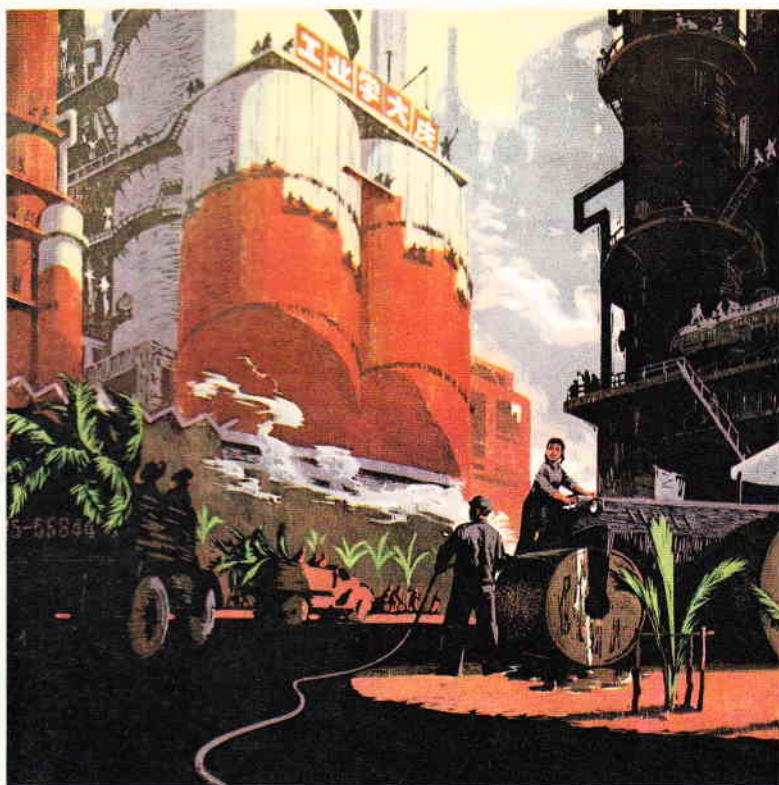


SSA

CHINESE LITERATURE



In this issue:

Investigation of a Chair (Peking opera)

The Undaunted (story)

Poems from Hsiao-chin-chuang

1976 **9**

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QUOTATION FROM CHAIRMAN MAO

Never forget class struggle

INVESTIGATION OF A CHAIR

(December 1975 script of the Shanghai Peking Opera Troupe)
Written by *Ab Chien*

Characters

Ting Hsiu-chin	<i>a brigade leader</i>
Wang Teh-chuan	<i>a militiaman</i>
Shen Chia-chang	<i>a well-to-do middle peasant</i>
Huang San-huai	<i>a landlord</i>

A summer evening in 1962.

The entrance to a village in Chekiang Province.

(As the curtain rises, the stage is bathed in moonlight, stars twinkle above and frogs are croaking in the background. To the left is the rear wall of a temple covered by vines and trumpet creepers. Formerly the ancestral temple of the Huang family, it is now the brigade's meeting hall. A big brown stone stands by the back door. To the right is a slope, flanked on one side by a crooked old camphor-tree

and by bushes and wild flowers on the other. In the background is a lotus pond.

The door opens, Huang San-huai cranes his head round it, then emerges, carrying a chair. He closes the door and walks right. As he approaches the stone, he thinks he hears something and hurriedly puts the chair down by the bushes. He runs both hands over it, sighing. Then, gnashing his teeth, he pulls out a matchet to pry up the chair seat.)

(Offstage Wang Teh-chuan calls, "Who goes there?" then enters, gun in hand, and patrols the area along the wall. In panic, Huang dodges behind the bush. Wang searches without discovering anyone.)

Wang (*sings*): *Chiang Kai-shek's gang clamour about a come-back, what rot!*
In this busy season, we must heighten our vigilance;
On patrol tonight I spotted a fitting shadow. . . .
(*He continues searching and discovers the chair.*)
Why, here's a redwood chair sitting by the slope!

(*Wang moves the chair and scrutinizes the bushes. Huang suddenly appears on the other side of them. He has made his way round so as to appear at the entrance of the village.*)

Huang (*pretending vigilance*): Who's there?

(*Wang turns, levelling his gun, and draws back.*)

Huang (*with forced casualness*): Ah, Teh-chuan.

Wang: It's you, the old landlord! Are you the one who put this chair here?

Huang (*glances at the chair*): That chair? (*Shakes his head.*)

No, I don't know who brought it here.

Wang: What are you doing out here at this time of the night?

Huang: Haven't you told everyone to guard the village?

Wang: You're trying to cover up something, like a cuttlefish squirting black ink.

Huang: Think before you speak, Teh-chuan.

This chair may have belonged to my family in the past,

(*He makes a show of emotion.*)

But it's a symbol of the exploitation of the landlord class.

I've tried to get my landlord's cap removed,

Why would I steal it, adding to my crimes?

Wang (*sings*): *Fine-sounding words, but suspicious behaviour,*
Is he lying or being honest? How can I tell?
Come back to the village with me.

Huang: Where to?

Wang: To the village.

Huang: To see the brigade leader?

Wang: That's right. To find Ting Hsiu-chin. (*Sings.*)
She'll know how to settle this.

Let's go! (*Turns to pick up the chair.*)

Huang (*panics, then hits on an idea*): Oh! There goes someone!

Wang: Where?

Huang (*pointing ahead*): Over there.

Wang (*puts down the chair*): After him!

(*Huang runs off, followed by Wang.*)

(*Offstage Shen Chia-chang exclaims: "What good wine!" He staggers in past the slope, holding a pipe.*)

Shen: Ha, ha! I've been to visit. . . . (*Sings.*)

I've been to visit my daughter in Yao Village.

She gave me many cups of good wine.

My face burning, in high spirits,

I've come back to the village by moonlight in the refreshing night breeze.

Only I'm not too steady on my legs. . . .

(*He flops down on the chair, then starts up in surprise.*)

A redwood chair by the slope,

Who's dropped it or put it here?

(*He moves the chair forward and strokes the wooden back admiringly.*)

Though it may be very old,

It's of good wood and well made.

I know what! (*Thrusts his pipe into his belt.*)

Why not take it home?

Finders keepers.

I know enough about carpentry
To fix it up and put it to good use.
(He undoes his belt, and his pipe falls to the ground. He ties his belt round the chair back and sings.)
If someone claims it, I'll return it to him,
But if not, then it's mine for keeps.
(He slings the chair over his shoulder.)
What luck I've had tonight!
(Laughing contentedly, he goes off carrying the chair.)

Ting Hsiu-chin (sings offstage): The branches are swaying, a wind's risen.

(Enter Ting, a flashlight slung over her shoulder, and Wang with his gun. They strike a pose together. Huang enters behind them.)

Ting (sings): What's happened tonight is highly suspicious,
We hurry to the scene to investigate.

Wang (notices that the chair has disappeared): The chair is gone!
How strange! (They search the area.)

Ting (sings): Why has the chair taken wings and flown away?

Huang (taking this opportunity to go up to Wang): After all our chasing,
I see now.
We've been tricked.

(Wang sighs helplessly.)

Ting (sings): Let me look around carefully for any clues.
(She turns on her flashlight. She and Wang continue searching and discover the pipe.)

Wang: What's that!

(Huang walks over to pick up the pipe, but Ting stops him.)

Ting (to Huang): Is it yours?

Huang (automatically feels the pipe in his belt): No, it isn't.

(Wang picks the pipe up.)

Ting (to Wang): It's a pipe.

Wang (examines it carefully): It's Shen Chia-chang's.

(Ting takes it and examines it too.)

Huang (deliberately heaving a sigh of relief): Ah! At last we've got to the bottom of this mysterious chair.

Ting: No! (Sings.)
The mystery hasn't yet been cleared up,
This just makes it more suspicious.

Wang: That selfish old Chia-chang. Will he never change?

Huang: It isn't easy to reform. It takes time.

Wang: The chair's gone but his pipe is here,
It's clear what happened.

Ting: Don't jump to conclusions,
We haven't got to the bottom of the matter.

Wang: I'll go to Shen's house now,
See if the chair is there.
(He is turning to leave when he notices someone coming. It is Shen in a great hurry.)

Shen: What a fool I am!
Found a chair but dropped my pipe,
I've had to come back to find it. (Goes towards the slope and suddenly sees Ting and the others. He is very embarrassed.)

Ting (cordially): Uncle Chia-chang.

Shen: Brigade leader!

Wang: What are you doing out here at this late hour?

Shen: I'm looking for my pipe.

Ting: Here you are. (Hands him the pipe.)

Shen (takes it, pleased): I can't do without it.

Ting: How did you happen to drop it here?

Shen: I went to see my daughter, had a few drinks and came back this way.

Wang: Did you see a chair here?

Shen (hesitates): Well...

Wang: Well, speak up!

Shen (to Ting): I found a chair by the slope here,
So I just picked it up and took it home.

Huang: He's made a lot of progress,
Owning up so promptly when he's done something wrong.

Wang (*sarcastically*): So?
What's this about a chair near the slope?
And you just took it home?
Look here, chairs don't walk, (*Points to the temple.*)
How did it get here?

Shen (*bewildered*): What do you mean "get here"?

Wang: Stealing is stealing, why try to cover it up?

Shen (*anxious and indignant*): Who stole the chair?
Who's trying to cover up?
(*Shamefacedly*) I found it there and took it, that was wrong.
(*Gruffly*) But you can't call me a thief.

Wang: Whoever did it knows.

Shen (*stamping his foot and slapping his thigh*): I'm not a thief and I
refuse to be called one!

Wang: But you. . . .

Ting (*stopping him*): Brother Teh-chuan!

Wang (*suppressing his anger, turns to Shen*): All right, all right!
It's no use going into it with you now,
Bring the chair back first thing tomorrow morning.

Shen (*gruffly*): I'll bring it back right now. (*Leaves, muttering to
himself.*) What rotten luck! I've picked up a load of trouble!

Huang (*hurriedly*): Brother Chia-chang, you're old and not so strong,
Let me help you carry it back to the temple.

(*Huang takes Shen's arm and they go off together.*)

Ting (*after a moment's thought*): You go and get the chair, Brother
Teh-chuan.

Wang: Right. (*Turns to leave.*)

Ting: Oh, yes. (*Stops him.*) Bring it here.

Wang (*puzzled*): Here? (*Exits.*)

(*The croaking of frogs grows louder. The night wind ruffles Ting's
hair and she smooths it, then slowly sits down on the stone to think.*)

Ting (*sings*): *A redwood chair has stirred up a storm;*



Production brigade leader Ting Hsiu-chin

"Investigation of a Chair"



Ting Hsiu-chin questions the chair and watches the landlord's reaction



Ting Hsiu-chin is thinking of how to deal with the enemy

*This is a knotty problem, hard to unravel.
 (She stands up, glances at the temple, then looks round.)
 If Chia-chang came to the temple to steal the chair,
 Why take the long way home going round by the pond?
 Is Huang the thief then?
 But why, instead of money or grain, should he steal
 This old chair which he could neither sell nor hide?
 It would only cause him trouble.
 And if he didn't steal the chair,
 Why sneak to the edge of the village so late at night?
 We've a saying, there're no waves without wind,
 Dead centipedes don't fall — they stay on their feet.
 What happened here tonight and the theft of the chair
 Can't be mere coincidences.
 We must unwind the silk from the cocoon,
 To get to the root of the matter.*

(Wang enters carrying the chair, followed by Shen and Huang.)

Wang: Here's the chair, Hsiu-chin.

Shen (*grabs the chair and sets it down in front of her*): I'm returning the chair just as I found it. Whether it was stolen or grabbed, (*Points to Wang.*) that's for you to say. I'm leaving now. (*Turns to go. Huang seizes this chance to take Shen's arm, so as to slip off with him.*)

Ting: Wait a minute!

(Shen and Huang stop.)

Ting: Where did you find the chair, Uncle Chia-chang?

Shen: Under the big tree by the slope.

Ting: And where did you say the chair was when you arrived, Brother Teh-chuan?

Wang: Under the big tree by the slope.

Ting: Where did you find the chair, Huang San-huai?

Huang: In the very same place.

Ting: Now that's strange. (*Sings.*)

You three people give the same answer:

The chair was standing near the slope.

Yet it used to be in the temple hall,

Who could have carried it over here? (Glances at Huang.)

Huang (*smiles and sings*): *I wouldn't know anything about that,*

You should ask Shen Chia-chang. (Walks over to speak to Shen.)

Shen (*sings*): *You don't have to question me,*

I've not been into the temple.

Huang (*sings*): *You'd better come clean,*

Don't make things any worse.

Shen (*sings*): *Why do you keep accusing me,*

Smearing me with mud?

Wang (*bewildered, sings*): *What a mess! This is a hard nut to crack.*

Huang (*rolling his eyes, sings*): *No one owns up, what's the use of our standing here? (Turns to leave.)*

Ting: *Wait. (Sings.)*

The tree spreads its branches towards the sky,

It has roots deep down in the soil.

Though no one owns up to the theft,

The chair must know how it got here.

I'll have to investigate and question the chair tonight.

Wang (*puzzled*): *Investigate the chair?*

Shen: *Investigate the chair?*

Huang (*suspiciously*): *Investigate and question the chair?*

Ting (*abruptly*): *Right. I'll investigate this chair itself!*

(Huang is taken aback.)

Shen (*to himself, sings*): *I must say this is something unheard of!*

(Puzzled, Shen sits down on the stone. Huang sits down to one side with a show of casualness.)

Wang (*to Ting, sings*): *But a wooden chair can't speak.*

Ting (*sings*): *When boiled, shell-fish will open up.*

Huang (*sings*): *She's questioning the chair, not me, (Sighs.)*

Yet my heart's beating like a drum.

Ting (*sings*): *I'll part the grass to find the snake. . . .*

Chair, oh, chair,

You were standing in the temple,

You can neither walk nor fly,

How did you get here

In the dead of night?

Why don't you answer me? (Glances at Shen.)

Why don't you speak up? (Slaps the back of the chair and observes

Huang give a nervous start.)

Ting (*sings*): *Now why, oh why? . . .*

Why was he startled when I hit the chair?

Is there some evidence to be found in the chair then?

(She inspects the chair more carefully, then darts a glance sideways at Huang who panics.)

Ting (*sings*): *Why is he so nervous when I inspect the chair?*

I'll fish with a long line to see what happens.

(She gives the chair a push.)

(Huang, forgetting himself, moves to shield the seat of the chair, but lowers his hands quickly for fear of giving himself away. Noting his reaction, Ting flashes on her light to examine the seat further. She discovers something.)

Ting: *Oh! (Sings.)*

Here I see a long scratch on the seat.

Wang (*goes to look at it*): *A scratch, eh?*

This makes it even more strange.

Ting: *Have a look, Uncle Chia-chang.*

Is this scratch a new mark or an old one?

Shen (*inspects it carefully*): *It's not an old mark, but a new one.*

Ting (*deep in thought*): *A new scratch?*

Huang (*trying to shift the target*): *Brother Chia-chang,*

Perhaps you bumped into something.

Shen: *No I didn't. I'm sure I didn't.*

Huang (*to Wang*): *Ha! He had a drop too much and can't remember.*

(Wang looks at Shen who turns his head away indignantly.)

Ting (*examines the seat further and makes another discovery*): *I say,*

isn't the lower part of the chair rather short and the upper part too long?

Wang (*examines the chair*): Yes, it's rather out of proportion.

Ting: Look, Uncle Chia-chang, why is the seat of the chair so thick?

Shen (*examines the chair*): Hm, it does seem to be made in a curious way.

Huang: It's stronger this way,
And comfortable too.

Ting (*to Huang*): Stronger?

Huang: Stronger.

Ting: Comfortable?

Huang: Comfortable.

Ting: Really?

Huang: Uh . . . uh.

(Ting laughs quietly.)

(Huang sniggers.)

(Ting goes on inspecting the chair. First she knocks on the side of the seat and listens. Then she taps on the middle of the seat. There is a hollow sound.)

Ting (*sings*): *Why does this thick seat sound hollow?*

Huang (*quickly covering up*): The wood's hard as steel,
That's why it's got that ring.

Shen: Yes, this kind of redwood comes from Yunnan,
It's of very good quality.
Made into clappers or drums, it has a special resonance,
Quite unusual.

Ting (*taps the seat again*): No! (*Sings.*)
That sound may mean the seat is hollow.

Wang: Right.

Ting (*to Wang, sings*): *Pry up the seat with your bayonet and we'll see.*

(Wang raises his bayonet.)

Huang (*suddenly*): Stop! (*They all stare at him.*)

Huang: Brigade leader, I hate to see this fine chair damaged.

It's a family heirloom

And means so much to me I made up a pack of lies.

I'm the one who stole the chair, not Shen.

I confess, I admit my mistake;

This'll be a real lesson to me, one I'll never forget.

Shen: What a foxy character you are, Huang,
A real vicious wolf.

You stole this chair

But pinned the blame on me.

I'll get even. . . . (*He rushes to hit Huang, but is stopped by Ting.*)

Wang (*to Shen*): We'll hold a meeting to settle with him tomorrow.
(To Huang, sings.)

Hurry and take the chair back to the temple hall.

Huang: Yes! (*Picks up the chair and starts to leave.*)

(Wang and Shen turn to go with him.)

Ting (*loudly*): Wait a minute!

(All three stop in their tracks. A short silence.)

Ting (*meaningfully*): You can't sew without a needle;
A boat must go slow in a fog.

(Huang makes an effort to appear calm. He puts the chair down.)

Ting (*casually*): Huang San-huai.

Huang: Yes.

Ting: Have you told the whole truth?

Huang: Nothing but the truth.

Ting: So it was you who stole the chair?

Huang: But I've never stolen anything before.

Ting: Who used to own this chair?

Huang: It was left to my family by our ancestors.

Ting (*insistently*): How did they acquire it?

Huang: By sweating the peasants.

Ting: Who does it belong to now?

Huang: It's been public property for ten years.

Ting: What made you steal it?

Huang: I've always been fond of it.
Ting: What were you going to do with it?
Huang: Take it home.
Ting: Where did you steal it from?
Huang: From the temple.
Ting: Where is your house?
Huang: In front of the ginkgo tree at the south end of the village.
Ting: Where are we now?
Huang: By the lotus pond at the back of the village.
Ting: To go home you should have headed straight south.
 Instead you went in the opposite direction and took the long way
 round,
 Lugging this heavy chair to the pond
 And putting it on the slope at the back of the village. Why?
Huang: Uh. . . .
Ting: What was your intention?
Huang: Uh. . . .
Ting: What were you planning to do?
Huang: Uh. . . .
Ting, Wang and Shen: Speak up!
 (*Huang collapses on the stone.*)
Ting (*to Wang, pointing at the chair*): Pry off the seat.
 (*Wang levels his bayonet and is about to thrust it into the seat. In
 desperation, Huang whips out his matchet and swings it at Ting who whirls
 round.*)
Ting (*calmly*): What do you think you're doing?
 (*Rolling his eyes, Huang kneels and holds out his matchet, as if offering
 it to Ting.*)
Huang (*craftily*): Brigade leader,
 Use my matchet to pry up the seat,
 The bayonet's not the right tool.
 For if you blunt the blade, it can't be used against the enemy,
 And it'd be a shame to damage the chair.

Ting: Oh? A shame, eh?
Huang: Yes, a pity.
Ting: Use the matchet?
Huang: That'd be best.
Ting: Who'll do the job?
Huang: Well, I'm a careful man.
Ting: You?
Wang: Let me do it.
Ting: No. (*Points to Huang.*)
 Let him do it.
 (*Huang hurries over to the chair.*)
Huang (*to Shen*): There's no need really to pry open the seat.
 How could anything be hidden in so small a space?
 (*As he slowly prizes the seat loose, he is racking his brains for a way out.*)
Ting (*taking him unawares, stamps her foot and cries*): Hurry up!
 (*Startled, Huang prizes the seat up with his matchet. Holding the
 seat in one hand, he pushes forward the chair to show the others.*)
 (*Ting turns on her flashlight and sweeps it on the chair without a seat.
 The others examine the chair.*)
Huang (*craftily*): You see, I told you there isn't anything there.
 (*The others look at each other, wondering.*)
Huang: Well, now you've seen for yourselves, there's nothing
 fishy.
Wang (*to Huang*): Put it back.
Huang: Right. (*Eagerly complies.*)
Ting: Not so quick! (*Walks up to Huang, observing him closely.*)
Ting: There isn't anything there?
Huang: No, nothing.
Ting: Really?
Huang: Really nothing.
Ting: Are you sure?
Huang (*pushes the chair towards her*): Have a good look for yourself.
Ting (*sternly*): Give me that seat.

Huang (*flustered, tries to cover the seat*): Ah!

(Ting closes in on Huang who turns to flee towards the village. Wang levels his gun to block his way. Huang dashes towards the bushes, but Shen bars his way. Ting kicks at Huang's hand, sending the matchet flying; and as he darts towards the temple Wang pulls him back. Ting snatches the chair seat from Huang and takes out a blue folder with a red title. She unfolds it.)

Ting: The landlord's account book!

(Huang springs up to grab the folder but Ting folds it and pushes him aside. When he tries once more to escape, she seizes him and shoves him to the ground. Ting, Wang and Shen glare at the landlord who backs away squirming.)

