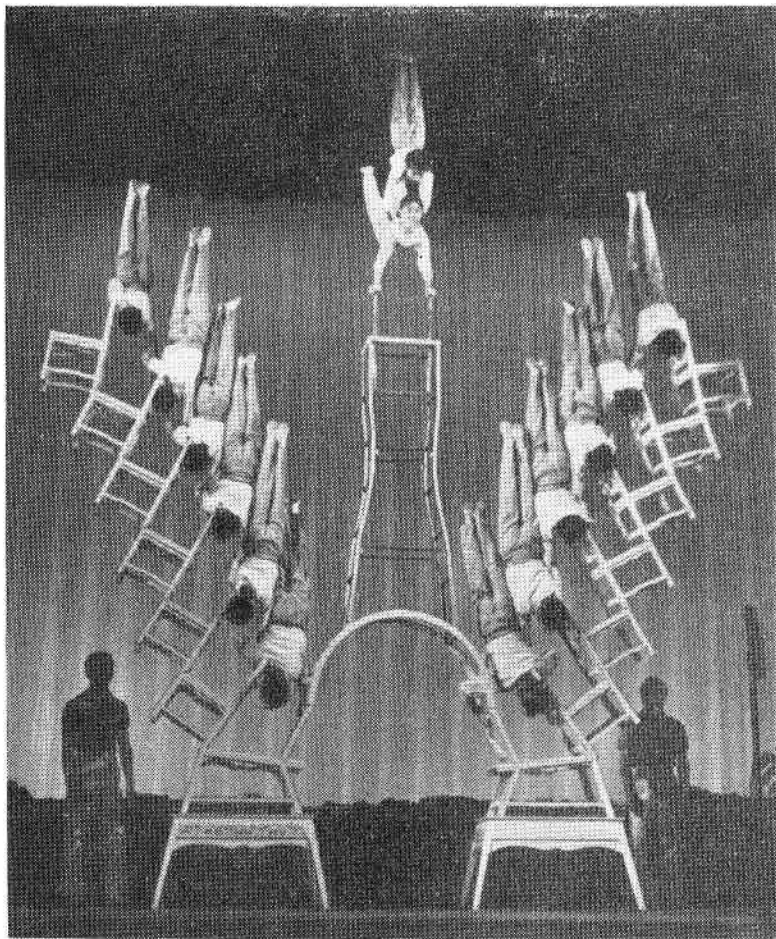
Swing

seven or eleven gymnasts present a variety of vigorous and beautiful tableaux on a bicycle. Formerly the “support” was almost invariably a man, and no more than eleven gymnasts took part. In this festival women often acted as the “support”, and in one item fourteen girls on one bicycle formed the tableau of a peacock fanning its tail — an entirely new departure.

The better to carry out the directive “**weed through the old to bring forth the new**”, our acrobats have changed many old conventions, devising new décor and new modes of expression. For example, before the Cultural Revolution *Balancing Bowls on the Head* was usually performed on a table or chair; but in recent years our equilibrists have balanced on other artistes’ shoulders, hands or heads, while the “supports” move freely round the stage; and this has enriched the performing technique. Moreover this turn can now be put on without any stage at all.

Balancing on Two Poles is another new item developed from a traditional one in which the two poles were set up in fixed positions. Today, the poles are supported on other acrobats' shoulders and the equilibrists leap from pole to pole in a series of balancing feats. As the poles move from place to place, a higher degree of skill and accuracy is required than in the past. Similar innovations have been made in turns performed with ropes and whips, as well as mimicry and