Ting (*sings*): *My anger rises to the sky
When I see that folder dripping with blood.
When Chiang Kai-shek's gang sound the call, you steal a chair,
Sharpening your knives, all waiting to stage a come-back,
Like mayflies trying to topple a giant tree.
The people will never lower the red banner,
Never forget class struggle.
Ever ready, our force is irresistible.*

Wang and Shen (*sing*): *Ever ready. . .*

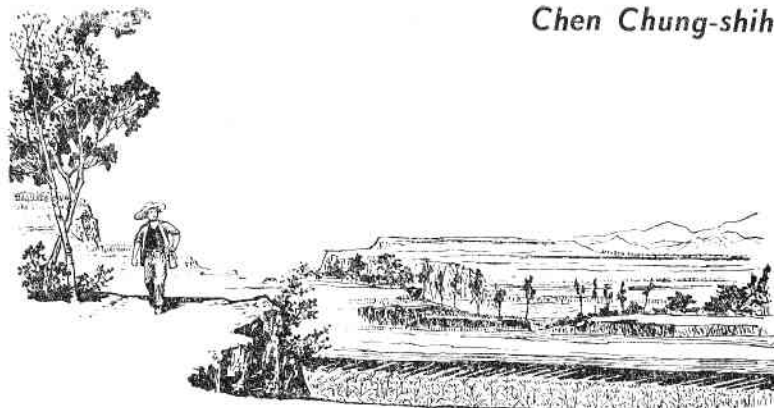
(Wang pulls Huang up by the collar.)

Ting, Wang and Shen (*sing*): *Our force is irresistible.*

(They march their enemy off and strike a pose.)

(Curtain)

Chen Chung-shih



The Undaunted

At noon on a mid-August day, many cadres had crowded into a classroom of the Tungyang Brigade Primary School. Liu Min-chung, secretary of the Fengchuan County Party committee, and the leaders of the Tungyang district's eight communes had gathered for a meeting that was soon to start. Meanwhile they were chatting and sipping tea — some were leaning on the windowsill, looking out at the beautiful Weiho Valley where summer was making way for autumn. Their eyes fell on the azure water bordered by lines of lush green poplars and willows, and on the vast green expanse of maize, cotton and paddy fields. . . .

To the east of the primary school was a large stretch of newly-levelled fields where another larger meeting had been held shortly before. Since all of Shensi Province was experimenting with sowing wheat earlier, a full ten days before October 1, National Day, field construction had to be finished quickly. This was a tough task, for the season would wait for no one. That was why county Party secretary Liu had decided to stay and personally supervise the work. And these fields had certainly been levelled in record time as Liu had

enlisted help from the other brigades and adopted certain new measures to spur efficiency. As soon as the fields were ready, Liu had called several hundred commune and brigade cadres to an on-the-spot meeting to explain how it had been done. Since the next step was to make the new measures known throughout the county, at the end of the open-air meeting Liu had asked the commune secretaries and chairmen to assemble here in the primary school in order to give them further instructions.

Liu sat at a desk, looking worn out. This man in his fifties who spent most of his time in an office had been speaking in the fields for two and a half hours on that very hot morning. It was no wonder he seemed tired. Liu looked around. "Let's get on with the meeting," he said. "Is everyone present?"

People began looking round to see if anyone was missing while those who had been gazing out of the window took their seats.

"Where's Tu Lo, Old Yang?" Liu asked.

"No idea," replied Yang Ta-shan, deputy secretary of Yochin Commune Party committee. "He disappeared before lunch."

"He seems to think he's still a young rebel in the Cultural Revolution," Liu commented, a note of sarcasm in his voice. "Well, we'll begin without him."

No one spoke. Liu glanced from one cadre to another, automatically tapping his fountain pen on his notebook. "We've no time to lose: all the fields in the county must be levelled in time for sowing. Who thinks he can make use of the Tungyang experience? . . . No one volunteers to start? All right, then. I'll have to call on you one by one," he declared, immediately asking the Chienchuan Commune Party secretary to explain the situation at his place.

Everyone present knew Liu well. He had gone to Yanan before Liberation to work for the revolution and when the country was liberated he was appointed head of Fengchuan County, though only in his late twenties at the time. Later he became secretary of the county Party committee. At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, the masses had struggled against him and criticized him for having taken the capitalist road. However, when the county revolutionary committee was set up, he was made chairman and later was



once again elected secretary of the county Party committee. It was thought that he had been a bit slack in his work since the Cultural Revolution, for his usual reply when problems were brought up was a vague "I'll think it over", or "I'll look into it". But, during that two and a half hours' report in the fields, Liu's voice had rung with conviction and he seemed quite excited. No longer his usual non-committal self, he now listened attentively as the various commune leaders reported on their work, and often interrupted them to ask for explanations. "Be explicit, please," he would urge, or else, "Right, the commune members should be properly rewarded. We mustn't overlook the importance of economic policy. Tungyang Brigade has done well in this respect."

The Party secretary of Chienchuan Commune was now perspiring under Liu's insistent questioning. His brows puckered, he said, "I think that the Tungyang experience is rather . . . uh . . ." Pausing to search for the appropriate adjective, he finally found a way out of his difficulty and declared, "The best thing would be for the county Party committee to issue a document for us to go by . . ."

"If you don't get rid of the 'fear' in that head of yours, not even a hundred documents would help," Liu retorted, exposing the Chienchuan Party secretary's secret scruples.

Silence reigned in the room. Only the muted pounding of the Weiho River on its banks could be heard. Then the tramp of approaching footsteps rang out. Everyone glanced at the door. A young man burst in like a gust of wind. With his ruddy face tanned by the sun and his white homespun shirt draped round his shoulders, he gave an impression of simplicity, steadfastness, and strength. It was Tu Lo, secretary of Yochin Commune Party committee.

"Where have you been dawdling all this time?" Liu turned to ask.

"Don't be so unjust, Comrade Liu," the young man retorted with a laugh and quickly took a seat during the general stir punctuated by others' chuckling. Looking round, he noticed his deputy secretary Yang Ta-shan trying to draw his attention. Picking up his straw hat and kit bag, he went to sit beside the old man.

Liu frowned and tapped his notebook to call the meeting to order.

"What's wrong?" Tu Lo whispered. "You all seem a bit tense."

"He's hauling us over the coals." Yang grinned. "Where have you been?"

Tu Lo explained that he had used his lunch hour to go and see for himself how things were in Tungyang Brigade, as well as in the other brigades that had taken part in the field construction work. "I think there's something wrong with this Tungyang experience, Old Yang," he concluded.

"So do I. That's why I haven't opened my mouth yet."

"We'd better talk things over with our other Party committee members first."

Meanwhile Liu had taken up where he had left off when Tu Lo entered. "Don't question the Tungyang experience, just apply it. I'll assume full responsibility, so there's nothing to be afraid of. If anything goes wrong, you can bombard me. But get cracking first."

Not a sound could be heard in the room.

Tu Lo opened his notebook and stood up. "How about letting me fire away?" It was as if a stone had been tossed into a tranquil pond. Liu turned to him, so astonished that he stopped tapping his notebook with his pen.

Tu declared calmly, "After hearing about the Tungyang experience from Comrade Liu, I wasn't quite satisfied. So after the meeting in the fields, I went to talk to the cadres and some of the members of Tungyang Brigade. What they said made me even more uneasy . . ."

"O-oh? This concerted battle makes you uneasy?" Liu broke in, half turning his head.

Tu Lo replied bluntly, "There's nothing wrong with a brigade's asking others to lend a hand if it has more work than it can handle. But with this measure of 'teaming up on a voluntary basis, calculating workpoints according to the amount of work done,' the stronger members team up, leaving out the weaker ones. Since some of them earn as many as eighty workpoints a day, some people call your battle a 'concerted battle for workpoints'."

Liu smiled, half closing his eyes. "Don't forget, comrade, we're living in a socialist country. Our policy is 'to each according to his

work' and 'more pay for more work'. So what if a few dare-devils manage to get eighty workpoints by keeping at it day and night?"

Tu Lo didn't reply, but brought up another point. "Another thing. A canteen was set up at the worksite for the people from other brigades. However, Tungyang Brigade has organized one too, although its members work near home. I heard. . ."

"*What* did you hear?"

"I heard that those who eat in the canteen are given one and half a catties of wheat per day as subsidy. Some of the brigades have had to use their collective grain reserves."

Liu smirked. "A concerted battle is hard work. We have to look after the commune members' welfare. I agreed to giving them that grain. But only a few brigades have had to dip into their reserves."

"So the policy of 'putting workpoints in command' and 'using material incentives', so severely criticized by the masses during the Cultural Revolution and recently too, seems to have cropped up again in a new form."

"We may criticize those things, but we must also implement the Party's economic policy," Liu countered.

"The Party's economic policy has never consisted of 'putting workpoints in command' nor 'using material incentives'."

As they argued hotly together, the others discussed the question among themselves in small groups. After a moment's thought, Liu said more mildly, "The effect of 'ultra-Left' ideas must be wiped out so that no one feels 'bound and gagged' because he's afraid of being criticized."

"Revisionism is the main danger at present," Tu Lo argued. "Trying to revive and spread a Right deviation is a serious mistake. I think the county Party committee should study the Tungyang experience carefully before asking the communes to adopt it."

Liu smiled smugly. "The county Party committee has already studied it. Don't worry. I'll take the responsibility for anything that goes wrong. If you still have doubts, keep them for later. What do you think, Old Yang?"

Yang's reply was firm. "I agree with Tu Lo. Since it's a matter of principle, our Party committee will meet to discuss the question as soon as we get back."

Liu gave him a disapproving look and turned to the others. "It is essential to understand the present situation," he declared more emphatically. "This is not the time of the Cultural Revolution. An important 'talk' will soon be relayed to you, then you'll see things more clearly. Don't try to go against the tide, whatever you do."

The meeting ended at dusk. As the cadres wheeled their bicycles out to the road, they were astonished to see that thick, black clouds were moving in to obscure the beautiful sunset at the horizon over the lower reaches of the Weiho River. As the sky became leaden, a cool, damp wind rose and sent the dust swirling along the road. With it came a smell of rain. Many cadres remained poised, one foot on the pedal, hesitating whether to set off or not.

Yang nudged Tu Lo. "What'll we do, young fellow?"

Tu snorted. "I don't believe that specious talk of his. We'll do it our way. We'll organize study sessions on the Party's basic line, criticize revisionism, and work hard."

Yang burst out laughing. "I meant to say, should we go back now or wait?"

Tu Lo laughed in turn. "Go back of course."

The two riders left the village and sped side by side down the highway with the others following close behind. Their shirts flapped in the wind and, from far away, Tu Lo's crimson singlet flashed like a glowing spark. . . .

2

The night's storm purified the air, leaving the sky bluer, the land greener, and the slopes more beautiful. But in Peishihling Brigade's terraced fields, some of the retaining walls had collapsed and the maize had flopped over in the mud. A mud-spattered group of people, including Tu Lo, was propping them up. They had just finished a plot when they heard a horn honking and looked up to see a semi-

new jeep stuck in the mud. Though the engine was racing, it wouldn't budge. The young girl straining to push the jeep looked worried. Tu Lo and several others ran over. As he approached, both Tu Lo and the girl called out in surprise:

"Cheng Hua!"

"Tu Lo!"

Gripping each other's hands, they laughed happily.

Seeing that the mud from Tu Lo's big hands had made Cheng Hua's fingers stick together, both burst out in peals of laughter. Then Tu Lo directed the others as they all pushed to heave the jeep out of the mud. The grateful driver turned to Cheng Hua. "Give me a ring when you want to go back to town." Then he drove off, leaving the young girl behind.

"Did you come specially to visit our commune?" Tu Lo asked Cheng Hua.

"I have two others to visit."

"Well, if you're not in too much of a hurry, help us prop up the maize for a while. It'll soon be time to knock off for breakfast."

She looked at the mud-spattered Tu Lo and replied hesitantly, "I have to report back to the county office this afternoon."

"All right. Let's go to my place then."

The others returned to the fields, commenting excitedly.

"Our Tu Lo's country ways probably aren't to her taste."

"Not so loud! She's our deputy county secretary. . . . You know, I've heard they're in love."

"Anyhow, it's good he doesn't act like a leading cadre. He's closer to us peasants that way."

It was lucky that the densely growing corn and the orderly embankments of the terraced fields stopped sounds from travelling far. Otherwise, how embarrassed the young man and girl walking on the winding highway would have been if they had heard these comments.

During the early stage of the Cultural Revolution, Tu Lo and Cheng Hua had rebelled against the former county Party committee and, together, had been attacked and trodden down by Liu. A special friendship had grown up between them as they fought back side by

side. Later they both became leaders of the revolutionaries in Fengchuan County. In 1968, when the new revolutionary committees were created all over the country, they became part-time deputy chairmen of the county revolutionary committee. After the Tenth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, Cheng Hua was elected full-time deputy secretary of the new county Party committee, as the representative of the young forces and women cadres. During the movement to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, Liu had wanted to transfer Tu Lo from the brigade to the commune level, but the young man hung back, unwilling to leave his mountain village during its grand five-year plan. Liu finally asked Chao Chi-yung, the prefectural Party secretary, to persuade him to agree to the transfer. It was only when Chao had promised Tu Lo that he would be given work-points and not a monthly wage that Tu Lo took the job of Yochin Commune Party secretary.

A militant friendship had blossomed between these two young people who had fought together for so long. And everyone thought they made a good couple, a fact they both were aware of, though neither had ever mentioned it to the other.

Cheng Hua was also staying in the Tungyang district to help supervise the levelling of the fields, but had left before the meeting in the fields to report to the prefectural secretary. When she returned, Liu told her about his argument with Tu Lo and said, "You know him well. Make him realize that the situation has changed. I don't want him to come a cropper."

Cheng Hua and Tu Lo walked down the slope and came to Aunt Chang's house where Tu Lo lived.

"So you've been given the job of talking me round," Tu Lo chuckled.

"I knew before coming you'd probably think that way." Cheng Hua accepted the glass of water he offered her and continued, "We'll discuss that later. First tell me what your Party committee has decided about the Tungyang experience. What do the commune members think?"

He nodded and replied seriously, "When we got back last night, we called a Party committee meeting and went over the Party's basic



line once again. Then we analysed the Tungyang experience. After careful discussion, we found that we all agreed, so we decided. . . .” Tu Lo paused, glanced at Cheng Hua, and then went on, “. . . not to adopt the Tungyang experience in our commune.”

Cheng Hua abruptly stopped taking notes and looked up.

“For the following reasons. . . .” Tu Lo continued.

She smiled and cut him short, “For the same reasons that you gave at Tungyang Brigade Primary School yesterday. Have you anything new to add?”

“No, the reasons are more or less the same. With the difference that what I said there was only my personal opinion while this is our Party committee’s decision.”

“What have you decided to do?”

“We’ve decided to carry on as before — go on learning from Tachai and repudiating revisionism so as to work harder. We guarantee to finish all soil improvement work on schedule.”

“And your concrete plans?”

“All the commune cadres, with the exception of three or four who’ll take care of the office, will go to the different brigades to investigate and to help each Party branch organize meetings to criticize capitalism. The criticism of the wrong line will speed up work. Each brigade will devise ways for themselves.”

Cheng Hua laid down her pen and drank some water. She closed her notebook, then opened it a couple of times without making any comment.

“Is that all right?” Tu Lo asked.

She merely replied, “I’ll report what you’ve told me to the county Party committee.”

“What do you think?” he insisted.

“Me?” she smiled. “I think you should carry out your Party committee’s decision.” She was still trying to avoid committing herself, for her position was not an easy one. Since Yochin Commune’s decision amounted to rejecting the Tungyang experience, she could not make a casual comment. Supporting Yochin Commune would mean opposing the Tungyang experience. She had expressed doubts about the Tungyang experience when she and Liu had first arrived to supervise the work there. But Liu had laughed them off saying: “Don’t you worry. Though we criticized the *santzyipao*,* that doesn’t mean all the old measures used were wrong. It’s time to correct the ‘ultra-Left’ tendency in our county.”

**Santzyipao* means extension of the private plots and free market, development of small enterprises having the sole responsibility for their own profits or losses, and calculation of output quotas based on individual households. This was a counter-revolutionary revisionist line carried out by Liu Shao-chi.

She did not insist on her own view. The rapid progress made in levelling the fields had silenced her, but after hearing about Liu's argument with Tu Lo yesterday she had not been able to sleep, for Tu Lo had put in a clearer way what she had thought herself.

"I'd like to know what you think," Tu insisted, unsatisfied with her ambiguous answer.

"I've come to find out the situation, not to express my personal opinion." She felt badly when he clicked his tongue and frowned, for she hated being so evasive. However, she could not help thinking of an incident that still burned in her mind.

Soon after having joined the county Party committee, she had gone to a commune on the bank of the Weiho River. The commune Party committee had decided that the privately-owned trees still growing on public land should be felled before a certain date. And Cheng Hua, the young deputy Party secretary from the county, was all for it. So the trees on collective land were all chopped down. However, as rumour had it that all privately-owned trees would soon be taken over by the collective, some peasants also cut down the trees they owned on the edge of the village or near their homes. Liu was furious on learning what had happened. "How could you back their decision so casually? I've received three reports on that question so far and I still haven't given my approval. How could you agree without thinking it over carefully first?"

"Growing private trees on public land is not right," Cheng Hua had argued.

"As a responsible member of the county Party committee, everything you say is policy. If you let your tongue run away with you like this and make a mess of things, how is the Party committee to justify your acts?"

Cheng Hua felt wronged. Seeing that she was on the verge of tears, Liu regretted having been so harsh and said half-jokingly: "So you think being a county Party secretary is simple, eh? It was easy enough to shout 'Rise up and rebel! Down with. . . .' as you used to. But a leader has to keep his eye on the right while thinking of the left, and look behind while advancing. One careless word and you'll find yourself in a fix."

Cheng Hua had replied sulkily, "I'm not cut out to be a leader. I'll go back to the grass-roots."

Liu laughed. "You need to be tempered. Your rebel spirit needs tempering before we can make a good steady county Party secretary of you." Ever since that incident, Cheng Hua had been very cautious.

Understanding her difficulty from the expression on her face, Tu Lo was clever enough not to press the point. Instead, he asked with concern, "Have you something on your mind, Cheng Hua?"

She put up a bold front. "No, nothing."

"You can't fool me." He smiled, shaking his head.

"We both have responsibilities now," she replied gravely. "We can't act the way we did before, but should weigh all we say and do. People have been making fun of us, calling us 'the rebels'. You know, we both need tempering. You shouldn't go on being so aggressive, Tu Lo."

"We don't cut off our fingers to trim our nails, for what would we do without fingers? And if we suppress our revolutionary drive, what will we be like? Like a nice shiny marble? I don't want to be like that."

"But a 'talk' has recently been relayed, and it seems there's a new wind blowing. Don't close your eyes to new developments. I'm afraid that you'll. . . ."

Remembering that Liu too had referred cryptically to a "talk", Tu Lo interrupted her, "No matter what the new situation, the Party's basic line will never change. Nine years ago when the Cultural Revolution began, we debunked those revisionist ideas. Whose 'talk' has allowed Liu to peddle that trash again?"

"Be careful what you say! This 'talk' comes straight from the top."

Tu Lo laughed outright. "The thing to do is study the Party's basic line. To me, the Tungyang experience proves that the struggle between the two lines is long and complicated. In the past we two fought side by side against revisionism. Believe me, the struggle is far from being over." His words made Cheng Hua reflect seriously.

Just then, Aunt Chang appeared to tell them that the meal was ready. She had prepared for her guest and for Tu Lo, who was like a son to her, a simple but delicious meal: red pea porridge, pancakes and stir-fried green beans.

As they ate, Tu Lo chatted cheerfully with Aunt Chang. However, Cheng Hua's mind was not on the food. Tu Lo's words still rang in her ears. He was right, she thought. And she too had been right to have her doubts about the Tungyang experience. If she had only stuck to her guns at the time, she wouldn't be in such a difficult position now. She had decided to take up the matter with Liu as quickly as possible, but she couldn't tell Tu Lo this first. Never. The incident about those trees had taught her a lasting lesson.

Since Cheng Hua had to visit two other communes before returning to the county that evening, Tu Lo didn't keep her long after the meal. As she was leaving, the girl opened her bag. Tu Lo spotted a paper package. "Oh! You've brought that book I wanted!" he exclaimed, eagerly stretching out his hand. She smiled and opened the package, revealing a white drip-dry shirt. Concealing his disappointment, he joked, "Oh, I can hardly walk around in that."

When the girl had left, Aunt Chang grabbed Tu Lo and said softly, "I've heard she's your girl friend."

"I don't know yet myself." He smiled.

But Aunt Chang didn't smile. "How can you argue with her like that? You should try to humour her a little."

He burst out laughing. "No, auntie. We young people are different. We struggle."

"It's fine to struggle in the movement to learn from Tachai, but not in this sort of thing."

"No, auntie. We must struggle in this too," he declared in a ringing voice.

3

Four days later, the county Party committee announced that the cadres at all levels were to attend a meeting at the theatre in the

county town. Liu would give instructions for the autumn harvesting and, in addition, relay an important "talk".

The meeting hall was quiet as the audience waited. They had all listened to Liu's reports many times before and knew that he always read a text prepared for him by his secretary. He would drone on and on, holding a cup in one hand and a cigarette in the other. Now and then he would stop to sip some water or puff on his cigarette. In a word he bored them to death.

But today, Liu behaved quite differently. The cigarette in his hand went out without his noticing it, and though he did not drink once from his cup, his voice boomed continuously. As he read, he added his own comments and explanations as if he were afraid that the "talk" might not be clear enough. When he reached a particularly interesting part, he stood up and took off his glasses. Though he was now farther from the microphone, even those sitting at the back could hear every word.

"Now, every sector of work in our country needs to be 'put right'. That is to say, everything must be put back on the right track this year. Criticism and struggle day in, day out, may keep things lively but it's bad for production. Of course, class enemies out to sabotage must be criticized. . . ."

There was a dead silence. Then, people began exchanging astonished glances. Here and there, cadres whispered comments to each other. Tu Lo muttered to Yang beside him, "This whole business seems fishy to me."

"Me too," Yang whispered back.

"Is he saying that we've been on the wrong track all along? That means he's attacking the Cultural Revolution."

As Tu Lo took out his notebook and pen, Yang reminded him, "We're not supposed to take notes."

"But some passages call for reflection," Tu Lo rejoined stubbornly.

At the end of one paragraph, Liu got so carried away that he raised his arm in an oratorical flourish as he cited examples to make his point without, however, mentioning names.

"Every unit in our county must be 'put right' — every commune, factory, shop, school and, most important of all, every leading body,

without exception. Some units in our county oppose the Party committee directly above them and refuse to carry out its decisions. But most serious of all, a few commune Party secretaries oppose the county Party committee too."

Old Yang nudged his companion. "He's directing his spearhead at us, young fellow."

Tu Lo continued jotting down notes, saying, "Sure. But still and all, it's the truth."

The hall buzzed with whispered comments. Liu's words had created quite a stir. The Party secretary of Chienchuan Commune leaned forward and whispered to Tu Lo in the row ahead, "No wonder Liu was so brash in pushing the Tungyang experience. He's had this 'talk' in reserve to back him up all the while."

Tu leaned back and spoke with sarcasm, "I don't think his secret medicine will help him much. Have you people adopted the Tungyang experience?"

"No. I guess we're going to be 'put right'."

"Don't worry. Gold is not afraid of fire, a Marxist is not afraid of criticism."

Meanwhile Liu was declaring, "You leaders must see to it that the spirit of this 'talk' finds expression in concrete measures. We must be bold and daring, must dare to attack those hornets' nests. The county Party committee has decided to send out work-teams to put the 'problem' units right. I'll take the lead. I'm willing to act, no matter what the risk — even if it means having to stand up here and be criticized again."

At that, to everyone's surprise, Liu stood up and bowed his head low, just as he had while being criticized by the masses during the high tide of the Cultural Revolution. Some guffawed at his clowning or commented loudly, while others voiced doubts. "Are we still supposed to study the theory of proletarian dictatorship or aren't we? Why hasn't he mentioned that?" But there were still others who nodded excitedly.

Tu Lo frowned. His face burned as if someone had slapped him and his mind was in a whirl. At the start of the Cultural Revolution, on that very rostrum, Liu had fiercely denounced Tu Lo, Cheng Hua,

and several other rebels as counter-revolutionaries. But a short time afterward, he had had to apologize sheepishly to them here. It was here too that Tu Lo and Cheng Hua had led the proletarian revolutionaries in a show-down with Liu, sweat streaming down Liu's face as he abjectly stammered out his replies. Then, in the presence of the army representative and delegates of poor and lower-middle peasants, Liu had made a self-criticism. His voice broke repeatedly as he swore to follow Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and never, never backslide again. Why was he putting on this act now on the very same rostrum? Tu Lo wondered, burning with anger. He looked at Cheng Hua sitting on one side of the rostrum with a solemn expression, her lips compressed and her brows knit. What was she thinking? She could not have forgotten the struggle between the two lines in this very place. Tu Lo was certain that now she had seen through Liu. After listening to Liu run on glibly a while longer, Tu Lo turned to Old Yang. "I'm going up there."

"What for?"

"To debate with him."

"Don't do that!" Old Yang gripped his shoulder. "Let him finish all his talking and play-acting."

"But he's slinging mud at the Cultural Revolution and trying to reverse the verdict passed on him. Each word is like a knife stabbing at my heart, Old Yang," Tu Lo protested. "As I see it, a big struggle is unavoidable. Since he's putting up this bold show and isn't afraid of being overthrown, well, neither am I! I don't care if I'm punished and lose my post. . . ."

Moved, Old Yang exclaimed from the bottom of his heart, "I'll fight beside you!"

Tu Lo grasped his comrade's hand. "After the meeting, notify the others that we'll have a Party committee meeting tonight. I'm going to see Secretary Chao of the prefecture, but I'll be back in time to talk it over with you."

"Right."

Liu's long-winded speech went on for another hour. At the end, Tu Lo hurried out, accompanied by Old Yang. Tu Lo wanted

to go to the prefecture at once, but Yang stopped his bicycle and remarked, "We haven't 'stoked up' since this morning."

Tu Lo laughed, realizing he was hungry too. "All right. Let's go and have a bite to eat first. Even if the heaven is going to collapse, we must keep up our strength so that we can prop it up again."

So these two, the older man who had matured in the hurricane of land reform and the youth tempered by the Cultural Revolution, headed for a small restaurant where they had a quick meal of hot beef and steamed buns before parting.

A semi-new jeep rolled through the gate of the Yochin Commune headquarters, bringing Liu and a five-man "rectification" work-team to the scene of their chief target. Young Tien, a girl working in the general office, received them cordially, asking them to take seats and pouring them some water to drink.

"Where's Tu Lo?" Liu demanded as he sat down.

"He's at a meeting," Young Tien replied. "It'll be over soon."

"What kind of meeting?"

"An enlarged meeting of the Party committee to study the important directives issued by Chairman Mao since the start of the Cultural Revolution. They also have on the agenda the question of the best way to criticize capitalist tendencies so that the commune members will throw themselves into field construction with greater enthusiasm." Young Tien was giving him an exact report, but noticing his frown and thinking that it might have offended him, she suggested, "If you like, I'll go and ask him to come at once."

"I'll go and see for myself."

Liu and his men followed the girl past a row of houses, the cadres' living quarters, to the meeting place — a spacious courtyard planted with alternating rows of poplars and paulownia trees. There, shaded by the dense foliage from the still hot late-summer sun, sat the commune cadres, the men with their jackets wide open and the women in short-sleeved summer blouses. They were listening as Tu Lo summed up the decisions reached at the meeting. However, he broke off as soon as Young Tien arrived with Liu and his party and, with Old Yang, went over to greet them warmly. They invited Liu to sit with

them at the table in front, but Liu did not stir and merely replied composedly, "Go on with your meeting. I'll just sit here and listen." He took a seat vacated by a near-by cadre.

"Every brigade will hold a study session on the directives issued by Chairman Mao since the start of the Cultural Revolution," Tu Lo continued. "They will be discussed at political night-schools as well, as the chief text of study. The aim is to understand the significance of the Cultural Revolution, and the question proposed for discussion is: Was the Cultural Revolution a fine or a terrible thing? So much for the first point.

"We'll also analyse why our grain yield has doubled since the Cultural Revolution. Have we been successful because, after criticizing capitalist tendencies in a big way, we were better able to go all out to boost production? Or has it been the result of relying on material incentives and workpoints? Once this is clear, we'll continue debunking capitalist tendencies. We must keep up this criticism without any let-up and deepen it too — we won't be half-hearted about it. This is a matter of paramount importance. Give it top priority."

Liu listened without letting his feelings show. He sat there languidly fanning himself and puffing at his cigarette, with a show of poise acquired after years of listening to opinions conflicting with his own.

Tu Lo was so engrossed in his speech that he completely forgot about Liu. He was coming to the third point: an on-the-spot meeting was to be held the following day in Peisihling Brigade, where he was stationed to guide the work. While speaking, he scanned the audience until he spotted the brigade's Party branch secretary sitting under a pomegranate tree. "Old Chang, when you go back this evening, call the Party branch members together and make all the necessary arrangements for tomorrow's on-the-spot meeting. And don't forget, you'll be one of the speakers."

"Fine," said dark-stubbled Chang.

Without taking his eyes off him, Tu Lo added, "Many comrades have proposed that we sit in on your political night-school classes after tomorrow's meeting. It'd be a good opportunity for us all to see it in action. What do you think?"

"Of course, everyone's welcome. And it'll give us a chance to learn from the other brigades. The only problem is that our classes don't begin till after dark."

Before Tu Lo could reply, there were exclamations of "It doesn't matter, we'll stay on till it's dark."

Seeing the cadres' enthusiasm for political night-schools — just one of the new socialist things — Tu Lo suggested, "Old Chang, see to it that each production team does something different tomorrow evening. It doesn't matter whether it's a study session, criticism meeting, discussion group, poetry contest or indoor sports. The important thing is to have enough variety for the visitors to get an all-round idea of the school."

As the audience applauded, Tu Lo sat down to continue his talk. He suddenly noticed that Liu was already leaving, slowly tapping his fan against his leg.

The landscape was resplendent in the flaming sunset, which lent a golden tinge to the white clouds, the azure sky and the steel-grey Weiho River meandering through the plain.

The meeting was over. People began walking their bicycles out of the commune courtyard towards the highway and commenting enthusiastically. Tu Lo and Old Yang stood at the gate seeing the cadres off, extremely happy at the general enthusiasm.

Suddenly Tu Lo recalled the talk he had had the previous day with Secretary Chao of the prefectural Party committee about the report given at the big meeting in the theatre. Although Old Chao had not commented explicitly on the "talk", he had told Tu Lo to make a careful study of Chairman Mao's directives on the Cultural Revolution, adding that they would shed light on the present struggle. That was why, after talking it over with Old Yang, Tu Lo had convened this meeting, which seemed to have been a success.

Tu Lo turned abruptly to Old Yang. "Let's go and see Comrade Liu."

The minute they entered the room where Liu was staying, Liu demanded, "What made you decide to organize a study session on those questions this afternoon? Whose idea was it?"

"Mine," Tu Lo answered calmly.

"It was Tu Lo's idea, but our Party committee approved it," Old Yang added.

"A singular idea!" Liu exclaimed ironically. "And each village Party branch will have a similar meeting, I suppose?"

"That's right. That's what was decided at the meeting," Tu Lo replied.

"If I'm not mistaken, you didn't even mention the Tungyang experience nor the spirit of that important 'talk'."

"No, I didn't," Tu Lo responded calmly. "I told you the other day what I thought about the Tungyang experience. And I informed Cheng Hua about the decision our Party committee had reached after discussing the question. She must have relayed to you what I told her?"

"I know all that already. My point is that even after hearing the spirit of the 'talk', you've decided to go your own way. Eh?"

"That's right." Tu Lo kept cool.

"You must realize that even if only one commune like yours takes this stand, it has a very bad influence," Liu said. "Several other communes have also begun to question the Tungyang experience and haven't yet seriously implemented it."

"Do I really have that much influence?" Tu Lo asked with a laugh. "After all, you're the county Party secretary. Do you honestly think one person can turn people against something you've put all your weight behind?"

"Don't try to deny the facts!" Liu got flustered. "You've not only rejected the Tungyang experience, but you've decided to organize tomorrow's meeting at Peishihling so people can see all those capers at the night-school!"

"What's wrong with what we're doing? We're criticizing the evils of capitalism, proclaiming the benefits of socialism and praising the Cultural Revolution."

"What use is all that at the moment? We need to learn from Tachai — level fields, harness rivers, transform mountains . . . and do some real work!"

“Old Liu, learning from Tachai doesn’t just mean levelling land. . . .”

“Don’t twist my words!”

Old Yang grinned at that. Pulling out his pipe, he said, “Old Liu, you’ve left out the key thing in learning from Tachai — that’s learning Tachai’s basic experience.”

“Don’t try to scare me by pinning labels on me,” Liu bellowed. “I want an outline of how your Party committee plans to ‘put things right.’”

“We never heard that expression before,” Tu Lo retorted. “We’ve been saying all along that class struggle is the key link, that the principal contradiction in the historical period of socialism is the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In addition, the Party’s policy and strategy in this struggle have been clearly defined. The phrase ‘put things right’ is too ambiguous. What has to be ‘put right’?”

“That’s ‘ultra-Left’ talk! You have dangerous ‘ultra-Left’ leanings,” Liu roared. “So you even question that important ‘talk’, eh? . . . Do you want to know what needs rectifying? Well, I’ll tell you. It’s thinking like yours that needs to be ‘put right’. You must do a complete about-face!”

“You’re wrong, Old Liu. I firmly believe in the Party’s basic line, and I’ll stand in the way of anyone who tries to twist it,” Tu Lo retorted somewhat impatiently. “It’s precisely because we’ve sensed a trend of this kind that we’re studying Chairman Mao’s directives on the Cultural Revolution once again.”

“You’re sailing in dangerous waters, Tu Lo,” Liu lowered his voice but spoke menacingly. “Watch your step. I came here especially to caution you that if you don’t change your ways. . . .”

“Thanks for the caution, but don’t think I’m not aware of your real purpose in coming here. You made it quite clear at the meeting in the theatre the other day.”

“So much the better. Now, instruct all the brigades to switch to studying the spirit of ‘putting things right’, plus the Tungyang experience.”

Tu Lo raised his eyebrows in astonishment and retorted, “Not on your life! The commune Party committee has already decided on what to study.”

“You’re to do as I say!” Liu blustered.

“You can give orders in the name of the county Party committee,” Old Yang put in, his face grave too. “But not in the name of our commune Party committee.”

Liu rose to his feet in a rage and gasped, “You . . . you two can’t forget the early days of the Cultural Revolution, can you?”

“And you’re not forgetting to oppose the Cultural Revolution.” Tu Lo leapt to his feet and glared at Liu.

A stalemate. In the constrained silence, only the puffing of Old Yang’s pipe could be heard.

As further discussion was out of the question, Liu declared, “The ‘rectification’ campaign will begin tomorrow. The work-team has the power to call whatever meeting it pleases.” At that he clapped the shoulder of a work-team member who had been present throughout the argument. “Go and tell Young Tien to inform all the cadres of the commune headquarters that there will be a meeting tomorrow evening to discuss problems in the Party committee.”

“Fine. Is there anything else before we leave?” Tu Lo asked.

“Yes. You’re to attend the meeting too,” Liu ordered. “And see to it that you’re on time!”

Tu Lo and Old Yang left and walked back to their living quarters together. There was a cool breeze that evening, refreshing after the stifling, smoke-filled room. Tu Lo headed straight for his room where he took his kit bag and a torch, then locked the door. On his way out he called through Old Yang’s window that he was leaving, then strode towards the gate. Old Yang rushed after him to ask, “Are you going to Peishihling?”

“Yes,” Tu Lo shouted back.

“Wait a minute.” Old Yang returned to lock his door and hurried to catch up with Tu Lo. “I’ll go with you.”

“Better not.” Tu Lo put his hand out to stop him. “You keep an eye on the office.”

"Let me come too," Old Yang insisted. "It'll be better if we're both there to help out with tomorrow's on-the-spot meeting. We must see to it that it turns out a success."

"Right," Tu Lo said confidently, as the two of them, the young and the mature peasant, set off in the faint light of the moon and strode along shoulder to shoulder.

4

When his talk with Tu Lo ended in a deadlock, Liu had realized that it would be useless to try again. That was why he was to take the decisive step of calling a meeting of all the Yochin Commune's cadres to reiterate what he meant by the spirit of "putting things right" so that they would recognize Tu Lo's error and expose him.

However, the meeting did not turn out as he had expected. It dragged on till midnight with Liu repeatedly hinting at what he wanted. But it was only when he openly urged the cadres to speak out that they finally voiced a number of criticisms of the commune Party committee, but not at all the sort of thing Liu had hoped to hear. He decided to call a second meeting, from which he would exclude Tu Lo, whom he instructed to analyse his thinking so as to make a self-criticism. Liu was convinced that with Tu Lo out of the way, the other cadres would feel free to criticize their Party secretary.

But this second meeting was an even greater disappointment for Liu than the first. It made him realize that he would never be able to get the whole county mobilized to "put things right" unless he could discredit Tu Lo. If the whole thing failed — and here, he was thinking of the precedent it would create — none of the county committee's resolutions could ever be carried out afterwards. Besides, almost all of the county cadres knew that he was personally tackling Yochin Commune so as to pluck out that thorn in his flesh, Tu Lo, and bring things back to "normal" there. If he couldn't get the commune to toe the line, what would people say? Liu Min-chung is spineless, a real weakling! So he decided to send the members of his work-team to different brigades to organize discussions and probe into the situation.

One day, Liu himself accompanied one of the work-team members to Peishihling, meaning to sound out Tu Lo and see if his views had changed. It was so hot by noon that Liu decided to stop and rest somewhere. The two of them walked through the quiet village, past the wall newspapers in every lane that featured special criticism sections and poetry contests. Liu did not even so much as glance at them, but headed for Aunt Chang's house. He had just entered the courtyard when Aunt Chang hurried out to greet him warmly. "Where have you come from?" she asked.

"The county town," replied Liu.

Aunt Chang went in to fetch some water for them to have a wash.

"Where's Tu Lo?" Liu asked, wiping his face.

"At the worksite. Do you want me to send for him?" she volunteered.

"There's no hurry. He seems to be keen on manual labour."

"He's just fine in every way. He has been here less than a year, but the bad trend's been beaten back and replaced by a healthy one. As we like to say 'when men change, the land and output change too.' Oh yes, he's a fine youngster and we appreciate the county's having sent us such a good leader."

Liu could not help turning away his face.

Aunt Chang, afraid she had been talking too much, went in to do her cooking.

An old man sauntered into the courtyard with a coil of straw rope slung over his shoulder and a bundle of straw under his arm which he was twisting into rope as he walked. He stopped at the steps of the house and sat down, his eyes on his work. Liu took a quick look at him and, assuming that he had dropped in to see Aunt Chang, paid no further attention to him. However, the old man presently looked up and asked, "Are you from the county?"

"Mm," Liu grunted by way of reply.

The old peasant bent over his rope-making again. After a long while he glanced up once more. "I've heard you're Secretary Liu?"

Liu simply grunted again.

The old man got up, still holding the rope, and went over to Liu. "I heard you're asking people to write reports exposing the faults of Tu Lo. I don't like the sound of it."

"What business is it of yours?" Liu demanded, a bit annoyed by the old dawdler.

"I'm afraid you're letting people pull the wool over your eyes. Who was the first person that you looked up on arriving? Humph! It was our former deputy brigade leader, a fellow who spent all his time on sidelines and crooked deals. At the beginning of this year Tu Lo had him investigated and found he had pocketed eight hundred yuan of public funds, so our brigade members chucked him out of that job. You're the county Party secretary. Why listen to a bourgeois type?"

Flabbergasted, Liu demanded, "Who are you?"

"The head of Team Two's democratic auditing group. I know what I'm talking about." At that the old villager walked off without a backward glance.

Tu Lo himself soon strode into the courtyard. He put down his hoe and greeted Liu, then picked up the wash-basin and went in to get some water.

For several days Liu had been collecting evidence to use against Tu Lo. Although he had not turned up as much as he had hoped, he had still accumulated quite a pile of material. But after going through it, even some of the work-team members had pronounced the evidence inconclusive and had begun to have their doubts about the way Liu was handling this. However, Liu had patted the pile of material and declared arrogantly that even if the evidence was insufficient, Tu Lo's "opposing the county Party committee and opposing the Party Central Committee" stand alone warranted punishment, because he had refused to promote the Tungyang experience and he had tried to discredit the "talk". That made him the man to be singled out as their main "rectification" target.

As soon as he had washed, Tu Lo sat down on a wooden chair opposite Liu who with the lid of his bowl was poking aside the tea-leaves floating on top. Liu looked up at Tu Lo. "How's your self-analysis going these days? Have you finished writing your self-criticism?"

Tu Lo was fanning himself with his straw hat. His jacket of white homespun stained yellow by mud was open, revealing his robust chest. Without a word, he fished out of his pocket a neatly written statement.

Liu glanced through it, then put it down on the table. "You've deliberately avoided the main issue."

"Not at all. I've seriously considered the principal criticisms made by our commune cadres on the Party committee."

"Stop trying to wriggle out of it," Liu sneered. "If your case were so simple, do you think I'd have come here in person?"

"I suppose you mean that I've opposed County Party Secretary Liu by refusing to back the Tungyang experience?"

"Bah. It's far worse than that." Liu was boiling. "I have proof that you people here have been trying to debunk it. And that has affected other communes as well..."

"Our commune Party committee decided to criticize Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line." Tu Lo spoke with quiet assurance. "And when the brigades began giving concrete examples, the Tungyang experience was cited. I don't see anything wrong with that."

"Your commune has completely ignored the spirit of 'putting things right'. Moreover, in your study sessions, you people have even questioned that official 'talk', and in some places it has come under fire! In a word, it's not only a matter of refusing to accept the Tungyang experience or the county Party committee's leadership. Do you realize who it is you're defying? You..."

"Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is a philosophy of struggle," Tu Lo countered. "Whenever a revisionist wind rises, the proletariat fights back. That's inevitable."