Balancing on Chairs



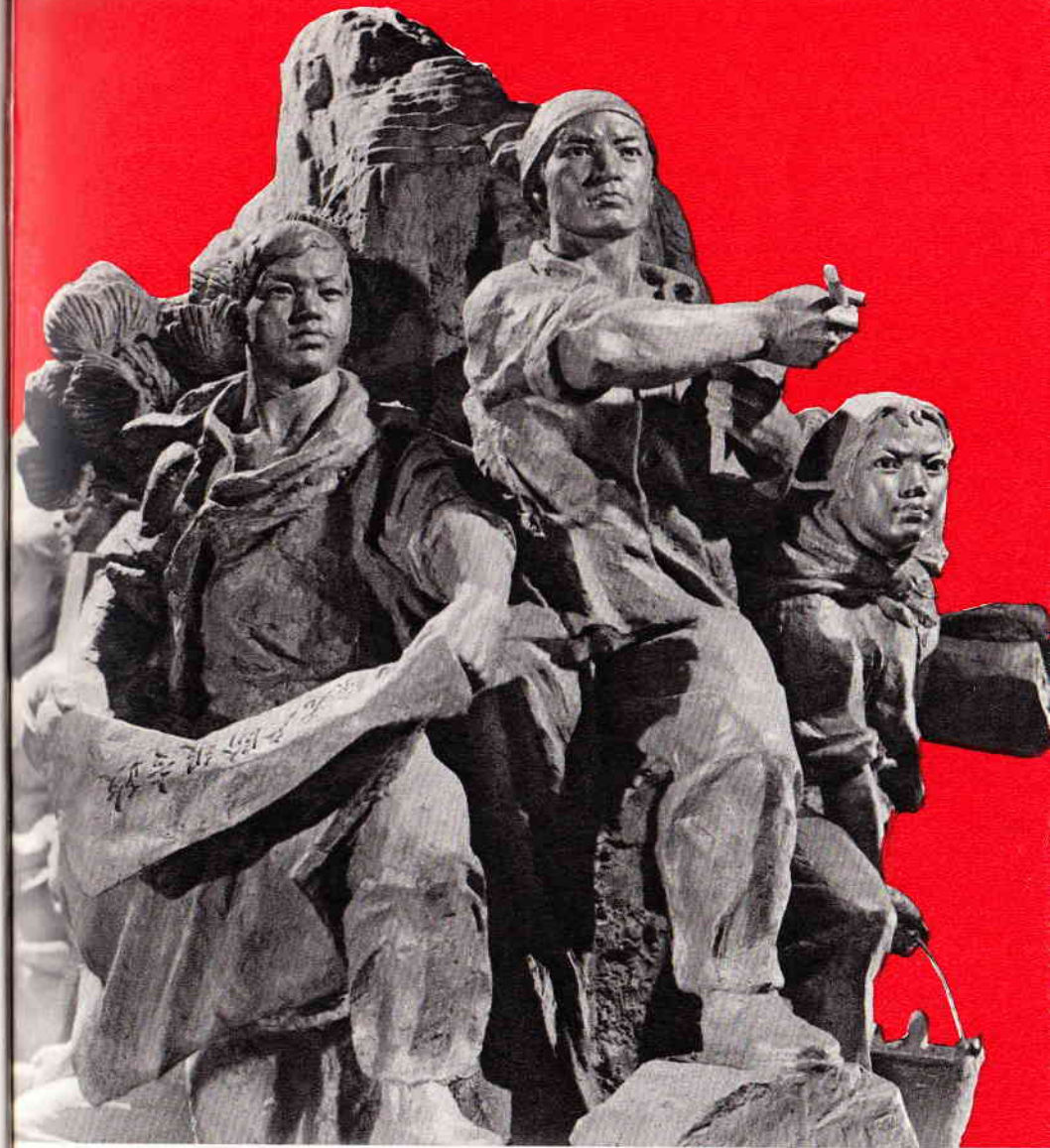
conjuring tricks; and these items have all proved popular with the masses.

To improve their art our acrobats have also made a serious study of the experience of the model revolutionary theatrical works. They have carefully rearranged the acrobatic movements, musical accompaniment, background scenery, costumes, stage properties and lighting effects in one organic whole, enhancing the artistic impact and reflecting more successfully the spirit of our socialist period. In the past, for example, the *Diabolo Game* was just a display of skill which tended to be rather monotonous. Now the deft manipulation of the diabolo is linked with dancing movements accompanied by gay folk music against a background of red plum-blossom in the snow, thus conveying the happy atmosphere of the Chinese Spring Festival. *Roller-skating, Balancing on Chairs, Lifting a Heavy Sword and Bending a Heavy Bow, Springing Through Rings* and other items have all gained in verisimilitude as a result of careful revision and better reflect the spirit of our age, showing the Chinese people's heroism and daring to scale the heights, so that now they make a stronger artistic impact.