Liu was so infuriated that his hands began to tremble. As he made a neat pile of the material on the table, he glowered at the young Party secretary. "Come with me to the commune headquarters at once. We're going to hold an emergency Party committee meeting."

However, at the commune headquarters, Liu realized there was not time enough to send for those committee members who lived and worked in their own brigades some distance away. So he gave the order to summon only the seven standing committee members. He

planned on a short meeting, assuming that the material collected by the work-team would make the cadres realize for themselves the seriousness of Tu Lo's case. Then Liu would only have to suggest how to deal with the young Party secretary.

They began the meeting at eight o'clock that evening, but at one o'clock had still not reached an agreement, despite their long, heated discussion. Old Yang and three other standing committee members, not including Tu Lo, sharply criticized the Tungyang experience as revisionist. As for the "talk" Liu vaunted as a panacea, they came out against it in no uncertain terms, branding it as incompatible with the Party's basic line because it misrepresented the chief contradiction as well as the orientation of the current struggle. They insisted that a study of Chairman Mao's directives on the Cultural Revolution was essential to an understanding of the whole question. Only two committee members kept fairly quiet. The director of the commune's factories explained that not being familiar with the situation he must listen first to what the others had to say. The other, a vice-chairman of the commune revolutionary committee, said she needed to give the matter more thought before she could express an opinion. . . .

Realizing that it was no use continuing the discussion, Liu decided to beat a strategic retreat, "Well, think it over, comrades," he said. "But there is one thing we can decide right now. If there are no factual mistakes in the material read to you just now, you can sign the report. As for Tu Lo, we'll let the county Party committee decide how to deal with him."

"But the report should include our Party committee's opinion," Old Yang pointed out.

"I'm going to write to the prefectural Party committee about this," declared Liang Hsiao-ping, that young woman vice-chairman of the commune revolutionary committee.

"As you like," Liu replied. "But in my opinion, you've all been influenced by dangerous ideas and can't analyse the situation correctly."

"And in *my* opinion," Liang Hsiao-ping retorted, "the sinister wind of the wrong line has influenced *you*."

Tu Lo stood up. "I've heard the materials you've collected and feel that there's no need to go into some minor details I've noticed. My two big 'crimes' seem to be, first, rejecting the Tungyang experience and second, organizing study sessions to review Chairman Mao's directives instead of propagandizing that 'talk'. Most of the examples collected about what I've said and done relate to these two problems. Despite our difference of opinion this evening, the facts cited conform, by and large, with reality."

"Right!" exclaimed Liu. "You must accept the consequences of your own actions."

"Where's that report?" Tu Lo demanded calmly. "Give it to me. I'll sign it."

His candour disconcerted Liu. This burly youth seemed to have grown in stature, dwarfing him.

As Old Yang watched Tu Lo sign the report, tears filled the wrinkles below his eyes and his bearded lips quivered. He could not utter a word.

Young Liang Hsiao-ping could not contain herself. As soon as Tu Lo put down his pen she seized his hand and burst into tears.

Tu Lo gripped her hand hard and said fondly, "The revolutionary road has never been smooth. How can Vice-chairman Liang, whom we're so proud of, break down and cry like this?"

Then he turned to Liu. "Will my signature do for the commune Party committee?"

"Yes, it'll do, for the time being," Liu growled.

"For the time being," Tu Lo reiterated. He rose slowly then and planted his hands on the table to glare at Liu sitting right under his nose. "And how about you? You're a Party secretary, but you've never really represented the Party. Never!"

5

The next episode occurred less than a week later in Liu's bright, spacious office on the first floor of the headquarters of the county's Party committee, also of the revolutionary committee. Liu was smoking on a sofa while the sofa opposite him, intended for visitors,

was unoccupied. Tu Lo in his straw sandals had preferred to squat on the wooden chair beside it.

Liu flicked the ash from his cigarette, and informed Tu Lo that the county Party committee had decided to send him to the May 7th cadre school.

Taken by surprise, Tu Lo asked, "But surely it is not a punishment to go to the cadre school."

"We're giving you one last chance to recognize your mistakes and reform," Liu answered stiffly. "Have you anything to say?"

"Going to May 7th cadre schools is the way pointed out by Chairman Mao for us cadres to temper ourselves. I'm happy to have this chance to sharpen my 'spear' for the struggle to come. But those who're counting on the cadre school to change my ideas to suit their own taste are making a big mistake."

"You certainly have a high opinion of yourself," was all Liu could find to say, for he was smouldering with rage. He jumped to his feet and went to sit at his desk, hoping to get rid of this "thorn" in his side as soon as possible.

"If you accept the decision, there's nothing more to discuss," he finally muttered.

"So you think you're going to get rid of me so easily." Tu Lo smiled sardonically, tilting his head towards the window to get a glimpse of the view outside.

Clusters of white clouds were scurrying across the blue sky and the sturdy poplars outside shimmered in the sunlight. Tu Lo gazed at their rustling leaves, his eyes brightening, as he recalled a soul-stirring moment. Those trees had been planted in 1968 during an unforgettable year and on an unforgettable day, the day the organ of red power, the revolutionary committee of Fengchuan County, was set up. To mark that glorious day for future generations, Tu Lo, Cheng Hua, the PLA men supporting the Left and this fellow Liu now smoking opposite, had all planted poplars before the building, then brand-new. Eight years had gone by and the saplings, originally no thicker than a man's thumb, were now full-grown, almost reaching the third-floor of the building. Their branches swayed in the late-summer breeze just before the bright window-panes.



Lost in thought, Tu Lo took a few steps towards the window as if unconsciously drawn by the trees. Then he spun round abruptly to ask Liu, "Remember what you said when we planted those poplars?"

From the corner of his eye, Liu glanced at the trees outside, then tossing his head as if to shake off his embarrassment, replied wearily, "It's slipped my mind. I'm getting old, you know."

Tu Lo couldn't hold back an indignant snort. "You . . . you made a self-criticism with tears in your eyes and swore to reform before an audience representing the half-million-odd inhabitants of Fengchuan County. Have you forgotten that? 'It's slipped my mind!' you say! But there's one thing that hasn't slipped your mind — the old road!"

Touched to the quick, Liu leapt to his feet. "So you mean to teach me a lesson? You're a bit young for that," he stormed. "Don't forget that this is not the time of the Cultural Revolution!"

"Don't think that because you managed to muddle through the Cultural Revolution you can put on new shoes to take the old road again." Tu Lo glared at him. "Revolution and struggle will continue for ever."

"Well, if that's the case, just wait for the second Cultural Revolution." Liu smiled sarcastically.

"No need to wait," Tu Lo retorted. "Our struggle against you has already begun."

Liu's jaw dropped. He was unable to speak for fury.

"I don't agree with those who say that the Party's basic line is no longer valid," Tu Lo went on. "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was a grand revolution, unprecedented in history. People can pick fault with this or that defect in it, but all the same it will go down in history as a glorious revolution, an inspiration to future generations. Neither you with your complaints and hatred for it, nor anyone else, will be able to negate it."

Liu looked as if he were sitting on pins and needles. Beads of sweat streaming down his face, he gasped, "You . . . you . . ."

"Think it over," Tu Lo cut him short. "Since the Cultural Revolution, you've been blowing hot and cold in turn. Every time a wind to reverse correct verdicts arises, you pop up to suppress the revolution; but when Chairman Mao's revolutionary line gains a decisive victory, you turn cynical and pessimistic. It's mainly your fault that Fengchuan County has failed to make big strides in learning from Tachai. And now, you've staked everything on this 'talk' by a certain high-ranking person; you've sallied out in full battledress to suppress revolution and force us to accept the revisionist line. You call it 'daring to act'. Haven't you realized that once this evil wind is beaten back, your winning card will prove worthless? What will you gamble your hopes on then?"

Liu wheeled round, trying desperately to find a reply, but before he could open his mouth Tu Lo silenced him with these impassioned words: "You've nothing to fall back on, for the truth is not on your side. I believe that the glory of Mao Tsetung Thought will shine on as long as the sun continues to shine. Final victory will belong to the proletariat! Those who persist in revisionism are doomed to failure. This time your defeat will not merely mean one more defeat in a long series of defeats, but will mean a qualitative change in the nature of your problem."

At that, Tu Lo strode out. What flaming words and ardent thoughts! What a fiery youth! The office suddenly seemed empty and deserted. Yet his exultant words lingered on as if still echoing

in the room. Left with no one to shout at, Liu looked round helplessly. The marks Tu Lo's straw sandals had left on the wooden chair caught his eye. His heart sank, his arms dropped. . . .

Tu Lo raced back on his bicycle, for he had been given only three days to get ready to leave for the cadre school and there was much unfinished business to take up and discuss with the commune Party committee. At the commune headquarters, Tu Lo asked for Old Yang, who was in charge of day-to-day affairs, but was told that he had gone to a brigade. Tu Lo gave Young Tien a note for him, then went to put away his bicycle and buy three steamed buns and some shallot from the canteen. He strode off, kit bag slung over his shoulder, eating as he climbed the mountain slopes.

He had already worked out how he would spend these last three days. He would visit all the brigades and then call a Party committee meeting before going away.

By sunset, he had already been to three villages and was just leaving the Peishihling worksite where hills were being levelled when Black Ox, Aunt Chang's grandson, hailed him. The lad had been looking for him to tell him that a woman cadre from the county, someone who had visited them once before, was waiting for him at home. At this, Tu Lo returned with the lad, for he knew it had to be Cheng Hua, whom he had planned on seeing in any case before leaving.

Tu Lo found Cheng Hua and Aunt Chang chatting under the grapevine arbour. He greeted them and sat down on a small stool. Since both young people were preoccupied, neither found it easy to begin a conversation. Thinking she was in the way, Aunt Chang got up to leave, but Tu Lo stopped her, for he wanted to spend as much time with her as possible before his departure. During the short time he had stayed with Aunt Chang, this old woman born of a poor peasant family had treated him like her own son. He liked to bask in the warmth and strength she radiated. However, she insisted on going off to prepare the evening meal and Tu Lo had to let her go.

Cheng Hua told him she had come to say goodbye and bring him the book he had wanted so badly the time before, the *Selected Works of Marx and Engels*. However, there was another more important

reason. She wanted to tell him something that was troubling her. After Liu informed Tu Lo he was being sent to the cadre school, Liu had notified her that she was to replace Tu Lo, which put her on the spot. Not that a difficult task worried her, nor even the responsibility and fatigue of the work. The first thing she had thought of was what stand to take in the still unresolved clash between Liu and Tu Lo.

"So that's what's bothering you," Tu Lo exclaimed and thought hard, knitting his thick brows. After a moment, the wrinkles disappeared from his forehead and he said reassuringly, "Don't worry. I think we can solve the problem by studying it in two steps." Cheng Hua looked up, listening eagerly.

"First, you must decide for yourself who's right and who's wrong in the current struggle between Liu and our commune Party committee. Then you can decide on a plan of action. Once you've answered the first question correctly, it will be easy to tackle the second one. Let's discuss the first question now," Tu Lo continued brusquely.

She began to speak, telling him that during her previous visit she had in fact already decided to support Yochin Commune's decision to reject the Tungyang experience and begin a big campaign to criticize revisionism, but had not wanted to discuss the question for reasons of discipline. She had returned to the county town firmly resolved to tell Liu what she thought, but when she saw how the spirit of the "talk" had gone to his head, she had realized it was useless to speak out and had decided to find a different way of dealing with him. Unaware of all this, Liu had sent her to Yochin Commune. . . .

Tu Lo listened eagerly, trying to judge from these few words how determined she really was. When she had finished, he tilted his head back and reflected a moment before commenting, "I can sense from what you've said that you are still dubious about the Tungyang experience."

Cheng Hua nodded, her eyes grave, knowing full well the meaning of the stand she had taken in the fierce struggle between the two lines. No one could predict what struggles against Liu lay ahead of her, nor how sharp they would be.

"That's fine," Tu Lo exclaimed happily. "Since you've decided the Tungyang experience is wrong, everything will be easy. We can tackle the next question. . . ."

"It's time for supper." A smiling Aunt Chang cut him short. "You've been talking all day long about problems, contradictions and struggles. Well, I won't force you to eat, but I'm going to make sure my guest is treated properly."

"Cheng Hua's our 'boss' now, auntie."

Aunt Chang blinked, trying to understand what he meant. When he explained that Cheng Hua had been appointed their new Party secretary, she slapped her thigh and exclaimed, "That's welcome news! Why didn't you tell me sooner? But I shall miss you."

Tu Lo saw Cheng Hua off after the meal. They walked along still talking enthusiastically. "Remember how we began revolting at the start of the Cultural Revolution?" Tu Lo asked her with a smile. "How old were we then?"

"Not quite twenty."

"When I heard that you'd been branded a 'counter-revolutionary', I began thinking that if a girl wasn't afraid to make revolution why should a big bully like myself hold back?"

"And when I heard that a kid like Tu Lo had dared to rebel, I thought: why should I be afraid?"

They both burst out laughing.

"We had the courage then to rebel and struggle, but what weapons did we have?" Tu Lo rejoined. "Our only weapon was Mao Tsetung Thought."

"In other words, uphold the truth and go against the tide."

"But to go against the tide, we must first be able to recognize counter-revolutionary currents."

"That's why Chairman Mao has always stressed the importance for us cadres of studying the works of Marx and Lenin."

Cheng Hua nodded.

"Being able to tell which is the correct line is only a matter of understanding a given situation. But this understanding doesn't necessarily mean that a person will dare to struggle, especially when the counter-revolutionary current is very strong. Then a Party member

is put to the test: how strong and pure is his Party spirit? This brings us to the heart of your problem.”

Cheng Hua was impressed by the logical way Tu Lo had led up to the essence of the problem. She began to reflect seriously as they walked along in silence.

After a while Tu Lo went on to expand his idea. “At the decisive hour of the Cultural Revolution, when we were preparing to seize victory, Chairman Mao warned all Party members never to lull themselves into thinking that one or two, or even three or four cultural revolutions would be sufficient. At the time I didn’t really understand what he meant. It was only after the struggle to smash Lin Piao’s anti-Party clique and the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, that I fully understood. . . . Now, let’s have a look at Liu. Isn’t his a case of putting on new shoes to take the old road? Well, what are we to do? Stand up against him or not?”

“Of course we must oppose him!” Cheng Hua exclaimed, resolve ringing in her voice.

Tu Lo said, “Remember the time you told me to stop charging like a bull? That I should file away the sharp points of my ‘horns’? But you should know that we need our sharp ‘horns’ to oppose Liu’s revisionist line. What made you advise me to change my ways? It was fear.”

Cheng Hua stood still, her charming eyes quite round, for the profundity of what this rough young fellow had said left her speechless.

“A dauntless spirit can only come from a selfless stand,” Tu Lo exclaimed, fired with emotion. “When we held up our right hands and took that solemn oath before the Party flag — ‘I pledge to give my whole self, even my life, to the red flag’ — we pledged absolute loyalty, without any reservation.”

“Yes, faint-heartedness and betrayal don’t spring from the moment when someone kneels before the enemy,” Cheng Hua rejoined eagerly. “He may have joined the revolution just for a bowl of rice. If such thinking goes uncorrected, then as soon as he has a bowl of rice at each meal, let alone some good dishes to go with it, such a person would no longer give a thought to those who’re still going hungry. I know now what I ought to do, Comrade Tu Lo.”

“The key lies in a steadfast faith in the communist cause,” Tu Lo declared, his eyes gleaming. “Neither steel nor explosives have been able to destroy *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*. What force on earth could cloud the brilliance of Mao Tsetung Thought?”

“It’s all clear now, crystal clear!” Cheng Hua exclaimed joyously. “You’ve undone the ‘knot’ in my thinking. Thank you ever so much!”

“Don’t underestimate the complexity of the coming struggle,” he warned her, still grave. “The minute you come to Yochin Commune and defend our ‘fortress’ alongside Old Yang and the others, Liu will begin putting pressure on you.”

She nodded. “I realized that yesterday when he was persuading me to accept this new task.”

“And you must realize that to promote the revisionist line, Liu needs to overhaul the organization. That’s why expulsion from the Party is so common, why so many people get packed off.” He went on with deep feeling, “We were empty-handed, weren’t we, when we rallied round the Party’s flag? A revolutionary fighter must keep his eyes fixed on the enemy, whether he is on the offensive or on the run. And he mustn’t glance even for an instant at the coins the enemy tosses out to help his escape. Why do you think Marx showered such praise on the members of the Paris Commune for refusing to accept higher pay than ordinary workers? It would seem a small matter, wouldn’t it? . . . It was because the martyrs of the Paris Commune were the first to attack bourgeois rights, which for centuries the exploiting classes held as sacred. We, sons and daughters of the Party founded and fostered by Chairman Mao, belong to a new class. Our task is heavy and our road long.”

And so these two young Party members, both still relatively inexperienced in the storms of class struggle, went on excitedly discussing the philosophy of revolution and the meaning of life on the eve of a new struggle. . . .

Suddenly loud voices and laughter rang out behind them. Recognizing the booming voice of Old Yang, Tu Lo wheeled round and ran towards his friend. They threw their arms round each other.

Old Yang had just received a call from Liu informing him that Tu

Lo would be leaving, to be replaced by Cheng Hua. So he and several other Party committee members had immediately hurried to Peishihling Brigade.

Old Yang and the others told Tu Lo that they were determined to win the coming battle. This was what they wanted him to know before he left for the cadre school. As they walked back to the commune headquarters, the sun began to rise and their spirits soared as they greeted the dawn of a new day.

The vast, snow-mantled plateau glittered in the morning sunlight, its white expanse sparkling with iridescence.

In a spacious cave dwelling, a ray of light fell across the May 7th fighters' desks and beds. Under the window sat dauntless Tu Lo, his head cradled on his joined hands over his desk. He was listening with great concentration to a broadcast of the inspiring call issued by the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao: Hit back at the Right deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts!

He stood up, flexing his hands and cracking his joints, then pushed open the window. Outside, the stark trees of the forest covering the snowy mountain slopes and the plain looked like legions of staunch fighters raising their fists to the sky. Instead of the endless, undulating plateau, he seemed to see the indomitable, roaring billows of the mighty Yellow River surging forward and surging in his breast. . . .

Illustrated by Yao Yu-tuo

Growing in Struggle (sculpture)
by Wu Hsien-lin



POEMS FROM HSIAOCHINCHUANG

The Hsiao-chin-chuang Brigade in Paoti County on the outskirts of Tientsin is an advanced unit. We introduced the poetry-writing activities of its members in *Chinese Literature* No. 10, 1974 and No. 4, 1975. During the movement to study the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the struggle to denounce Teng Hsiao-ping, while repudiating the Right deviationist trend, the peasants there wrote more poems. Recently the People's Literature Publishing House, Peking, and the People's Publishing House in Tientsin published a second volume of selected poems from Hsiao-chin-chuang and a collection entitled *Even the Biggest Hurricane Can't Knock Us Down*. The ten poems published in this issue are chosen from those two volumes. For more information about these poems see the article on p. 115.

Wang Yu-chen

When Chairman Mao's Poems Came to Our Worksite

When Chairman Mao's poems* came to our worksite,
Like a spring breeze they brought warmth to our hearts.
We carry on the revolution with even greater zest,
More determined to combat and guard against revisionism.

Wang Yu-chen is a militia woman.

*Referring to Chairman Mao's two poems *Reascending Ching-kangshan* — to the tune of *Shui Tiao Keh Tou* (May 1965) and *Two Birds: A Dialogue* — to the tune of *Nien Nu Chiao* (autumn 1965).

Despite heavy burdens we climb ever upward,
Every far-flung continent is within our view.
Watered with our sweat, even frozen earth will thaw,
Tomorrow our commune will be ever more resplendent.



Wang Tso-shan

Every Single Victory Is Won Through Struggle

Throughout our many thousand year-long history,
Every victory was won through struggle;
Now our village has a new spirit, new people,
It is class struggle that has changed it so.

The high tide of the Cultural Revolution
Swept away the basis of revisionism.
After starting night classes to study Marxism,
Even on our brackish soil Tachai's flowers appeared.

Then the movement to expose Lin Piao and Confucius began,
"And the jade-like firmament was cleared of dust."*
Bad customs were swept away, fresh new habits started,
Till above the superstructure the red flag was unfurled.

Wang Tso-shan is secretary of the brigade's Party branch.

*A line from Chairman Mao's poem *Reply to Comrade Kuo Mo-jo — a lu shib* (1961).

Last year in July, August and September,
A foul, malevolent mist* spread infection,
But we faced the miasma and discovered its source,
Then criticized the unrepentant capitalist-roader.

The revolutionary road still stretches far ahead,
The Party's basic line we must guard and follow.
Cutting our way through all poisonous weeds and obstacles,
Through struggle we'll usher in a brave new age.



*Referring to the counter-revolutionary revisionist line carried out by Teng Hsiao-ping, the biggest unrepentant capitalist-roader and the Right deviationist wind he started last autumn.

Wang Tu

Even the Biggest Hurricane Can't Knock Us Down

We'll keep our red flag flying high in spite of wind and tempest!
For we poor and lower-middle peasants have boundless courage.
While we continue making revolution there's sunshine in our hearts;
Even the biggest hurricane can't knock us down!

When high winds blow our night school light shines brighter;
When rains pour down our red flag still proudly flies.
Our ten innovations,* like unfading flowers,
Bloom more splendidly despite the tempest.

Wang Tu is deputy secretary of the Party branch and leader of the militia company.

*These are: starting a political night-school, building a contingent of Marxist theorists, inviting peasants to give lectures on local history, singing new revolutionary operas, setting up an art propaganda team, starting a movement to write poems, beginning a library, telling revolutionary stories, encouraging sports activities, and introducing new customs and habits,

With work-hardened hands we'll write new poems,
Without training we shall still sing new songs,
The breeze will carry them a thousand miles away,
Our resolute spirit will soar to the skies.

Revolutionaries dare to sail against adverse winds,
Chairman Mao's hand stays steady on the helm.
Class struggle is the key; we grasp it tightly,
Marxism will ever point out the way.

We dare to struggle, dare to revolt,
With Chairman Mao's support we'll seize turtles,
Quell tigers and subdue leopards;
Even the biggest hurricane can't knock us down!



Yu Fang

This Is the Subject I'll Speak About

When Little Chin returns home after school,
He sits down with pen and paper.
Tomorrow when we criticize Teng Hsiao-ping for his betrayal,
What subject shall I choose to talk about?

"Fishermen brave wind and waves,
Hunters fear neither tigers nor wolves;"
Right now while she's busy cooking our dinner
I can hear my mother singing a revolutionary Peking opera.

Hearing her sing excites Little Chin,
He feels both strong and proud;
Fighting for revolution one must not be a coward;
Tigers and wolves must be trampled underfoot.

Yu Fang is vice-chairman of the women's association.

But Teng Hsiao-ping hated revolutionary operas,
He attacked them as "ultra-Left" or "melodramatic",
He opposed them and all new revolutionary things;
What he preferred was "to return to the rites".*

Little Chin thinks that tomorrow he'll speak up and say,
"My mother's learned to sing the new revolutionary operas."
The more Teng dislikes them, the more we'll all sing,
We'll learn from their heroes and raise high the red flag!

Socialism is bearing fine fruits in our village,
The red flag flies high on the cultural front.
Revolution must be waged in the realm of ideology,
To combat and guard against revisionism!



*The reactionary political programme to restore the slave system advocated by Confucius (551-479 B.C.). Here it means that Teng Hsiao-ping, a reactionary like Confucius, was vainly trying to restore capitalism,

Chang Yu-chen

Going into Battle

This year I'll be sixty-eight;
I remember well what our village used to be like:
Before Liberation we tenants all worked for the landlord;
The scars of past suffering we bear on our backs.

But since the Communist Party came to our village,
Bitter gourds have become honey-sweet melons.
Beginning with land reform, then the co-op and commune;
It was like the sesame, flowering all the way up.

Teng Hsiao-ping ranted, "The present is not as good
As the past." What arrant nonsense this is!
When I heard I nearly burst with anger;
I'll certainly join in the battle to denounce him!

Chang Yu-chen is an old peasant woman.

Wang Shu-ching

Away with All Pests

Listening to the broadcast my eyes blazed with anger;
Flames of wrath flared up in my mind.
At the meeting I'll be the first to denounce the hooligans;
If the enemy dares to attempt subversion, we'll crush them.

Though the bourgeoisie has lost power it still exists,
Never despairs, always dreams of a come-back;
So in Tien An Men a despicable incident* was staged
In the hope of launching a blood-bath in Peking.

Holding high the red flag, we fought these die-hards;
The militia was the first to advance;

Wang Shu-ching is a deputy brigade leader.

*Under the influence of Teng Hsiao-ping's Right deviationist line, a small group of counter-revolutionaries started a counter-revolutionary incident in Tien An Men Square, Peking, on April 5 this year. The workers' militia, together with the police and PLA guards, swiftly crushed their attempt.

PLA men and police all joined in,
With iron fists they smashed this ignominious attempt.

Revolutionaries are steeled through struggle;
When storms subside we see more clearly.
Our enemies remain, they've not given up;
We must continue the struggle without cease.

On with the revolution! On with the struggle!
Let's thoroughly denounce Teng Hsiao-ping.
With our revolutionary brooms we'll make a clean sweep;
Away with all pests!



Wei Wen-chung

Our Peasants' Feet Are Hard as Iron

In the old society for years unnumbered
Poverty-stricken, we owned no footwear.
Trudging along through all sorts of weather,
Our feet became as hard as iron.

Across thousands of rivers and countless hills,
We've left our bare footprints everywhere;
Following our leader Chairman Mao, we fought
For liberation in both the north and the south.

Chairman Mao showed the way, we charged forward;
We, with our feet of iron, always in the van.
From mutual-aid teams to the communes,
We've built a splendid golden road.

Wei Wen-chung is chairman of the poor and lower-middle peasants' association,

Tested by fire in the Cultural Revolution,
Our feet hardened, our convictions firmed.
With callused hands we denounce the devils,
Upon iron feet we stand to recite our poems.

We poor and lower-middle peasants want revolution;
No obstacle can hold us back. With iron feet
We'll stamp out each and every attempt at restoration.
With heads held high we'll stride ever forward.



Hsu Hsiao-fan

Walking Again Along the Familiar Path

A magpie chatters on a bough,
Gongs and drums sound outside the village;
Young Wang who's just graduated from college
Is returning, walking along the familiar pathway.

His happy mother clasps his hands in hers;
His former comrades look him over carefully.
Yes, he's still dressed in his peasant clothes;
His young face glows with health and happiness.

Our Party secretary comes to greet him too;
Though different in age they share the same ideals.

Hsu Hsiao-fan is a young graduate from middle school who has gone to settle
in the countryside.

"I've come to settle down in the countryside."
"Welcome, we hope you'll take Chairman Mao's golden road."

Gladly he accepts new coarse cloth sandals
So carefully sewn for him by his mother.
Every stitch shows her deep maternal love;
Wearing them he'll walk more firmly.

Well prepared to shoulder new important tasks,
He accepts a bugle from our Party secretary.
In college he fought for revolution in education,
Now, leading the village militia, he'll attack again.

With the sweat of his brow he'll plant his ideals,
In sunshine and rain they'll quickly sprout.
Buffeted by storms and raging tempests,
They strike deeper, stronger roots, grow faster.

How well he remembers before graduation,
A "well-meaning" relative wrote to him,
Saying that college graduates were not mere peasants,
And that he'd no longer be a simple clodhopper.

As a rock thrown in a pool starts a thousand ripples
His anger flared up as he wrote his reply.
"I've grown up among these so-called clods of earth;
I still love the fragrance of the up-turned soil.

"The poor and lower-middle peasants sent me to college;
I'll never forget what the working class expects of me.
No bourgeois influence will ever deflect me;
I've decided to remain a peasant for ever."

His words are like a salvo of big guns;
His lofty spirit soars to the highest heaven.
We are pleased he's such a fine successor to our cause;
Such youngsters are the pride of our age!



Batling with a Brush (sculpture)
by *Wang Kuang-yun*



We'll Keep in Mind Tachai's Experience

We longed to see it, every day, every month;
Even in our dreams we visited Tachai,*
Now at last our wishes have come true,
We're climbing the terraced Tachai hills.

I find it difficult to express my feelings,
Now that the people of Tachai are standing by my side.
My eyes are brimming, full of gratitude,
Of such a landscape I can never see enough.

I weigh their heavy hammer in my hands,
New strength springs up inside me.

Wang Hsien is a member of the Party branch committee.

*Tachai Brigade in Hsiyang County, Shansi Province, holds the red banner on our agricultural front.

I hold their work-worn hands in mine,
So many heartfelt things I want to say.

Heroic Party branch, heroic people,
What a fine example you have set us.
Such well-made terraces, such splendid roads,
Inspire us to work like giants refreshed.

We'll always keep Tachai's experience in mind,
Hold the red flag high and seize class struggle;
Denounce wrong trends and go all out
To bring other great changes to our own village.



Wang Jui

The Song of the Tractor Driver

Sweating profusely, grease all over my hands,
I'm driving an iron ox for the revolution.
My toil-worn hands firmly grasp the steering wheel
As I drive along the new highway.

Rows of willows flit past my cab window,
Banners flutter, rallying us to learn from Tachai,
Grain is piled sky-high on the threshing floor,
New mobile warfare has begun in all our fields.

Our land is so rich in fruits and flowers;
So many new scenes I see from my small window;
The more I see, the more my enthusiasm grows;
Waves of warmth pulsate through my heart.

Wang Jui is deputy leader of the militia company.

Three years ago when learning to drive my tractor,
The Party secretary grasped my hand and said,
“Learning from Tachai has hastened mechanization;
From now on we must speed up all our work.”

Facing the morning sun I plough the fields,
Guided by the north star I open up new land;
When there's drought my iron ox brings new pumps,
After harvest I carry grain to the state.

In early spring when willows show faint green
I fetch new comrades from the city;
Hoisting these youngsters on to my tractor,
I step on the gas and gaily drive on.

When paddy fields are fragrant and brooks gurgle,
A college graduate comes to settle in our village;
Grasping his hands in my greasy ones,
I pile on the sack of new seed he's brought us.

In winter when the cold north wind is blowing,
I drive a barefoot doctor on her rounds sometimes,
And take much needed medicine late at night,
To relieve the fears of anxious mothers.

Many times I've carried film projectors and their teams
And brought revolutionary opera troupes to our village.
New books I've taken to our night school, where loud denunciations
Of the capitalist-roader drown out my engine's mighty roar.

The sun shines gaily on my driver's seat
As scenes fair as a woven tapestry I pass.

To my engine's rhythmic hum I sing aloud
An endless song that flows like water across our land.

The Cultural Revolution has brought new songs,
Our mountains and rivers form a bright new picture.
The more I see of these lovely scenes,
The happier I am as I speed along our new highway.



SKETCHES

Nachialun

Scaling the Heights

An eagle soared into the overcast sky as the setting sun cast a glow over the snowy peaks. On the lofty mountains where the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army once left their footprints on the historic Long March, green pines and cedars stood graceful and erect in the winter cold.

Ten pairs of feet trampled the fallen leaves in the forest as gay voices and laughter scattered flocks of birds. When Yeh Chih, leader of the group, climbed up a cliff she waved the red flag in her hand and shouted to those behind her: "Comrades, look at the red flag. It is calling on us to scale the heights along the path of the Long March."

Behind her nine youngsters, all of them members of a Light Cavalry Detachment of Culture, responded with a cheer.

The day before, to welcome the New Year, the detachment had gone to perform for the Yi people, staging an opera on the site of an irrigation project. It was nearly time for the show to start when Yeh Chih learned that in a neighbouring village there was a geological prospecting team. Already made up for her part, she nevertheless went specially to invite members of the team to come to their per-

The writer is of the Pai nationality.

formance. But the seven young men of the team had already bid farewell to the Yi villagers and were now climbing uphill, packs on their backs. Yeh Chih saw them to the top of the hill.

"Will you be following the path of the Red Army on the Long March?" she asked.

"Yes," came the answer of the team leader. He was a sturdy Nahsi youngster who looked the picture of honesty. "We shall prospect for resources on the snowy peaks travelled by the Red Army on its Long March. We shall put up red flags there."

The performance at the work site turned out a great success. Their task done, Yeh Chih drew her comrades together and told them what was on her mind.

It was promptly decided that they too would follow the trail of the Red Army's Long March and catch up with the prospectors. They would take their opera to the seven young men and let azaleas bloom on the snowy mountains. That was how the detachment made its way further into the mountains.

Mountain peaks rising in the distance usually look pretty close, but once you try to scale them, you realize they are quite far away. When the detachment reached a steep ascent, Yeh called a halt. Scooping clear spring water gushing out of the boulders for drink, they bit into fragrant new buckwheat bread given them by an old Lisu woman.

"Perhaps the Red Army men on the Long March also rested here to wipe the sweat from their brows," said Yeh Chih, moved by the poetic surroundings. "Perhaps they too ate buckwheat bread and drank the clear spring water."

"Yes, aren't we fortunate," said Little Tsui-feng, a Pai boatman's daughter who had grown up beside Lake Erh-hai. "We're following the path of the Long March and performing the model revolutionary opera, *Azalea Mountain*.* Sister Yeh Chih, let's climb up, following in the footsteps of the Red Army."

*A modern revolutionary Peking opera set in the early days of the Second Revolutionary Civil War Period (1927-1937). The opera depicts the struggles and growth of an armed peasants' detachment under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and presents the image of Ko Hsiang, a proletarian heroine.

The stirring melody of a passage sung by the heroine Ko Hsiang rose to the tree tops as the ten youngsters climbed vigorously upwards.

The weather is fickle in the high mountains. A few moments later it began to snow. Large snowflakes landed on the young people's shoulders, whitening the girls' headkerchiefs. The steep path became very slippery.

"Let us forge ahead, following the Red Army's footprints!" Yeh Chih cried at the head of the procession.

"I'm sure the Red Army met with heavy snows too when they passed here. I bet it snowed harder than this." Little Tsui-feng's treble rang out crisply.

"That's right. Perhaps there was also a young woman fighter of your age in their ranks, no more than seventeen..." said Yeh Chih lovingly.

"Sister Yeh Chih, don't you know there were Red Army fighters younger than that?" asked Tsui-feng in all seriousness. "I read in a revolutionary reminiscence all about a brave Little Red Devil who was only fourteen..."

This inspiriting thought put fresh strength into Tsui-feng. Following Yeh Chih closely, she went up one ridge after another.

The snow stopped. Night came.

Just at that moment a ball of flame flashed on the path ahead.

The flame danced and floated down towards them, flitting from one ridge to another...

"It must be them. It must surely be them."

Her heart deeply stirred, Yeh Chih climbed upwards. The light came nearer and nearer until at last they saw it was indeed the leader of the geological team, the sturdy, honest young Nahsi, a torch in his hand.

"Comrades," he cried, coming towards them. "When the last rosy rays of the sun turned your red flag into a red cloud, all seven of us were sure it was you coming up the hill. We all jumped for joy and I've been sent as a representative to welcome you. I have good news for you, comrades. Very possibly, rare metals urgently needed for our socialist construction are hidden in these snowy peaks of the Long March."

They soon reached the gentle slope where a white tent stood. Sweeping away the snow, they built a bonfire for their open-air theatre. At the foot of the slope sat their audience of seven, the most enthusiastic audience possible, warmly applauding every item and asking for many encores.

Yeh Chih had never been so stirred in her life. The red flags fluttering on high, the blazing bonfire, towering green pines and the path of the Long March winding upwards into the clouds... All these reminded her that the seeds of flame scattered by an older generation of revolutionaries from Ching Kangshan had now burst into flower. Yes, a generation of young fighters have taken over the red flags their fathers carried and are advancing to break new ground along the path of the Long March.

Suddenly, snowflakes started to whirl again.

The snow fell on Yeh Chih's eyebrows, melted on her flushed cheeks and fluttered through her lips parted in singing. The prospectors begged her to stop and take cover.

But the young artiste went on, carried away by the passionate devotion to the revolution of Ko Hsiang. The splendid aria bursting from her full heart pierced the clouds and reverberated in the valleys.

Their last item was interrupted, however, by the appearance of three men climbing up the slope, torches raised.

"Ho, another new socialist thing," they exclaimed boisterously. "Performing an opera in the hills along the path of the Long March — and it's *Azalea Mountain* too. Remarkable!"

They did not pause to take breath but turned to continue on their way.

"Where're you going, comrades?" Yeh Chih hurried after them. "Why not stop for a rest and watch our performance. It's snowing hard."

"Many thanks, comrades," replied a deep voice. The speaker was very tall and his face ruddy. "We have our headquarters on a high peak and because it's snowing so hard we must hurry back. You see, comrades, the first television transmission will be reaching these snowy peaks right away — we're a TV testing team."

A TV relay station had been set up on that peak. The three had been going from one ridge to another testing in the storm. Now they were returning to the top peak to see if transmission could be relayed without disturbances even during such a bad storm.

Heavy equipment on their backs, they strode uphill, braving the whirling snow, scaling the heights.

"What shall we do?" Yeh Chih looked questioningly at her comrades. "Shall we stop here or go on?"

The decision was promptly made. After the last item was finished, they'd start uphill too. Let red azaleas blossom over the snow-capped peaks.

The prospectors too came to a decision. Three of them would watch over the camp while the other four escorted the cultural workers up.

Yeh Chih and her group had no chance to refuse. The sturdy honest young Nahsi, leader of the geological team, snatched up a heavy bundle of stage properties and picked up a torch. Yeh Chih hoisted the red flag and the detachment set off.

The three members of the TV team returning from their expedition had just ascended to the peak, brushed the snow from their coats and picked up mugs of hot tea when they saw the red flag and torches dancing along the mountain path.

They raced out of their tents to welcome the cultural workers. "Welcome, a warm welcome to you!"

Yeh Chih stretched out her hand to grip the warm hands of the expeditionary fighters.

It was then, at that very moment, that the TV transmission began to come in on the night of New Year's Day, 1976. The screen lit up. And suddenly, came lines of verse resounding to the skies:

I have long aspired to reach for the clouds

And I again ascend Ching Kangshan.

"A poem by Chairman Mao!" cried Yeh Chih, shouting with excitement. The others cried jubilantly: "Long live Chairman Mao!"

On snowy peaks thousands of metres above sea level, on the path of the Long March, how many people, their hearts pounding with

joy, thronged their TV sets. They held their breath and tried to keep calm so as to catch every word and syllable. The silvery mountains lapsed into an awed silence. Only one voice resounded over the snow and mountains, only one voice stirred the hearts of the fighters. . . .

Nothing is hard in this world

If you dare to scale the heights.

At once, using the notes she had taken down, Yeh Chih read aloud the two newly published poems of Chairman Mao's. Fired with exultation, she recited them again and again. In the midst of warm applause, sharp-eyed Tsui-feng noticed a young Tibetan girl coming towards them from the path behind. Over her left shoulder was a kit marked with a red cross and over her right she carried a gleaming gun.

"Are you a barefoot doctor?" asked Yeh Chih.

"Yes, I'm a barefoot doctor going out on a visit." The Tibetan girl glanced up at a higher peak as she grasped Yeh Chih's hand warmly.

"Are there people living way up there?" Yeh Chih asked, surprised.

"Sure. It's an advanced production team too, a model of self-reliance and arduous struggle. Their old team leader once served as guide for the Red Army, now he's a leader in the movement to learn from Tachai. He often tells us: The Red Army scaled ninety-nine high mountains before they won victory. We are still at the foothills, how can we stop to catch our breath. . . ." Her listeners were stirred by her crisp, forthright answer.

"You're. . . ." Yeh Chih felt concerned about the girl going out alone.

"I'm off to deliver a baby for one of our commune members. See those bonfires? That's our pre-arranged signal."

Yes, they could see them — two blazing bonfires.

"But you're not going all alone on such a stormy night!"

The girl's laughter came crystal clear. "Tigers and leopards are all afraid of me."

"Don't you even carry a light?"

The girl laughed again. "My feet know their way around."

“What a fine example of the saying: Only the selfless are fearless.”

“Please, comrade, don’t praise Little Choma like that. As our beloved Chairman Mao so rightly says, ‘**Nothing is hard in this world if you dare to scale the heights.**’ To make revolution we must aspire to the clouds. I must go now, my patient is waiting.”

With a sweet smile and a slight nod Little Choma turned towards the high rugged cliffs. She began scaling the heights.

All of a sudden, the sky seemed vaster, the earth more immense, the mountains as if dwarfed. Yeh Chih thought with emotion: A stormy night on New Year’s Day, yet how many courageous fighters are scaling the heights! On the path of the Long March how many red banners are flying! With Chairman Mao leading the way, our new generation of revolutionaries can certainly ‘**clasp the moon in the Ninth Heaven and seize turtles deep down in the Five Seas**’. After murmuring these lines of Chairman Mao’s with deep feeling, Yeh Chih called out at the top of her voice, “Choma!”

“Yes?” The answer from high above rang out strong and clear.

“Wait for us!” It was little Tsui-feng’s treble. And the other cultural workers cried in chorus: “We’ll scale the heights with you.”



REPORTAGE

Hsing Tung-chi

The Northern Wilderness Is My Home

On April 6, 1975, a fresh spring breeze wafted over Wild Geese Island in the Great Northern Wilderness, on the border of Heilungkiang Province. That day a telegram arrived from Shanghai for the first company of the twenty-first regiment of Heilungkiang State Farm. It read: “Chen Yueh-chiu has died of cancer. . . .” This bad news appalled everyone — the farm cadres, staff members and educated youth as well.

“I don’t believe it!” a youngster cried, grabbing the telegram.

“How could you have died, Little Chen! We’ll miss you so . . .” an old livestockman murmured, with tears in his eyes.

After finishing secondary school, Chen Yueh-chiu and her comrades had responded to Chairman Mao’s call and gone north in May 1969 to do farm work on beautiful, fertile Wild Geese Island. That spring Yueh-chiu got her first glimpse of the boundless borderland across which roaring tractors were ploughing long furrows. She was beside herself with excitement at the thought of settling down there to help carve out the wilderness with her own hands.

Chen Yueh-chiu was assigned to the pig-raising section of the livestock platoon. One day she and others were sent to take manure to the fields. As she was loading her cart, she observed the veterans' work style and followed their example, shovelling the manure on without stopping to take a breath until sweat streamed down her face. When a big chunk of manure fell from the cart, she threw down her shovel and picked up the dung with her bare hands. Those working near by commented approvingly, "Yueh-chiu's only just arrived from the city, but she isn't afraid of dirtying her hands. She has spunk, this girl."