Many new talents have appeared in Chinese acrobatics. This was one of the salient features of this festival in which many young artistes took part. Out of about two thousand participants, 30.8 per cent were youngsters under eighteen. The Liaoning Troupe consisted entirely of young acrobats, while they made up 69 per cent of the Kwangtung Troupe. Vigorous and energetic, these young artistes had mastered many difficult feats. Their performances were brilliant and masterly. Many of them were born during the Cultural Revolution, the youngest being only seven or eight. But despite their short period of apprenticeship, no more than two or three years, thanks to the guidance of Mao Tsetung Thought and good coaching by older artistes, these youngsters had a good basic training in acrobatics, sometimes even surpassing veteran artistes. They had thought up new items too and developed new skills, such as somersaulting and catching one another on a ladder, striking various poses on a swing, or fourteen girls balancing on chairs on their hands. All their turns were fresh regarding both their content and technique, their stage décor and their spirit. The emergence of a vigorous contingent of young Chi-

nese acrobats is a great victory for the revolution in literature and art and the revolution in education. It shows the achievement of the Cultural Revolution. Older artistes in this festival had also regained their youthful vigour and made new contributions.

This fresh flowering of Chinese acrobatics vividly refutes the reactionary claim that in our socialist literature and art "the present is inferior to the past", a Right deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts spread by Teng Hsiao-ping, the unrepentant capitalist-roader within the Party. It also forcefully debunks the revisionist line in literature and art before the Cultural Revolution.



Writing Revolutionary Posters

Song of the Tachai Spirit

Studying in the Fields



Moving Mountains



Rejoicing over a Bumper Harvest

New Group Sculpture “Song of the Tachai Spirit”

A number of group clay sculptures reflecting the exploitation and oppression of the old society have been created in China since Liberation and warmly welcomed by the masses. As our socialist revolution and construction develops, the workers, peasants and soldiers demand more and better sculptures depicting the new society and its heroes.

The clay group sculpture *Song of the Tachai Spirit* fully meets this need. This collective work was executed in Tachai by amateur art workers of Hsiyang County, Shansi Province and professional sculptors from the Fine Arts Institute of the May 7th Central Art College and the Kwangchow Art Company. It consists of three main sections comprising sixty-nine life-sized figures in the round or in high relief against a background in bas-relief.

Song of the Tachai Spirit acclaims the victory of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in Tachai and the new spirit of the brigade's poor and lower-middle peasants. Each section presents one aspect of their spirit and achievements.

The first depicts how the Tachai people have put proletarian politics in command and grasped class struggle in their everyday work. On the south side it shows three youngsters getting ready to put up big-character posters criticizing revisionism, so portraying the resolve of the brigade's poor and lower-middle peasants to repudiate capitalism and build socialism in a big way. Their far-sightedness, which has enabled them to see through revisionism, and their determined fight against capitalism, are a result of their conscientious study of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought. On the west side, commune members listen attentively as the woman Party secretary explains Chairman Mao's directives on the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, giving examples from Tachai's own struggle between the socialist and capitalist roads. An old, former poor peasant sits in front. As he fills his pipe, he intently observes the young woman speaker, smiling contentedly at the thought of this new generation of successors now maturing. On the north side, two girls are reading some writings by Marx, Lenin and Chairman Mao. The one holding the book is concentrating so hard that she has forgotten to drink from the bowl of water in her left hand. This scene shows another facet of the high political consciousness of the Tachai people.

The theme of the second section is the peasants' spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle. One tableau, "Moving Mountains" on the west side, executed in the style of revolutionary romanticism, depicts four people dislodging a huge rock. One is using a shoulder-pole as a lever; the others are pushing the rock with their bare hands. They are straining forward, their eyes fixed on the same point ahead, as together they make up a mighty force. The scene vividly portrays the heroism of the Tachai people who, defying all difficulties, have waged a courageous battle against nature.