Another time Yueh-chiu and Old Li were carrying buckets filled with swill to the pigsty. Because the girl was going too fast, the buckets swinging from her shoulder-pole slopped swill on to the ground but she went on, regardless. Not until she put down her load did she discover that Old Li, squatting down, was scooping up the swill she had spilled into his own buckets. She flushed a bright red. My attitude to work isn't up to the mark, she thought.

While discussing her re-education at a meeting one day, she declared, "To become one with the workers and peasants, it isn't enough for me to do the same work that they do, I must also open my heart to them. From now on, I'll try my best to do that."

After that, Chen Yueh-chiu tried harder than ever to learn from her fine borderland comrades and helped by the Party and the Youth League, strove daily to remould her world outlook. And one year to the day after her arrival in the border region, she became a Youth League member.

The year of comradeship and struggle had deepened Yueh-chiu's love for the borderland and the poor and lower-middle peasants there. She often went to help the old livestockman who lived all by himself in a hut by the stable, tidying his room, doing his washing or mending, and even papering the ceiling for him. For another family, short of hands during the winter, she carried water despite the wind and snow. When people saw that she had kept at it for a good four months without stop, they said, "Yueh-chiu's fairly burning with love for the borderland."

Later Chen Yueh-chiu became a member of the company's Youth League committee. During the movement to criticize Lin Piao and rectify the style of work, she took the lead in denouncing the fallacies put forward by Lin Piao. When a handful of class enemies tried to persuade the educated youth to return to the city, she was the first in her company to write a big-character poster denouncing them. "It's right for us young people who've had middle-school education to work in the countryside," she wrote. "This is the bright road pointed out by Chairman Mao and no one can prevent us from taking it. We League members love the borderland. We must give the lead to all the other young people from town in striking root here and winning still greater victories."

Two Shanghai girls in Yueh-chiu's dormitory were younger than most of the others and she showed warm concern for them, helping them to wash their clothes and make quilt covers. As the two girls' command of standard Chinese was poor, they couldn't understand the others well and this affected their study. Yueh-chiu patiently taught them standard Chinese and served as an interpreter for them at meetings. With her help, the two girls made rapid progress.

Another youngster Chang Yung-liang had a poor attitude to work. When asked to lend a hand with the wine-making, he worked hard. But when sent to raise pigs he slacked, because he felt this was a dirty job with no future. One day a pig tipped over a bucket of swill that he was carrying, splashing it all over him. In disgust he threw down his shoulder-pole, leapt out of the pigsty and ran away. Yueh-chiu sought him out and had a long talk with him. She went over Chairman Mao's article *Serve the People* with him and told him the story of a fine old stockman who, for nearly twenty years, had been raising pigs for the revolution. "Thousands of jobs have to be done for the revolution, but in each one we're serving the people," she said encouragingly. "Since we young people have just left school, it's essential that we go where conditions are hard so as to temper ourselves." Chang nodded and picking up his shoulder-pole went back to work.

One rainy autumn night, Chang who was keeping watch over the piglets fell asleep by the stove, for he had not slept at all during

the day, as he should have, but had gone out to enjoy himself. Yueh-chiu happened to pass that way and, taking in the situation, decided to stay and look after the piglets. When Chang woke up it was already daybreak. He hurried out to see if the piglets were all right and found them scampering about in clean pigsties. It was only when he saw Yueh-chiu standing in very dirty clothes near a pigsty that he understood what had happened and felt ashamed. Learning from her example, he began to take his work more seriously. Every night he made several rounds to see if everything was in order. Then Yueh-chiu gave him books on pig-raising which he studied whenever he had time, combining theory and practice. He soon discovered that he had a lot to learn before he could do his job well and, as a result, began to put his whole heart into it.

Yueh-chiu often said, "In our struggles we can't do without Marxism. We must study harder so as to struggle better. We've come to the borderland from the city and have only just begun integrating with the workers and peasants. To become a new type of peasant, educated and with socialist consciousness, we must study revolutionary theory and spare no pains to remould our thinking." And on the very first page of the diary that she began the day she arrived at the farm, she copied out these words written by Lenin: **"Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."** This became her motto.

Yueh-chiu's pockets were usually crammed with books and newspapers, which she read whenever she had a spare minute. She drew up a plan of study and kept to it faithfully. For six years she successfully combined study with practice in class struggle, farm work and scientific experiments. She made a careful study of the four volumes of the *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* and many other Marxist-Leninist works such as the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, *The State and Revolution* and *Dialectics of Nature*. She had a stack of notebooks filled with notes.

Revolutionary theory was a source of great strength for Yueh-chiu. She had come to understand the profound significance of the road taken by educated youth. While striving to become one with the

workers and peasants, they were striding forward to fight the remnants of the old society that still lingered in the new.

Lin Piao had twisted the meaning of sending school-leavers to the countryside, describing it as a new type of "labour reform". At a meeting to criticize this fallacy, she declared that by capitalizing on the old ideas still in people's minds, he had tried to stifle new socialist things and win the younger generation over from the proletariat. "We must arm ourselves with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, rid our minds of old ideas, and by our acts and our firm determination to strike root here, narrow the gap between city and countryside, between workers and peasants, and between manual and mental labour."

In June 1970, the Party branch committee decided to make Chen Yueh-chiu the company's veterinarian. The general consensus of opinion was that the committee had certainly made a good choice,

Chen Yueh-chiu with an old livestockman



picking the very person the farm workers themselves would have chosen. But a few people jeered, "Who's ever heard of a girl vet?" Still others wondered if a girl could handle such a big assignment, for they had several hundred pigs, several dozen horses and a large herd of oxen. Yueh-chiu herself thought, "Their jeers simply show that some people still belittle women, that the fallacy 'men are superior and women inferior' still remains ingrained in the minds of certain people. Since we are determined to build a new socialist countryside, we must dare to smash these shackles." So she declared to the other farm workers: "Chairman Mao has said, **'Times have changed, and today men and women are equal. Whatever men comrades can accomplish, women comrades can too.'** Since the borderland needs me as a vet, I will shoulder the task and struggle against the old ideas."

Pleased by her determination, the old livestockman encouraged her, "You young people must be strong-willed. We have faith in you, Yueh-chiu. Go boldly ahead!"

And Yueh-chiu lived up to her comrades' expectations. The first time she tried to give a sick horse an injection, she did not go about it the right way and was kicked to the ground by the horse. Despite the sharp pain, she struggled to her feet and gave the injection. When she started learning to castrate pigs, some people objected that it was a vile job and advised her not to do it. "A girl castrating pigs wouldn't look good," they said. But Yueh-chiu stood firm. Taking up her scalpel, she asked the older vets to teach her. After hard practice and study, she was able to castrate a piglet in two minutes flat, making a smart job of it. Whenever any of their livestock died, she practised dissecting and read up on pathology at the same time. Once a sick horse was brought for treatment which involved thrusting the vet's whole hand into its rectum. Even some of the young men couldn't stomach the idea of it, let alone do it. But Yueh-chiu rolled up her sleeves and with the help of the older vets checked the horse's rectum. People said, "That girl isn't afraid of anything."

Armed with revolutionary spirit, she worked boldly and studied hard. Within a few years, she learned how to treat over thirty different diseases in livestock and the best way to prevent them. She

also mastered acupuncture and herbal medicine, becoming one of the outstanding vets in her regiment.

One dark winter night, when Yueh-chiu returned to her dormitory from political night school, she was told that the black horse was ill. She dashed to the stable and examined it carefully. Having diagnosed the trouble as colic she relieved the horse by emptying its rectum manually, then gave it a purgative. Since the horse needed exercise, she decided to walk it to the veterinary station to make a further examination there. The stockman on duty stopped her. "No, lass," he said. "On a dark night like this, there'll be wolves outside. I'll go with you as soon as I finish feeding the animals."

"I'm not afraid of wolves. The sooner I exercise the horse, the quicker it'll recover." At that she led the horse away, disappearing into the darkness.

Yueh-chiu was not only a vet but a pig-raiser too. And she never forgot it. "Though I've taken up the syringe, I'll never put down the swineherd's stick," she often vowed to herself. Every day when she finished treating sick animals, she would shovel out the pigsties or carry buckets of swill by shoulder-pole. In addition, since the livestock drank a total of three hundred buckets of water a day, she lent a hand at that too, working the windlass without stop until she had drawn sixty buckets of water. That was how she earned the nickname "our fine barefoot vet".

In early spring 1974, when the previous winter's litters were separated from the sows, thirty-six mangy piglets needed special care. Yueh-chiu volunteered for the job. She put her charges in a special pen, fed them carefully, and treated them with medicine. This meant getting up earlier and going to bed later so as not to neglect her other duties. Sometimes she even worked round the clock. Two months later these mangy piglets had all become fat and healthy.

In July 1973, word came to their farm that they could select someone to send to college. Her comrades unanimously chose Yueh-chiu. She applied to go to the college run by the state farm bureau of the province, for its students were recruited at the grassroots and sent back after graduation. However, the college had no openings left and she was assigned to another, the graduates of which were ap-

pointed to administrative posts all over the province. At once Yueh-chiu withdrew her application, explaining to her fellow workers, "The countryside is a big college. I'd rather study here." Some people felt sorry for her, thinking she had been foolish. "How wonderful to be able to study and then become a state cadre and get higher pay," they said.

But Yueh-chiu replied firmly, "I wanted to go away to study in order to serve the people better and do more to develop the border region. That's what's important to me — not money or a higher position. You may think I'm a fool. But personally, I hope I'll never stop being that kind of 'fool'."

Wild Geese Island had been a wilderness overgrown with brambles and thistles twenty years ago. The group of demobilized PLA officers and soldiers who came here in 1958 in response to the Party's call, had turned over 10,000 *mu* of this age-old, virgin wilderness into rich farmland. But in order to do so, some of these pioneers gave their lives. The First Company's Party branch often evoked this revolutionary tradition to educate the young people. From time to time Chen Yueh-chiu went to visit the graves of the martyrs so as to reflect on the death-defying spirit of her revolutionary predecessors who had struggled to open up the border region. One entry in her diary tells us something of her thoughts. "The soil here has been watered with the blood of martyrs. I pledge to continue the long march these heroes began and take up the task they did not live to finish, marching along the path steeped in their blood."

In the spring of 1974, the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius redoubled the islanders' determination to learn from Tachai. The First Company's commanders and fighters resolved to "grasp political line, and work really hard to wrest a bumper harvest". Yueh-chiu had begun to suffer from gripes. However, fired by the general enthusiasm, she gritted her teeth and kept on working as usual, without a thought for her health.

When the company decided to fill in a swamp over twenty *mu* in area as part of their plan to guarantee a high, stable yield, Yueh-chiu and a husky young man carried earth in a big crate hung on a shoul-



Chen Yueh-chiu at work

der-pole between them. They kept up a good pace, shuttling back and forth, sweating profusely. When their sturdy carrying-pole snapped, she picked up an even thicker one and went on. No one suspected that a serious illness had already begun to undermine her health.

That summer the pains recurred more and more frequently, and her condition worsened. Her only reaction was to make still greater demands on herself. On July 24, 1974 she solemnly handed in her application for Party membership, for she was determined to temper herself so as to march in the vanguard of the proletariat, and devote her life to the magnificent cause of communism.

Not long afterwards, the leadership found out about her illness and urged her to go for a medical check-up. Conscientious as always, she set out for the hospital early one morning and returned the same afternoon, a journey of 80 *li*, so as not to lose too much time from work.

In their concern for her, her comrades often wrenched the tools from her hands. The company leaders told the cooks to prepare more nutritious food for her. They tried to persuade her not to make light of her illness, urging her to take time off for rest and treatment. But how could she stop working? She told the leadership and her comrades: "Our predecessors gave their lives to reclaim this land. I can't let this little illness of mine stop me — we should have more pluck than that!"

Soon the soybean pods were swaying in the breeze and the maize was turning golden — the autumn harvest was at hand. The sight of those fine crops filled Yuch-chiu's heart with joy. On October 3, she got up at daybreak, dressed quickly and made for the door, picking up a sickle on her way out. Knowing that she had hardly slept all night because of her stomach pains, her room-mate stood in the doorway to stop her. "You mustn't go to the fields. Stay at home and rest."

"No," Yuch-chiu replied, "the joy of labour will make me forget my pain." She threw herself into harvesting the beans and worked so fast that she was soon far ahead of the others. But suddenly a stabbing pain made her clutch her stomach. Her comrades rushed up and found her squatting head down with the handle of the sickle pressed against her stomach. When she saw her comrades clustered round her, Yuch-chiu struggled to her feet despite the pain.

"I'm all right," she gasped. "Hurry up and get in the crops." But seizing her sickle, they took her back to her room.

A few days later when Yueh-chiu's company began cutting the maize, she again insisted on going to the fields. When her comrades tried to stop her, she replied, "Toughness is acquired through struggle. Illness preys on the weak but is afraid of the strong. If you stand up to it, it'll go away." However, she had hardly begun working when, gripped by terrible pains, she crumpled on the ground in a cold sweat. Her comrades dashed over to help her back to her room. But not long afterwards, the plucky girl reappeared in the beet field where she began knocking the earth from the pulled up beets.

One day towards the end of October, the leadership and her comrades once again forced her to stay home and rest. But she soon had enough of lying in bed and slipped out to the livestock section where the workers' wives were preparing fodder. Unable to make her go back, the women had no choice but let her help them hold open a sack they were filling with fodder. When it was full, she swung it onto her shoulder and carried it to the fermentation shed over thirty metres away, despite the women's protests. But she was terribly weak because for some time she had only been able to keep down half a bowl of porridge a day. For her, carrying that heavy sack was like climbing a high mountain. Yet she strode on steadily. Where did she get that strength from? Her comrades found the answer in her diary when they sorted out her belongings after her death. She had written: "I'll give my life to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat!" It was this revolutionary spirit shown by many heroes that had given her the courage to conquer her pains. This great aim had given her the strength to go on.

Yuch-chiu slung yet another sack over her shoulder, but this time after only a few steps she collapsed and the sack thumped to the ground. The women swarmed round her and helped her to her feet, calling her by her name. The tears welled up in their eyes. . . .

The company Party branch and the regiment's leading cadres were worried about her. Since she was not getting better despite a long period of treatment, they decided that she should stop work altogether and return to her home town. She must go to a bigger hospital there to be examined and treated. This courageous girl who had never as much as groaned once, could not hold back her tears on learning their decision. On October 31, Chen Yueh-chiu reluctantly left the state farm. As she shook hands with her comrades-in-arms, she reassured them, "Don't worry. I'll be back soon. Nothing can keep me away."

Thus Yuch-chiu returned to the Yangtse Valley to begin a struggle against death.

She went to Shanghai in January, where she was carefully and thoroughly examined at one of the hospitals. On her admission form,

the doctors recorded the cruel truth: Terminal cancer of the colon, characterized by rapid proliferation.

Nevertheless, the young revolutionary fighter, believing wholeheartedly in the cause of communism, was never depressed, nor pessimistic. Once when another patient asked what illness she had, she replied simply, "Cancer of the colon." Seeing how startled the other woman was, Yueh-chiu added with a smile, "Oh, it isn't so terrible. I'll soon be returning to the Northern Wilderness!"

A few days later she underwent an operation during which three tumours, each as big as a fist, were removed. When the surgeon learned that his patient was a fighter from the Northern Wilderness and that she had left her work only a short time before, he exclaimed, "Never have I seen such courage!"

When the news that she had cancer reached her borderland comrades, the First Company's Party branch immediately sent Wu Feng-ying, Party member and deputy secretary of the Youth League branch, to see her. Soon afterwards, other comrades-in-arms were chosen to go and stay by her bedside, while a leading cadre made a special trip to Shanghai to comfort her and her parents. The concern shown by the Party organization moved her deeply and made her long even more for the borderland where she had matured into a revolutionary fighter.

On the sixth day after the operation, Wu Feng-ying walked into Chen Yueh-chiu's room in the hospital. Yueh-chiu was so happy that she forgot all about her recent operation and propped herself up on her elbow, crying, "Young Wu! Young Wu!" She grasped Wu's hand as if she had been reunited with a loved one after a long separation. "So you've come!" she exclaimed. "Tell me quick, how is the study of the struggles between two lines coming along? Has the early snowfall affected the autumn crops? What about the piglets born last autumn? Was the survival rate good? . . ."

Those questions brought tears to Feng-ying's eyes — she was unable to utter the consoling words that she had rehearsed over and over in her mind during the trip to Shanghai. After a moment she began telling Yueh-chiu about their work at the farm. Yueh-chiu was overjoyed to hear that her company had reaped a bumper harvest of grain

and beans and that they had greatly expanded their pig-raising section. But presently, looking distressed, she blurted out, "It must have been tough harvesting at top speed in the falling snow. How I wish I'd been able to stay and lend a hand. . . ."

As soon as her stitches were removed, she tried to get up and do exercises. "I want to recover quickly so that we can go back together sooner," she told Feng-ying. For the same reason, she forced herself to eat all the food she was given though her appetite was still poor.

On February 16, 1975 she began a letter to the company Party branch, a moving letter that took her two days to write. It read:

Dear Company Leaders, Dear Comrades,

I've good news to report. Fighter Chen Yueh-chiu, far from the company, has won the first round in her struggle against cancer. Though I am still in pain, I keep longing to be back with our company. . . .

However, the disease pursued its course relentlessly. When she was finally able to walk normally and could finish a bowl of rice at each meal, the cancer spread and serous fluid filled her abdomen as well. The doctors decided that a second operation would be necessary to try to save her life. When they asked her if she was willing, she replied with a question: "Will I be able to return to the Northern Wilderness afterwards?" They all gasped, profoundly moved by her revolutionary spirit.

However, neither surgery nor medicine could stop the cancer from spreading and Yueh-chiu's young life was in danger. But her love for the borderland and her comrades was as strong as ever and when they came to see her she begged, "Take me back with you. I want to see the state farm and all my comrades-in-arms there!"

When another group of friends from the farm came to visit her, she told them with a tremor in her voice: "We've been schoolmates for eleven years now, but those six years in the Northern Wilderness were the most significant. We meant to fight on together. But now I'm done for. You must go ahead and fight to the end!"

Knowing that her days were numbered, she told the doctor, "Don't waste medicine on me any longer. Keep it for other patients." Despite her critical condition, her thoughts were with her mates fighting

in the forefront against revisionism. She asked that the books in her room at the state farm, all on politics or technical subjects, be given to those who needed them. Through this gift, she wanted to encourage her comrades-in-arms to strike deep roots in the Northern Wilderness.

Seeing how sad her mother was, Yueh-chiu tried to comfort her. "Everyone must die one day. Though I'm still young, my only regret is that I've only been able to give six years of my life to following the road of integrating with the workers and peasants. That's a far cry from what Chairman Mao expects of us."

One afternoon Chang Yung-liang, on leave to visit his family in Shanghai, came to see her. For several days, Yueh-chiu had not even been able to swallow a drop of water — medicine alone was keeping her alive. But when she heard Chang's voice, she gathered all her strength and opened her eyes, calling weakly, "Chang Yung-liang! Chang Yung-liang!" Chang tried to hide his grief and sat down carefully beside her bed. How she would have liked to have another long talk with him! But she hardly had the strength to speak. After a moment's silence, she took a deep breath and gasped, "You'll be returning soon, won't you! You must . . . work well . . . when you get back. Take the road of . . . integrating with the workers and peasants . . . for ever . . ." Chang could no longer hide his grief. Hot tears welled up in his eyes. The last sparks of her life served to kindle a blazing torch that is now encouraging thousands of educated youth to advance.

On April 2, Yueh-chiu began sinking. She made a last and only request to the Party. Panting, she told her comrade-in-arms who had never left her bedside day or night, "Please tell the . . . Party organization . . . My ashes . . . must be . . . sent back . . . My home is . . . I . . . belong to the Northern Wilderness!" Then she fell into a coma.

Shortly after two o'clock that afternoon she regained consciousness. Gazing affectionately at the picture of Chairman Mao on the wall, she uttered her last words, the watchword of her age: "Long live . . . Chairman Mao! Long live the Communist Party!"

At 6:40 on April 3, the heart of this fine daughter of the Party who had made the Northern Wilderness her home stopped beating. This revolutionary middle-school graduate nourished by Mao Tsetung Thought had died at the age of twenty-four.

Chen Yueh-chiu's lofty ideals and fine spirit inspired people to reflect more deeply and to struggle harder and without stop. The Party and Youth League of her regiment issued the decision that all in the regiment should learn from her. Her ashes were brought back to the borderland as she had requested and buried beside the martyrs who had opened up the island.

The broad masses of the educated young people, leading cadres, staff members and workers on the island took Chen Yueh-chiu as an example in studying the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They pledged to follow in her footsteps and study revolutionary theory assiduously, resolutely break with old ideas and develop the same revolutionary enthusiasm and the same death-defying spirit displayed in the years of revolutionary war. The educated youth resolved to show their love for the borderland by striking deep roots and striving to win greater victories in their new home, the Northern Wilderness. All those on the state farm resolved to continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Chen Liang

Farewelling Minister Chang Shen, Envoy to the Tartars

— to the tune of *Shui Tiao Keh Tou*

Long it is since our troops were seen to sally out,
But do not say all our fine chargers* are gone;
Here and now, though single-handed,
You are hero enough to confront ten thousand men.
Yet how absurd that the envoys of mighty Han
Must ape the rushing rivers
For ever flowing east and only east.
Still, let us once more pay homage to those yurts;
We shall yet see emissaries from the Huns
In the foreigners' quarter of our capital.**

*Legend had it that Po Lo was so skilled in selecting fine horses that after he visited a place no good chargers were left there. The "fine chargers" here refer to men of talent.