The next tableau presents four commune members carrying stones in the swirling snow, again showing the Tachai spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle. The rapid progress Tachai has made in mechanizing farming since the Cultural Revolution is illustrated by the last two tableaux of this section: peasants blasting rocks and driving bulldozers. The vigorous modelling conveys the great strides made in agricultural production.

The third section projects the communist spirit of the brigade's poor and lower-middle peasants, their love for the collective and the state. "Conquering Heaven" evokes the peasants' combat in 1963 against the worst flood in decades. They fought side by side in the deluge to save the grain and animals belonging to their brigade before thinking of their own belongings and houses. A middle-aged man is struggling to shore up a stable on the verge of collapse, displaying the dauntless spirit embodied in the watchword, "If the sky falls, I'll prop it up." He symbolizes the heroic Tachai people who, armed with Mao Tsetung Thought, dare to conquer heaven and earth. Another scene, "Rejoicing over a Bumper Harvest", catches the peasants' enthusiasm and their determination to make a still greater contribution to our country and to the cause of the people of the world, showing another aspect of their noble communist spirit.

These sculptures are unaffected and very lifelike. Some techniques used in Chinese jade and ivory carving were used in addition to the usual methods for clay modelling. The artists have breathed life into this work to convey in a vivid, realistic way the revolutionary spirit of the poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai.

What the Revolution in Literature and Art Has Taught Me

Last summer and early autumn last year saw a reactionary trend in the realm of art attacking the model revolutionary theatrical works and praising the revisionist line which had prevailed for seventeen years before the Cultural Revolution. This was all at the instigation of Teng Hsiao-ping, the biggest unrepentant capitalist-roader in the Party. And to boost the old revisionist line in art those bourgeois elements even claimed that all the performers in our present revolutionary operas had been trained in the previous "seventeen years". This is a most vicious slander of our Cultural Revolution, as well as of each one of us who matured during the Cultural Revolution.

Our revolution in literature and art exemplified by the model revolutionary theatrical works has not only produced fine works of art and good experience, but has also brought up a contingent of artists of the working class. Should these achievements be accredited to the proletariat or to the bourgeoisie? To Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in literature and art, or to the old revisionist line? There must be no confusion on this fundamental issue. We Chinese



Yang Chun-hsia as Ko Hsiang in *Azalea Mountain*

stage artists have first-hand experience which gives us the greatest right to speak on the subject.

I am a stage artist brought up by the Party. I have performed in operas for more than twenty years since I first started learning to act at the age of eleven, and I have seen for myself the tremendous changes in Chinese opera. The old revisionist line tried to make me into a

“star”, a “prima donna” serving the bourgeoisie, but the Cultural Revolution rescued me from this dead end. Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line pointed out for me a golden road, enabling me to make a fresh start in revolution as well as in art. Contrasting the past with the present sets my mind in a tumult. I shall never forget how the Cultural Revolution educated and helped me, nor how the revisionist line in art fettered and poisoned my mind.

In 1954, while still a Young Pioneer wearing a red scarf, I entered the Shanghai Operatic School. At that time, under the domination of the revisionist line in literature and art, the school taught us nothing but old feudal operas praising such characters as emperors and kings, feudal generals and high officials, feudal scholars and young ladies. It also imbued us with the bourgeois desire for personal fame and profit, teaching us, “One whose technique is good will never lack for food.” The first scene I learned to act in this school was “The Casket Is Given As a Pledge of Love” from the *kunchu* opera *Palace of Eternal Youth*.^{*} At that time someone told me, “You’re cut out for playing young court ladies. This is the start of your training, so if you lay a good foundation you’ll have a great future.” I was cast as the emperor’s favourite, Lady Yang. In order to play this part well I had to imitate the gestures of a feudal court lady every day and sing, “Upon receiving the Imperial favour, I am transported to heaven,” and other similar lines which I could not possibly understand. Just think, what a huge gap there was between a Young Pioneer of new socialist China and a decadent palace favourite of feudal times! So while I was still a naive little girl this school dominated by the revisionist line started poisoning me with feudal and bourgeois ideas. For as Lenin long ago said, the aim of the revisionists was to train us as useful slaves for the bourgeoisie. After several years of being inculcated with bourgeois ideas of working hard to win personal fame and feudal Confucian precepts from those old operas, innocent youngsters were transformed into the old type of actors with no revolutionary ideals. So my outlook gradually changed. Intent on excelling

^{*}An opera by Hung Sheng (1645-1704) about the love of Emperor Ming-huang of the Tang Dynasty and his favourite Lady Yang.

in my acting and singing in those feudal operas, I lost interest in politics, became estranged from my comrades, and felt there was no need to be concerned for our country’s future or the revolution. That was how the school led me on to the wrong path of striving only for bourgeois fame and profit.

After graduation I was assigned to work in the Youth Peking Opera and *Kunchu* Opera Troupe of Shanghai. The literature and art front dominated by the revisionist line was pervaded with bourgeois ideas which contaminated every one of us. Some of my associates became decadent, others committed serious mistakes. And I too, befogged by the belief that art was supreme, plumed myself on being able to play parts requiring a certain degree of technical skill. However, those feudal operas which served the interests of the bourgeoisie were only praised by bourgeois elements — the workers, peasants and soldiers never enjoyed them. Once some poor and lower-middle peasants complained after seeing one of our performances, “You call yourselves a youth troupe, yet you only put on those old operas. Why don’t you give us some new socialist items?” This criticism gave me a strong jolt. But what was the correct orientation? What was the revolutionary road? I had no clear answer at that time to these questions. The revisionist line which had dominated the stage for the last decade and more had poisoned our minds with feudal, bourgeois and revisionist ideas, cutting us off from the masses. We were being turned into an intellectual élite and buried alive with the moribund Peking opera; we were being used as instruments to sabotage socialism and restore capitalism. The training we received before the Cultural Revolution served only to corrupt the minds of us young stage artists.

The year 1964 witnessed the start of the great revolution in Peking opera. Swept up in the mighty tide of this revolution, I gradually came to realize that an artist had no future unless he or she served the worker-peasant-soldier masses in the way pointed out by Chairman Mao. So I took my first step forward in the battle on the art front. In 1971 when the Peking Opera Troupe of Peking produced the revolutionary opera *Azalea Mountain*, the theme of which was that a peasant revolution could only succeed when led by the Communist

Party, I was cast as the heroine Ko Hsiang, Party representative of the peasant force. Deeply stirred by this honour, I was eager to play the part well; and I thought that my years of stage experience and early training would stand me in good stead. In fact, this turned out not to be the case. Not only were those old ideas and old conventions inadequate to portray this Party heroine — they proved the greatest stumbling-block to my progress.

The first difficulty I encountered was that my thoughts and feelings were all wrong. I was used to playing court ladies and young mistresses of rich families. Now that I had to play a Party representative, my colleagues all feared it was “out of character” for me, while I myself knew I was not up to portraying a heroine like Ko Hsiang. However, “character” is not something an actress is born with: it can be changed. And the only way for me to change the character given me by my old school was to follow Chairman Mao’s instruction that our literary and art workers must **“shift their stand; they must gradually move their feet over to the side of the workers, peasants and soldiers, to the side of the proletariat, through the process of going into their very midst and into the thick of practical struggles and through the process of studying Marxism and society”**.