**In the Han Dynasty, foreign envoys were lodged in a special quarter of Changan.

In the former domain of Yao, Shun and Yu*
There must surely still remain
One or two who think shame to serve under barbarians.
Ten thousand *li* reek of raw mutton and beef;
Where now are the brave hearts of bygone days?
When will our mighty land be reunited?
No need to ask what fate awaits the Huns —
High in the sky blazes the brilliant sun.

*Referring to the Yellow River Valley, then occupied by the Kin Tartars. Yao, Shun and Yu were legendary sage kings.

Ascending the Pavilion of Manifold Views*

— to the tune of *Nien Nu Chiao*

On the high pavilion I gaze around and sigh:
How many men from of old
Have shared my way of thinking?
This strategic terrain, the work of no mortal hands,
Has yet been simply judged
A natural barrier between north and south.
In front, the river;
On three sides, serried mountains:
A grand base from which to win back the Central Plain!
Why then did the Six Dynasties**
Make it serve purely selfish ends?

*A pavilion on the south bank of the Yangtse on Mount Peiku at Chingkou.

**The kingdoms of Wu, Eastern Tsin, Sung, Chi, Liang and Chen, which had their capital in Nanking, south of the Yangtse.

How farcical those Wangs and Hsiehs*
Who climbed a height to gaze into the distance
Then shed tears as if they, too, were heroes.
Trusting to the river and mountains as their bulwark
They turned a blind eye on the vast expanse to the north
Befouled by barbarians.

It is high time to gallop forth,
Never turning back,
Pausing only in midstream to take our oath.**
Our boys have routed the brigands,***
The tide has turned in our favour —
Why fear we are no match for the enemy?

*The powerful families of Wang Tao and Hsieh An in the Eastern Tsin Dynasty. They and other high officials used to go during festivals to Hsinting, south of Nanking, to gaze towards the north and lament.

**Referring to Tsu Ti of Eastern Tsin who in A.D. 317 led an expedition and swore to reconquer the northern territory.

***A remark made by Hsieh An of Eastern Tsin when younger members of his family led troops to defeat northern invaders in A.D. 383.

Reply to Hsin Chi-chi's Second Poem, with the Same Rhymes

— to the tune of *Ho Hsin Lang*

To revert to the start of our troubles,
The court's "love of the people"
Meant squandering gold and silk,
Creepers tangling with vines.
Our valour spent, grown delicate and nice,
Our dignitaries go
To the northern mountains to enjoy the snow.*
Shame overcomes me,
Sprinkling my hair with white.
Tears were shed when, the tables turned,
A daughter of Chi was sent to the kingdom of Wu.**

*A gibe at the Southern Sung officials who went yearly, with tribute of gold and silk, to pay homage to the Kin Tartars.

**In the 6th century B.C. the once powerful state of Chi had to send the duke's daughter as a hostage to the state of Wu.

How did it come to pass that the strength of Lu
Was whittled away by Chi?*

Confucius was lucky,
He blamed Tzu Lu for playing a martial tune.**

Were our standard to be changed for a brand-new one
And a time set
To campaign for our great cause,
At your call I would rise and go forth
To bestir my old bones ten thousand *li* away.
But such talk will be dubbed sheer folly
And used against me.
The world's a furnace; who will work the bellows
To smelt indestructible iron?
Then we can cut across the River Fei***
And smash through the Hanku Pass!****

*Referring to Lu's repeated defeats by Chi in the 5th century B.C.

**When Confucius was caught out trying to cover up a mistake for the duke of Lu, he said hypocritically, "How lucky I am — if I slip up people are bound to know it." On another occasion he swore at his favourite disciple for playing a martial air instead of the peaceful, ceremonial music which he admired. This is a veiled attack on the capitulationists at court.

***In A.D. 383 Eastern Tsin defeated the powerful army of Fu Chien from the north here.

****This pass led to the Central Plain occupied by the Kin Tartars.

Plum-Blossom

Sparse boughs gauntly outstretched, hard as jade,
Are dotted with unopened buds lustrous as pearls;
Of a sudden, one bud first unfolds,
All the other flowers following with their fragrance.
Eager to spread the news that spring is coming,
It is not afraid of being smothered by snow.
No need to play three movements on the flute,*
The Lord of the East** has everything in hand.

*Tradition had it that the Tsin musician Huan Yi played the melody "Plum-Blossom in Three Movements" to hasten the flowering of plum-blossom.

**The God of Spring.

Chen Liang, a Sung Legalist Poet

In Chinese feudal society there were constant struggles between the capitulationist line of the Confucian school and the line of resistance to aggression of the Legalist school. Chen Liang (1143-1194) of the Southern Sung Dynasty (1127-1279) was a representative Legalist philosopher and poet who used poetry as a weapon to fight against the capitulationist line of the Southern Sung government and such Neo-Confucians as Chu Hsi.

Chen Liang lived at a time of sharp contradictions among different nationalities in China which caused untold suffering to the common people. Vast stretches of territory in the north were occupied by the Kin Tartars, but the diehards of the big landlord class who held the reins of government were capitulationists. Ignoring the people's dire calamities, they moved the capital from Kaifeng in Honan to Hangchow south of the Yangtse, where they gave themselves up to pleasure, paying for peace by offering tribute to the Tartar ruling clique.

During this period the Chinese in the north rose in arms time and again to oppose the cruel oppression and pillage of their Kin rulers.

Inspired by their resistance, Chen Liang too was strongly against the aggression of the northern Tartars as well as the conciliationist line of the big landlord diehards. Five times in 1163 he memorialized the throne, attacking the cowardice and incompetence of the corrupt, capitulationist government and putting forward Legalist proposals to strengthen national defence, send expeditions to recover lost territory, change certain bad policies and bring about national resurgence. However, his proposals were not accepted by the Southern Sung ruling clique.

Chen Liang was a philosopher with certain materialist ideas. He fought hard by means of polemics against the idealist Neo-Confucian doctrine advocated by Chu Hsi, the debate between them reflecting the struggle on the ideological front between two different lines: that of the would-be reformers eager to resist aggression and that of the diehards who stood for regression and capitulation. Chu Hsi, the chief spokesman of the Confucian school, was out to defend the rule of the big landlord class. He therefore declared that the Confucian ethics were infallible principles ordained by Heaven, and condemned as "wicked lust" the labouring people's revolutionary demands to end oppression and exploitation and the progressive ideas of reformists of the landlord class, vociferating that all the principles ordained by Heaven must be upheld and all lust exterminated. His reactionary idealist injunction "restrict lust and acquisitiveness" aimed at making the labouring people content with their position in the feudal hierarchy, so that they would become willing slaves. His reactionary theories clearly served the Confucian political line of national betrayal, national disunity and retrogression.

Chu Hsi also argued that the three earliest dynasties in China, Hsia, Shang and Chou, were superior to all subsequent periods. He described them as the golden age of the "Kingly Way" when the principles of Heaven were observed by all; whereas later dynasties from Chin and Han onwards had followed the "Conqueror's Way" so that "lust became rampant". By claiming that each generation was worse than the last, he hoped to turn the wheels of history backwards.

Chen Liang sharply refuted these specious arguments. He believed that history advanced continuously in step with the development of objective conditions, and that no unsurpassable gulf separated the early from the later dynasties. He pointed out that all men possessed natural desires; the rulers of the three earliest dynasties had not ruled solely according to the "Kingly Way" but had also sought after power and riches, for their hearts were not pure but also filled with lust. On the other hand, the rulers of Han and Tang had to their credit the great achievement of uniting the country; their "Conqueror's Way" was no worse than the rule of the early princes. This refutation of Chu Hsi's reactionary interpretation of history was a serious blow to the Confucian line of the big landlord-officials; hence it had a progressive significance at that time.

Chen Liang during his lifetime was a well-known patriotic poet. His poetry reflects important topical issues and ardent love for his country, expressing his Legalist political ideas. In it he launched fierce attacks on the capitulationist line of the Confucians represented by Chu Hsi.

The Southern Sung court often sent envoys to pay homage to the Kin Tartars in the north. According to historical records, in 1184 and 1185 they twice sent a minister named Chang Shen to the Kin court. One of the poems published in this issue was written to farewell him on one such occasion. In this poem Chen Liang voiced angry indignation against both the capitulationists and the Kin reactionary rulers. The last lines express his contempt for the powerful enemy, his firm belief that they could be overcome, and his determination to work for this cause.

In the spring of 1188, Chen Liang left his home district Yung kang in the province of Chekiang and travelled to Chingkou (present-day Chinkiang in Kiangsu) and Chienych (present-day Nanking) to inspect the terrain and the military situation in readiness for a northern expedition to recover lost territory. When he ascended the Pavilion of Manifold Views on Mount Peiku and gazed at the mighty river and mountains around, he was so deeply moved that he wrote a poem also published in this issue. In it he described the strategic significance of this locality and expressed his conviction that the Kin Tartars could

be defeated, debunking the capitulationist literati who cared only for their own safety, ignoring the national interests, and who regarded the Yangtse as a natural boundary separating the north from the south.

In the winter of that same year, he went to Shangjao in Kiangsi to visit his good friend Hsin Chi-chi, another well-known patriotic poet, to discuss the political situation. The two men stayed happily for ten days by Goose Lake in Chienshan and wrote a few poems for each other. In the poem set to the tune of *Ho Hsin Lang* Chen Liang heaped scorn on the capitulationists who were "delicate and nice", pointing out that the sorry plight of the country was due to their suppression of patriots. He expressed his desire to go out and fight for the reunification of China, and his wish for a sword of indestructible metal to use in battle. This poem, too, breathes ardent patriotism.

Because Chen Liang tried to smash the spiritual fetters of Confucianism and restore the old territorial integrity of the country, he was persecuted by the diehards of the big landlord class who twice had him imprisoned. They called him "a crazy eccentric". Undaunted, on his release from prison he wrote:

Vengeance is my life-long aim;
What matters it if my hair and beard are grey?

This same indomitable spirit is evident in the poem on plum-blossom in this issue. Here while praising plum-blossom he was actually paying tribute to the reformers. The gaunt plum-boughs, hard as jade and impervious to the cold, are like the poet himself, while the plum-blossom's role as a harbinger of spring represents his devotion to his ideals and his determination to carry out a Legalist political line.

However, Chen Liang was after all a thinker of the landlord class and his ideas show the limitations of his age and his class. Though he was for the Legalist line and Legalist ideas, he dared not openly oppose Confucianism. Though a partisan of armed resistance to the Kin Tartars, he failed to see the strength of the masses and placed his hope for reform on the emperor. So all his fine ideals, his longing to recover lost territory and put an end to corruption, could only end in failure.

NOTES ON LITERATURE AND ART

Tsung Shu

The Portrayal of the Heroine in "Investigation of a Chair"

Since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line on literature and art China's operatic stage has been flourishing and many fine theatrical works have appeared. The modern revolutionary Peking opera *Investigation of a Chair*, presented in this issue, is one of those which have been fairly successful in integrating revolutionary political content with the best possible artistic form.

The action of this one-act opera takes place in 1962 when Chiang Kai-shek and his clique who fled to Taiwan on the eve of liberation are clamouring about fighting back to the mainland, while in China a handful of overthrown landlords and capitalists are watching anxiously for a chance to seize back the paradise they have lost. In a coastal village south of the Yangtse River, Huang San-huai, an ex-landlord, steals a redwood chair from the brigade's meeting hall (formerly his family's ancestral temple). Just as he tries to prize up the chair seat, Wang Teh-chuan, a militiaman on night patrol comes along.

Wang suspects the landlord who denies having anything to do with the chair. Unable to figure out the truth, the militiaman takes him to brigade leader Ting Hsiu-chin. While they are gone, Shen Chia-chang, a well-to-do middle peasant returning from a visit to his daughter in a neighbouring village, discovers the chair. Glad to pick up a windfall, he takes the chair home.

When Ting Hsiu-chin comes with the militiaman, the chair is gone but she finds a pipe dropped by Shen Chia-chang. The landlord takes advantage of this and tries to make Shen out as the thief. With the pipe as evidence, Wang the militiaman is ready to believe him. Faced with a crafty enemy, Ting Hsiu-chin who has a high consciousness of class struggle thinks the matter is not so simple. She asks Shen to bring the chair back so as to investigate the matter from the angle of class struggle. Observing the landlord's nervous start when she slaps the back of the chair, Ting realizes that the chair itself must contain certain evidence. She decides to investigate it. As she interrogates the chair she watches the landlord's reactions. Finally, she finds his old account book hidden in the seat of the chair and so deals a powerful blow to the class enemy's attempts to stage a come-back.

Investigation of a Chair presents the sharp struggle between the forces for and against capitalist restoration in China's countryside in the early sixties in a close-knit dramatic plot. Centring on the stealing of the chair by the landlord Huang San-huai, and brigade leader Ting Hsiu-chin's investigations with the final discovery of his account book, the opera graphically reflects the long-term and complex class struggles going on in China's countryside during the socialist period and gives a good portrayal of Ting Hsiu-chin, a village cadre who, by grasping class struggle and making investigations, is able to analyze confused situations involving contradictions between the enemy and ourselves and contradictions within the ranks of the people.

Priority must be given to portraying typical proletarian heroes — this is one of the valuable lessons learned from summing up the experience gained in the production of the revolutionary model theatrical works. Although *Investigation of a Chair* is a short opera, the playwright has shown skill in grasping an incident from everyday struggle and clothing it in an artistic form which brings out its universal

significance, so as to depict and highlight the splendid character of a proletarian heroine. The ingenious plot and penetrating portrayal of Ting Hsiu-chin make this an inspiring drama.

1

The Party's basic line formulated by Chairman Mao himself has told us: Socialist society covers a fairly long historical stage. In this stage, classes, class contradictions and class struggle continue, the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road continues and the danger of capitalist restoration remains. Guided by the Party's basic line and taking class struggle as the key link, the playwright outlines dramatic conflicts and portrays the heroine through class struggle. Starting from the particular dramatic conflict of this opera, he centres attention on the redwood chair and dramatizes it to the full. This redwood chair, insignificant in itself, plays a special role in linking up class struggles past and present and in testifying to the landlords' exploitation of the peasants in the past and their attempt to stage a come-back today. Ting Hsiu-chin's "questioning" of the chair is a unique form of struggle in which she takes the initiative in battling against the enemy under the special conditions of complex but covert class struggle, at a time when "The branches are swaying, a wind's risen." Her consciousness of class struggle and the struggle between the two lines is high. She analyzes people and happenings from a class stand and is well aware of the reactionary nature of the landlord class; but to start with she cannot think what motive Huang San-huai has to steal the chair. However, adhering to the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge, she starts making investigations, probing into the problem by "questioning" the chair and "observing" the reactions of different people until finally she uncovers the class struggle, finds the landlord's account book and smashes the class enemy's plot to restore capitalism.

Through the story of the redwood chair which presents a specific form of struggle between the enemy and the people, the playwright gives a profound reflection of the universal law of class struggle during the period of socialism and vividly portrays Ting Hsiu-chin, a typical

character who is resolute in carrying out the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this way the opera attains a fairly high ideological level.

2

The dramatic conflict centring on the redwood chair unfolds in several stages. At four crucial points in its development the playwright makes Ting Hsiu-chin tell the others to wait, to unravel the mystery of the chair step by step and her every utterance of the decisive "Wait!" shows her wit and courage in fighting the enemy.

When Shen Chia-chang brings the chair back and turns to go, Huang San-huai seizes the chance to slip off too. Ting says gravely for the first time, "Wait a minute!" Shen and Huang have to stop and this marks the beginning of the battle. When the landlord accuses Shen Chia-chang of the theft and tries to sneak away himself, Ting again says decisively, "Wait!" This is the first shot in the battle to "investigate" the chair and smoke out the enemy.

As if unwinding the silk round a cocoon, the nine stages of the investigation reveal finally the core of the struggle, which is one against the restoration of capitalism. Starting the investigation by slapping the chair, Ting goes on to inspect it, turns it round, examines it carefully and discovers a long scratch on the seat. On further inspection, she finds that "the lower part of the chair is rather short and the upper part too long" and that the seat is extraordinarily thick. When knocking the seat produces a hollow sound, she decides to pry it up with a bayonet to find out the "truth" and the struggle develops quickly. Afraid of exposure, Huang San-huai abruptly confesses to stealing the chair. This unexpected break-through in the dramatic conflict paves the way for the climax. The reason why the landlord suddenly admits to stealing the chair because it "means so much" to him is that he wants to prevent the prying up of the seat. To prevent Ting from finding his account book and to cover up his political crime of trying to restore capitalism, he would rather admit to a theft. His lies fool Wang Teh-chuan who tells him to return the chair to the temple promptly. If Wang had had his way, the struggle against capitalist restoration would have been defeated half-way. At this

important juncture, Ting says urgently for the third time, "Wait a minute."

Keeping a firm grasp on the evidence, Ting Hsiu-chin probes further to get to the root of the problem. She asks the landlord why instead of taking the chair straight home he took a long way round and set it down by the lotus pond. Ting's cross-examination flusters Huang who collapses on the stone. Then, in desperation, he whips out his matchet intending to attack Ting. When she whirls round, he kneels and holds out his matchet as if offering it to her for the purpose of prying up the seat. In this life and death struggle, Ting remains cool and calm, complying with Huang's request to allow him to pry up the seat with his matchet, all the while keeping a close watch on him. After the chair seat is prized off, Huang pushes forward the chair to show the others while trying to conceal the seat. His cunning once again fools Wang Teh-chuan who tells him to put the seat back. However, Ting Hsiu-chin sees through the landlord's trick. For the fourth time she stops them by crying sharply, "Not so quick" and orders the landlord to hand over the seat. The battle now turns into hand-to-hand combat and the conflict reaches white heat. Ting kicks the matchet out of Huang's hand, snatches over the seat and extricates the hidden folder — the landlord's account book. Through this series of dramatic conflicts, the opera brings out to the full the heroic image of Ting Hsiu-chin who, firmly grasping the key link of class struggle, dares to fight and dares to win.

3

Since the plot of *Investigation of a Chair* is fairly simple, involving only four characters, the playwright has been able to explore and delineate with care the class relationships between them, with Ting Hsiu-chin as the focus. There are three sets of contradictions between the four characters. The contradiction between Ting Hsiu-chin and Huang San-huai is one between the enemy and the people, their repeated struggles constitute the main thread running through the whole opera. The landlord's cunning, treachery and cowardice serve as a foil to the wit, courage and resolution of Ting Hsiu-chin.

There is a striking contrast between Ting and the militiaman Wang Teh-chuan too, in their character, working style and attitude towards people and things. Wang is not without revolutionary vigilance, but he is careless and rough, does not give enough thought to his analysis of problems and is therefore easily misled by superficial phenomena. In the opera, his bluntness brings out Ting's acumen and thoughtfulness, making her qualities stand out in sharp relief.

The third contradiction is between Ting and the well-to-do middle peasant Shen Chia-chang who is selfish, easily frightened but greedy for small gains. He is used by the landlord who tries to pin the theft on him which further complicates the struggle. By depicting Ting and Wang's different attitudes towards the middle peasants, the playwright brings out Ting's high political level in carefully distinguishing between contradictions of two different types, and in uniting and educating the masses.

Nevertheless, Ting Hsiu-chin is the focal point of all three contradictions and remains the centre of dramatic conflicts throughout the opera. In this way, in the limited space of a one-act opera, *Investigation of a Chair* concentrates on fine meticulous portrayal of its main character from different angles instead of attempting a large-scale full-length portrait. And it has succeeded in presenting Ting Hsiu-chin's high political consciousness, her determination to continue the revolution under the proletarian dictatorship and carry the struggle against retrogression through to the end, so that her image stands out clearly as a heroine with tremendous fighting spirit and lofty moral stature.

The appearance of the revolutionary modern Peking opera *Investigation of a Chair* is a fresh achievement of China's proletarian revolution in literature and art as exemplified by the revolutionary model theatrical works. It provides a good example of the way in which even short operas can portray proletarian heroes.

Returning to Yen-an (woodcut)
by Ku Yuan



Poems from Hsiao-chin-chuang

The Hsiao-chin-chuang Production Brigade in Paoti County near Tientsin is an advanced unit in the movement to learn from Tachai in agriculture. At the same time it is a model in using socialist ideology and culture to drive out feudal and bourgeois influences in the countryside. During the Cultural Revolution many villagers of this brigade started writing songs, and even more people joined in during the movement to debunk Lin Piao and Confucius. The present deepening of the great struggle to criticize Teng Hsiao-ping's counter-revolutionary revisionist line and hit back at the Right deviationist wind has brought about a new upsurge of song-writing.

Poor and lower-middle peasants mount the platform,
Singing in contest at the top of their lungs
Indignant denunciations of Teng Hsiao-ping!
Each desk is a gun-emplacement,
Each poem a volley fired
Against all those who want to put the clock back.
High praise they give the Cultural Revolution,
Their fighting spirit adds splendour to their poems.