Our leadership decided to give us our first lesson in the Chingkang Mountains. So with rucksacks on our backs my comrades and I went to this old revolutionary base where Chairman Mao had lived, and plunged into a life of struggle with the local peasants. Once some former poor peasants led us up the small mountain path along which Chairman Mao — then Commissioner Mao — had carried grain to Huangyangchieh, a famous strategic height. We sat down there in a circle under an oak to hear a story of how he had educated Red Armymen. Standing on that very spot, Chairman Mao had pointed to distant peaks below and urged the Red Armymen to see the whole of China from the Chingkang Mountains. The road of armed struggle which Chairman Mao opened up there proved to be the road to victory for the whole country. The greatness of Chairman Mao’s revolutionary practice gave me much food for thought. Looking back at the path we had travelled under the domination of

the revisionist line, how paltry it seemed! It was the Party and the Cultural Revolution initiated and led by Chairman Mao that had brought me back to the right path. I saw then that unless I remoulded my world outlook, eradicating the poisonous influence of the revisionist line, I would never be able to carry out the task given me by the Party and would fail to live up to the Party’s expectations of the younger generation.

However, the path forward was by no means smooth and easy. As we rehearsed the new opera, the sharp struggle between two ideologies was reflected in our work. For example, when we were rehearsing the fifth scene “Firm As a Rock in Midstream”, at first I could give no adequate portrayal of the thoughts and feelings of the heroine. To start with I looked very stern to show her firm revolutionary stand, so that my comrades protested, “You’re acting too stiffly, like a bureaucrat, without enough working-class feeling.” Thereupon I went to the other extreme, putting on an excessive display of gentleness and personal emotion. Then comrades pointed out sharply, “If you depict her in this way, her principled Party stand disappears completely.”

How was it that I had swung from one extreme to another? When I searched for the basic reason, I discovered it was the world outlook and view of art drilled into me by my old school. If one analyses and interprets the thoughts and feelings of a heroine like Ko Hsiang from a prejudiced bourgeois or petty-bourgeois standpoint, one is bound to distort her image. So I made a fresh study of the articles and poems written by Chairman Mao during that period, and came to see more clearly that the principled Party stand of a Communist does not conflict with his proletarian feeling for others — these two are integrated in his noble character. My portrayals of “sternness” or “gentleness” simply showed my petty-bourgeois feeling which was quite out of keeping with the heroine’s character and must therefore be rejected. I began to gain a better understanding of Ko Hsiang’s mentality when I grasped the relationship between the way she helps her comrades in this scene with Marxist reasoning and moves them with her proletarian feeling. This example shows that an actress who wants to project a correct image of a heroine and break

a new path in art must undergo a profound process of ideological remoulding.

Artistic technique must be remoulded too. When I played feudal young ladies it was a rule that "the wrists should not project from the sleeves, the teeth must not be revealed when smiling, the skirts must not be ruffled when walking". It would be quite impossible to portray our workers, peasants and soldiers with such conventions. Peking opera can only take on a new vitality if we remould the old art form and give it new content under the guidance of the proletarian world outlook. Unless thoroughly remoulded, those old conventions which I had learned could only act as fetters, so that I would not even know how to move my hands and feet. To give a good portrayal of a proletarian heroine, I must blaze a new trail in art and not stick to the old path. I was eager to do this but at the start I could not find a new path; so I had to study and work very hard.

Azalea Mountain shows many innovations in stage technique such as the use of rhymed dialogue. The leadership encouraged us to learn and draw nourishment from the labouring masses. The peasants taught us how to plant rice, harvest wheat and carry loads with a shoulder-pole, increasing our knowledge in class struggle and productive labour. While rehearsing, both our leadership and my comrades devised all sorts of ways to help me overcome one difficulty after another, enabling me to learn many new things which I could never have learned in my old school.

Formerly I had been rather poor in acrobatics; so now all my comrades helped me in this respect. To get one movement correct, some of them would practise it with me ten or twenty times a day. Again, my singing voice had lacked sonority; but now with the help of others I have greatly improved my singing and learned to make it more expressive by combining natural with falsetto singing and varying the delivery. The role of Ko Hsiang in this opera was created collectively and many people sweated hard over every single singing passage in it. Each gesture, each word spoken or sung, is the result of the intensive work and collective wisdom of our Party leadership and the masses.

All this brought it home to me that without the revolution in literature and art my generation of young artists would never have regained our youth. Now certain people are trying to take the credit for our achievement, attributing it to the training we received under the revisionist line. This is a blatant lie. What the bourgeoisie take the credit for is in fact their crime. Their aim was to restore the old society. Unless we debunk this slander thoroughly, there can be no flourishing of our socialist art.

When we look back at the sad lessons of the "seventeen years" before the Cultural Revolution and the glorious achievements of the last ten years, we literary and art workers feel deeply moved. We must never turn back, never allow a repetition of those "seventeen years". With class struggle as the key link, we must take action to defend the model revolutionary operas and the fruits of the Cultural Revolution. A fierce struggle is still going on. We must heighten our vigilance and join actively in this fight to hit back against the Right deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts. I have just taken one step forward on the long road of revolution in literature and art, but I am determined to forge ahead all my life following Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

CHRONICLE

Theatrical Performances over May Day

To celebrate May Day — International Labour Day — more than one hundred performances of theatrical items rich in content and varied in style were put on in Peking and Shanghai. They presented model revolutionary theatrical works, selections from these and adaptations of them in the form of local operas, plays, operas, songs and dances as well as new Peking operas, plays, *pingchu*, music, dances, *chuyi* (ballad-singing, story-telling and cross-talk), acrobatics and puppet shows.

The major content of the programmes performed by both professional and amateur artists was criticism of the capitalist-roader Teng Hsiao-ping and the struggle against the Right deviationist attempt to reverse the correct verdicts of the Cultural Revolution. To celebrate the great victories won in this struggle, the literary and art workers had quickly created and rehearsed a number of songs, *chuyi*, poetry recitals and dances for this occasion, such as: *Fight to Defend Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee*, a ballad; *Reversing Correct Verdicts Goes Against the Will of the People*, a dance; *Beat Back the Right Deviationist Wind*, a Peking opera; *Denouncing Teng Hsiao-ping*, a children's item; and the *pingtan* ballad *Defend the Victories of the Cultural Revolution*.

A salient feature of many of these performances was their acclaim of new socialist things and their reflection of the struggle in China of

the proletariat and the revolutionary masses against the capitalist-roaders in the Party.

The restaging of the model revolutionary theatrical works reflected their nationwide popularity and the fact that our socialist literature and art, inspired by these models, have been developing day by day. Many of the performers were young artistes who matured after the Cultural Revolution and who have brought a new vitality to our stage.

The grand May Day performances showed once again that the situation in our socialist literature and art is excellent.

New Films

A number of new feature films, films adapted from operas and animated films were released on May Day.

One of the colour feature films, *Ox-Horn Boulder*, shows how the poor and lower-middle peasants of a production brigade, under the leadership of the Party, keep to the socialist road and wage a struggle against the capitalist-roaders in the Party who push the revisionist line. Another, *Secret of the Absia River*, portrays children of minority nationalities in China who take an active part in class struggle and resourcefully capture a gang of thieves. *Brave Eagles in the Sky*, in black and white, tells how an air force unit of the Chinese People's Volunteers, with the help of the Korean people, smashed the air superiority of the U.S. imperialists in their fight to resist U.S. aggression in Korea, showing the heroism of the Chinese People's Volunteers and praising Chairman Mao's military thinking and proletarian internationalism. The short feature film *Chin-suo*, also in colour, presents the heroic deeds of a boy during the War of Resistance Against Japan.

Three colour films adapted from Shantung local operas are: *The New Educational System Is Fine*, *Driving the Pillar Three Times* and *Women Prop Up Half the Sky*. From different angles they reflect the new people, new things and new scenes in our socialist countryside.

Golden Wild Geese is a scissor-cut film describing how a group of Tibetan children smash the attempted sabotage of a reactionary herd-

owner, while *Trial Voyage*, an animated film adapted from a novel of the same title, shows the two-line struggle in China's ship-building industry.

Thai Culture Mission Tours China

The Thai Culture Mission toured China in April this year, and its performances were warmly welcomed by the Chinese people.

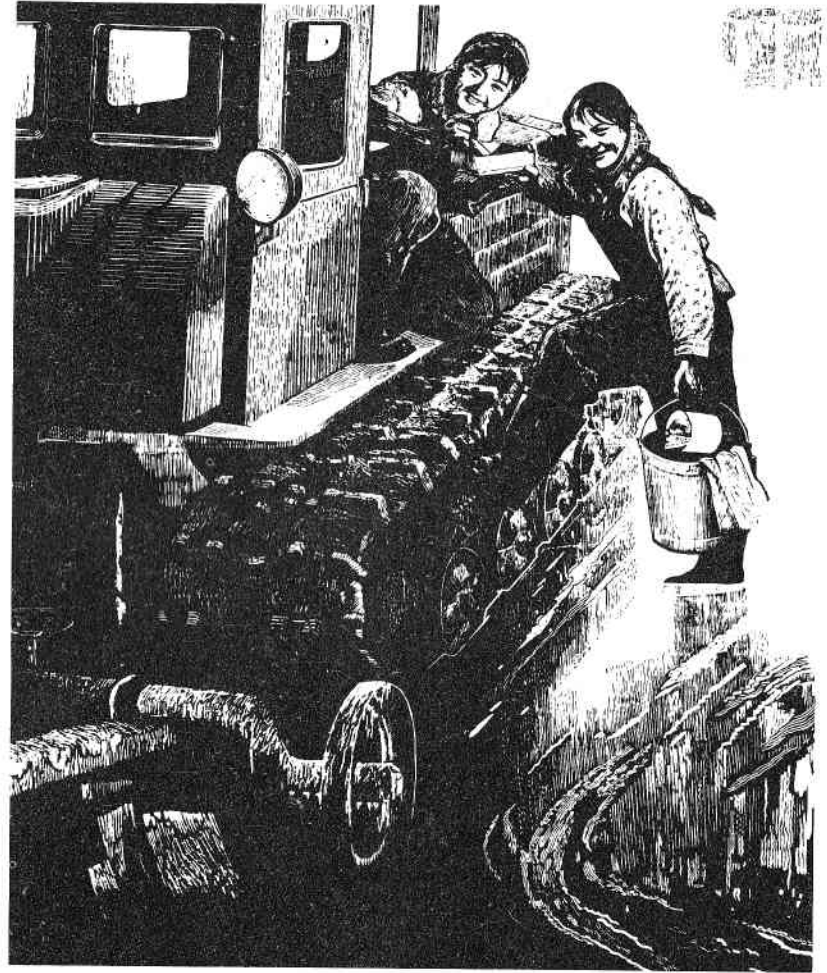
Traditional Thai dancing has a long history and is rich in national flavour. During their tour of China, the Thai artistes brought to us not only their ancient dances but also folk dances and athletic displays depicting the life and work of the Thai people. From different aspects, all their items portrayed the wisdom and other fine qualities of the industrious Thai people. The *Thai-Chinese Friendship Dance* which they presented praised the fraternal friendship between the peoples of Thailand and China. Through their tour, the Thai artistes made a new contribution to the promotion of the friendship between our two peoples and to the cultural exchange between our two countries.



Two Selections of Poems Published

Selected Poems from Hsiao-chin-chuang (Volume 2) and *No Typhoon Can Topple Us — Songs from Hsiao-chin-chuang* were published recently by the Tientsin People's Publishing House and the People's Literature Publishing House. The former contains 150 poems by 94 commune members and cadres, and the latter 155 poems by 90 commune members and cadres.

These poems, all written since last year — mainly in the struggle to beat back the Right deviationist wind — pay tribute to the deep proletarian feeling of Hsiao-chin-chuang's poor and lower-middle peasants for Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought, their strong indignation against the biggest unrepentant capitalist-roader in the Party Teng Hsiao-ping and the revisionist line he pushed, and their firm determination to defend Chairman Mao, the Party Central Committee and Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Conjuring up the clear-cut heroic images of the revolutionary masses whose slogans are: "No typhoon can topple us" and "Oppose revisionism", these forceful poems reflect the militant life of the Hsiao-chin-chuang commune members who have repudiated revisionism and are building socialism in a big way, warmly praising the new socialist things which have emerged in the course of their struggle.



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