This poem by a member of Hsiao-chin-chuang Brigade vividly conjures up one of the occasions when these peasants used songs as their weapon to attack Teng Hsiao-ping, the biggest unrepentant capitalist-roader in the Party.

In early autumn last year, Teng Hsiao-ping whipped up a Right deviationist wind to reverse the correct verdicts passed in the Cultural Revolution, in an attempt to sabotage the dictatorship of the proletariat and to restore capitalism. He singled out Hsiao-chin-chuang Brigade for attack too. Then many rumours were spread to slander the cultural activities of the Hsiao-chin-chuang poor and lower-middle peasants. Their enthusiasm for singing revolutionary model operas and revolutionary songs, as well as for writing poems, was described as "cutting capers". Led by their Party branch the peasants fought back against this sinister trend and forged ahead, fearlessly rebutting this foul wind whipped up by Teng Hsiao-ping. With deep proletarian feeling they took up their pens to hit back at Teng Hsiao-ping and his counter-revolutionary revisionist line. Within a few months they held ten poetry contests and wrote more than fifteen hundred poems, bringing into full play the militant role of revolutionary literature and art.

The poems of the Hsiao-chin-chuang villagers are weapons in class struggle and the products of class struggle. Last year in July Wang Tso-shan, the brigade's Party secretary, was studying in Peking when he heard that Teng Hsiao-ping was advocating a revisionist programme based on the theory of extinction of class struggle and the decisive role of the productive forces. When he compared this with Chairman Mao's instructions and linked it with the realities of class struggle and the struggle between two lines in Hsiao-chin-chuang, he could see that the programme was wrong. On his return to the village, he led the local cadres and commune members to make a fresh study of the Party's basic line in the socialist period, and taking class struggle as the key link they started criticizing revisionism and resolutely combating Teng Hsiao-ping's line. His poem *Every Single Victory Is Won Through Struggle* is an impassioned tribute to the militant philosophy of Marxism. It sings the new victories gained through struggle under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, and

the heroic spirit of the poor and lower-middle peasants who dare to forge ahead through brambles and thorns. Revolutionary poems, like battle-drums, inspire people with greater enthusiasm to plunge into new battles against revisionism.

Wei Wen-chung, an old poor peasant well-known for the poems he wrote during the movement to debunk Lin Piao and Confucius, is now taking an active part in this present struggle to defend and further develop the achievements of the revolution. In his poem *We Poor and Lower-Middle Peasants Will Brook No Evil* he wrote:

We are sure of the revolutionary road ahead;
Nine strong oxen cannot drag us from it;
Even if we face mountains of swords ahead
We shall go forward. . . .
Expressing our determination
To keep our country red. . . .
We'll resist the Right deviationist wind
And outstrip the achievements
Of the Cultural Revolution.

This expresses the determination of the peasants of Hsiao-chin-chuang to carry through to the end the struggle to rebut the Right deviationist wind.

Rebutting the Right deviationist wind is a great political struggle between Marxism and revisionism waged by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie; it is the continuation and further deepening of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The poor and lower-middle peasants of Hsiao-chin-chuang, after making a serious study of Chairman Mao's important instructions concerning the repulsing of the Right deviationist wind, know that capitalist-roaders are still on the move and that this is a social phenomenon which will persist throughout the whole socialist period, a reflection of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. They also realize that the capitalist-roader Teng Hsiao-ping is the chief representative today of the bourgeoisie within and without the Party, the chief instigator of the Right deviationist wind. One of their poems says:

The capitalist-roaders
Are still taking the capitalist road,

Stretching out their black claws
And trying out new tricks.

This graphically conveys the new characteristic of the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat, exposing the reactionary nature of Teng Hsiao-ping's retrogressive programme and denouncing his counter-revolutionary revisionist line.

Deputy brigade leader Wang Shu-ching in his poem *Denunciation* wrote:

The unrepentant capitalist-roader,
Dreaming vainly of restoring the old order,
Annulled past verdicts,
Tried to settle old scores,
And had the nerve to reverse
Our revolutionary line. . . .

The poor and lower-middle peasants roar:
We'll take the lead in hitting back
At the Right deviationist wind.
The flames of our denunciation
Are scorching the sky,
Smashing his plot to sabotage
Chairman Mao's revolutionary line!

These simple words voice the masses' determination to support and defend Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

To refute Teng Hsiao-ping's slander of the Cultural Revolution, the poor and lower-middle peasants of Hsiao-chin-chuang have written many poems in praise of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line. They sing with verve:

We celebrate the victories
Of the Cultural Revolution,
Then write new songs
To debunk Lin Piao and Confucius.
One victory follows another,
Filling this great land of ours
With red flowers and fine fruit.

Ever since the Cultural Revolution, more and more socialist new things have appeared on every front. As they contain elements of

communism and reflect the interests and wishes of the proletariat and other revolutionary people, they are welcomed and supported by the masses. The poor and lower-middle peasants of Hsiao-chin-chuang whole-heartedly laud these new revolutionary developments: the domination of the stage by the model revolutionary operas, the co-operative medical system in the countryside, school-leavers going to settle in communes and state farms, college graduates returning to their home villages to work as peasants — all these are subjects for their poems. And their heartfelt eulogies are forceful rebuttals of Teng Hsiao-ping's defamation of new socialist phenomena.

With the criminal aim of restoring capitalism in China, Teng Hsiao-ping vociferated that the present was inferior to the past, in the vain hope of turning history backwards and making the labouring masses suffer again. The older peasants of Hsiao-chin-chuang recall the misery of the old society and contrast it with their happiness today, expressing boundless love for the Chinese Communist Party and our socialist system, and trenchantly debunking Teng's reactionary fallacies. *Going into Battle* by an old peasant woman Chang Yu-chen truthfully expresses such feelings. *The Song of the Tractor Driver* by Wang Jui, deputy leader of the local militia, is another poem which jubilantly praises the fine situation in Hsiao-chin-chuang as a result of the socialist innovations introduced since the Cultural Revolution, and rebuts the shameless slanders of Teng Hsiao-ping.

Since the Cultural Revolution, Hsiao-chin-chuang Brigade has introduced ten innovations: they have set up a political night-school, built up a contingent of Marxist theorists, invited peasants to give lectures on local history, sung arias from new revolutionary operas, formed an art propaganda team, started a mass movement to write poems, opened a library, organized the telling of revolutionary stories, encouraged sports, and introduced new customs and habits. These fine fruits of the revolution in the ideological sphere have proved effective in enforcing dictatorship over the bourgeoisie. That is why they were attacked by Teng Hsiao-ping, who blethered that these ten innovations were no good. He plotted to abolish the political night-school and criticized the peasants for singing model revolutionary operas and writing so many poems.

The poor and lower-middle peasants of Hsiao-chin-chuang fought back unflinchingly, using militant poems to create revolutionary opinion, make clear the great significance of carrying out a socialist revolution in the ideological sphere, and defend Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. *Even the Biggest Hurricane Can't Knock Us Down* by Wang Tu, deputy secretary of the Party branch, is a vivid reflection of their militant spirit and fearlessness in fighting against the wrong trend. Yu Fang, a girl who grew to maturity during the Cultural Revolution, has also written many new poems in the current struggle. Her poem *This Is the Subject I'll Speak About*, by describing a family in which old and young alike love the model revolutionary operas, exposes Teng Hsiao-ping's plot to bring about retrogression. Tested in the storms of struggle, Hsiao-chin-chuang's ten innovations are gaining in strength. So the villagers sing exultantly:

Our new things,
Like red blossoms blooming the whole year round,
Stand up to the icy cold,
Their leaves luxuriant and green.
The wind may rage, the rain pour down,
Still, thousands of flowers unfold to greet the sun.

The deepening of the socialist revolution in the ideological realm has spurred agricultural production. The mass movement of learning from Tachai is going with a swing in Hsiao-chin-chuang. Following Tachai's example and relying on their own efforts, they have worked hard to improve their soil and irrigation and to mechanize farming. As a result, Hsiao-chin-chuang which often used to be flooded and had poor alkaline soil has changed out of recognition and the output of grain is increasing every year. Last year, when Teng Hsiao-ping was whipping up the Right deviationist wind, the poor and lower-middle peasants here at once saw through his scheme and firmly persisted in taking the socialist road, putting proletarian politics in command and grasping revolution to spur production. By so doing they harvested more than seven and a half tons of grain per hectare, the highest yield ever attained in this district. Deputy team leader Wang Hsin-min wrote in one poem:

The grain for the state's been sent in,
Still, mountains of grain are heaped on the threshing floor:
On the left golden maize,
On the right endless stacks of beans,
On the east huge piles of millet,
On the west the sorghum is still being threshed.

This gives a vivid picture of their splendid harvest.

Our cadres and masses have made up their mind
To move mountains and drain seas;
We'll make Old Man Heaven bow his head
And force the Dragon King to obey our orders.

The poor and lower-middle peasants of Hsiao-chin-chuang are determined to take the golden road pointed out by Chairman Mao, "**In agriculture, learn from Tachai!**" so as to make greater contributions to our socialist construction.

New and better poems are being produced in the course of struggle. Today, Hsiao-chin-chuang is peopled by heroes and heroines whose songs fill the air. Whereas in 1974 two hundred people here wrote poems, today the figure has risen to over four hundred, two thirds of the village population. Many of these poems have been published in newspapers and periodicals; some have been set to music and are sung far and wide. Recently the People's Literature Publishing House of Peking and the Tientsin People's Publishing House put out two selections of poems from Hsiao-chin-chuang, including more than three hundred new poems. These poems show true feeling and a clear-cut class stand. Vigorous, topical and militant, they are written in the racy, down-to-earth language of the countryside and have an unmistakable Chinese flavour. They are fine fruits of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in literature and art.

We Must Never Stop Integrating Ourselves with the Masses

Chairman Mao has instructed us, **“In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines.”** Like the struggle between different political lines, the struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie and between the socialist and capitalist lines on the literary and art front has always been very fierce. When the War of Resistance Against Japan started in 1937, many literary and art workers went from all parts of China to Yen-an and the other revolutionary bases where, guided by Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line, most of them took the road of integrating themselves with the workers and peasants. In this way they created many works of art which were welcomed by the masses and played a positive role in the class struggle and in liberating our country. A few, however, followed the Right capitulationist line of Wang Ming, clinging to their bourgeois world outlook and bourgeois view of art. They peddled feudal and bourgeois art and were against revolutionary art which promptly reflected class struggle and the struggle for national liberation.

In 1942 in Yen-an, Chairman Mao initiated and led the Party’s rectification movement which thoroughly debunked the Wang Ming line. The rectification campaign in literature and art was part of this larger movement. Chairman Mao attached great importance to the rectification of our literary and art circles. In May that year he convened a forum of writers and artists at Yangchialing, Yen-an, at which he delivered his *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*, a summary of great historic significance. The *Yen-an Talks* made a thoroughgoing criticism of the wrong line in literature and art represented by Wang Ming, and gave a comprehensive summary of the history of the struggle between the two classes and two lines on the literary and art front since the May 4th Movement. It formulated a complete revolutionary line for literature and art and pointed out the basic orientation and path for the development of proletarian literature and art. This glorious work is one of the most important documents of our Party for improving ideological and theoretical work.

After the publication of the *Yen-an Talks*, many literary and art workers in Yen-an and other revolutionary bases followed Chairman Mao’s instructions and plunged into the struggles of the workers, peasants and soldiers, living among them. This immediately infused fresh life into our literature and art.

At that time I was a young art student in the Lu Hsun Academy of Literature and Art at Yen-an. When I heard Chairman Mao’s talk it really opened my eyes. After the forum ended, Chairman Mao came to our academy to urge us to leave this “small academy” and go to study in the “bigger academy” — the fiery life and struggle of the masses. This showed his great concern for us and was an immense encouragement to us. Following his instruction, many teachers and students did leave our “small academy” to learn in the “bigger academy” of the masses.

I myself went with some other students to a small mountain village a few dozen *li* from Yen-an, to live and work with the peasants there. I also did some administrative work in the local government. That village had little more than forty households, most of them former poor peasants and hired hands. In the old society they had been

cruelly oppressed and treated worse than cattle. It was not until after Chairman Mao led the Red Army on the Long March and triumphantly reached northern Shensi that they were liberated and became masters of the land. These peasants who had lived in two totally different societies had a high degree of class consciousness, being all for the Communist Party and devoted to Chairman Mao. By working with them I began to understand how hard it is to create material wealth, and from them I learned a great deal about actual struggles. I felt then that we youngsters fresh from school were inferior to the peasants in every way and we must learn modestly from them. The fine qualities of those villagers, who were so hard-working, brave, frugal and honest, made such a profound impression on me that my thoughts and feelings began to change. As I was eager to do something useful for them, I drew pictures to help them learn to read. Every day I would send one sheet of pictures and characters to each family; and by learning one or two new characters a day they mastered thirty to forty every month. They liked my pictures so much that they pasted them on their walls, learning the characters while enjoying the pictures. Seeing them pasted up on the walls of virtually every household, I felt no end pleased.

Under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, this former poor mountain village had been transformed: its pens were filled with cattle and sheep, its barns with grain. In the past only one person there had been able to read and write; but now the village had a primary school as well as winter-classes and night-classes. To me, all these things were like a series of splendid moving pictures; so I made such woodcuts as *Cows*, *Sheep*, *Winter-Classes* and *Women Reading the Paper*. My work in the local government office also enabled me to witness daily the real life and struggles in the village and the many new phenomena which emerged. Stirred by these, I produced the woodcuts *The Masses Fight to Reduce Rent*, *Registering for Marriage*, *Brother Comes Home on Leave* and *Night in a Peasant Household* as well as others.

Each time I made a new woodcut I would ask the villagers for criticism, and they were always eager to help by pointing out defects



Night in a Peasant Household

and suggesting improvements. For instance, when they saw my draft of *Sheep* they said, "When you herd sheep you must have a dog with you, otherwise you'll have trouble with wolves. And a shepherd ought to carry a sack with him — it comes in useful in a storm, and if a ewe drops a lamb in the mountains, the lamb can be put in the sack." I accepted their ideas readily and made repeated changes until they were more satisfied. And after completing a woodcut, I would send copies to the peasants' homes by way of "publication". Their delighted smiles at seeing their life after liberation reflected in these pictures was an inspiration to me. These experiences helped me to understand more deeply Chairman Mao's instructions that artists ". . . must go among the masses; they must for a long period of time unreservedly and whole-heartedly go among the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, go into the heat of the struggle, go to the only source, the broadest and richest

source". How profound and correct I had found this instruction to be. At the same time I realized that I had taken only the first step in this direction.

Following the victory of the revolutionary war, I left Yen-an and went to work in a city. In March 1949, at the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Party, Chairman Mao pointed out that after the proletariat had won state power throughout the country, the main contradiction within the country would be that between the working class and the bourgeoisie. This contradiction and struggle was also reflected in the realm of literature and art. Political swindlers such as Liu Shao-chi promoted a counter-revolutionary revisionist line to restore capitalism and re-introduced the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. They blatantly altered the correct orientation for literature and art pointed out by Chairman Mao — that literature and art should serve the workers, peasants and soldiers — and tried frantically to drag writers and artists on to the erroneous revisionist path. Under the influence of this black line in literature and art, and owing to my own lack of awareness of the struggle between the two lines, I cut myself off from the real life and struggle of the masses and took the wrong road, my work becoming divorced for a time from the existing class struggle. This taught me a painful lesson!

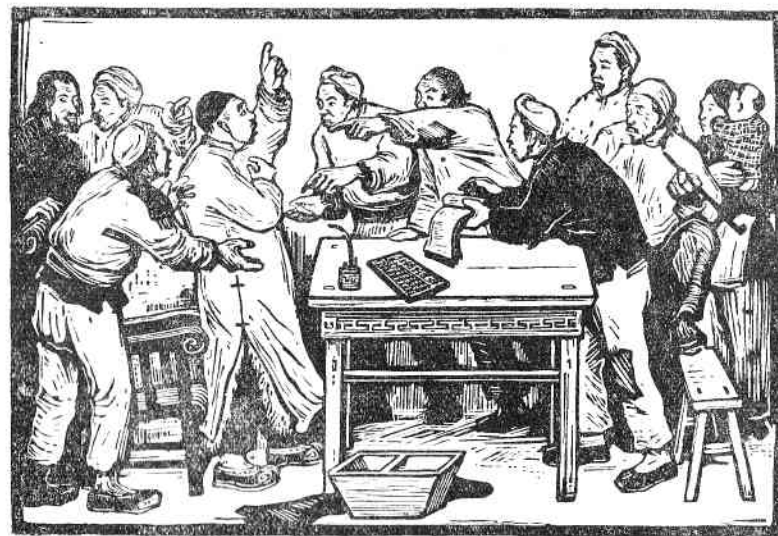
The epoch-making Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution initiated and led by Chairman Mao smashed the counter-revolutionary revisionist line. I learned a great deal in the storms of this class struggle. After I had been steeled by the Cultural Revolution, the Party sent me back to my post as a teacher of art. We were urged by our leadership to persist in carrying out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line by going to conduct classes among the workers, peasants and soldiers, in the heat of their struggles. Together with my worker-peasant-soldier students I went back to study in the countryside.

We went to Huh sien County in the province of Shensi, to a new type of socialist village which had appeared as a result of the Cultural Revolution. The old peasants there told us the history of their village and their own stories, while the Party secretary of the brigade

described to us the class struggles and struggles between the two lines which had been waged in the countryside. These accounts deepened our class feeling and taught me another great lesson.

This county had been very successful in fostering amateur art activities, and the local poor and lower-middle peasants had made a careful study of the *Yenan Talks*. They took an active part in class struggle, in the struggle of production and in scientific experiments. At the same time they used painting brushes as weapons to help their revolutionary tasks. They were thus the creators of both material and spiritual wealth. At our request they gave us a profound and most moving lesson on how to do art work. For example, one brigade Party secretary said, "We must remember whom our paintings are to serve, and whom we should depict. The painting brush may feel very light in our hand, but it's no light task to keep truly in mind the need to consolidate the proletarian dictatorship — some people find that too heavy a task for them. . . . To paint well, your mind must be clear; you mustn't paint for fame or profit but to praise socialism. Your orientation and path have got to be clear."

The Masses Fight to Reduce Rent



When we asked for comments on our work, the poor and lower-middle peasants made it very clear what they liked and disliked. They considered in the first place the ideological content and the feeling reflected. For example, one of our students drew a picture called *After Her Election*, depicting a girl who has just been elected Party secretary. But, as the peasants pointed out, her expression was ambiguous. "Is she willing to take up the job or not?" they asked. "You should show her full of confidence but at the same time feeling the weight of her revolutionary task." Some of us, influenced by traditional paintings, liked to draw gnarled trees, thinking these made for aesthetic composition. The peasants, however, pointed out, "Trees should be straight or they won't be much use as timber." "It won't look like our new socialist countryside unless you have rows of trees and regular fields with straight demarcation lines and sturdy crops." We had our studios in the peasants' homes and our easels were set up by their *kang*. They helped us choose subjects, and together we discussed how to express them. While we were painting they made various comments and suggestions. They were really wonderful teachers. Side by side with these spare-time artists we took part in struggles with our painting brushes, learning our craft in the process and improving our basic technique. We made rapid progress and were soon convinced that the vast countryside was the biggest and best academy of art for us. Then I remembered Chairman Mao telling us to go and learn in the "bigger academy", and I saw more clearly the profundity of that directive.

The biggest unrepentant capitalist-roader within our Party, Teng Hsiao-ping, whipped up a Right deviationist wind and attacked the Cultural Revolution, the revolution in literature and art and the revolution in education. He opposed open-door education and preached specialization regardless of political orientation, in his vain attempt to bring back capitalism. The stern facts of class struggle have confirmed again that during the socialist period of history the struggle between the two classes and two lines is very sharp, and not for one moment must we forget class struggle. I have resolv-

ed to make a serious study of the works of Marx, Lenin and Chairman Mao, to firmly grasp class struggle as the key link, abide by the Party's basic line, and persist in the revolution in literature and art as well as the revolution in education. I must advance, never faltering, along the path of integration with the masses, in accordance with the directives in the *Yenan Talks*.

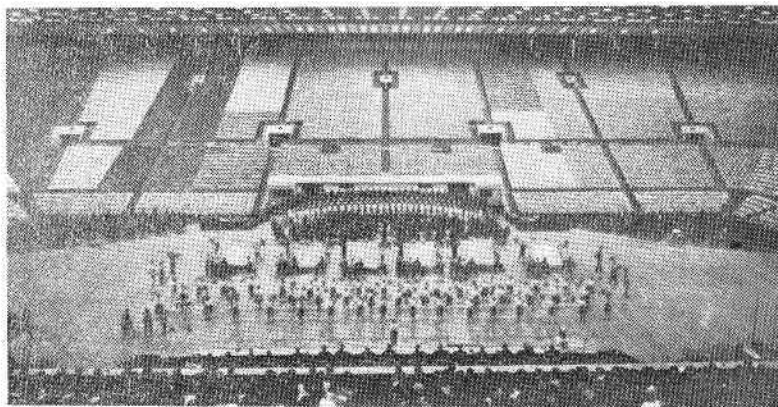


CHRONICLE

Mass Song Recitals

In commemoration of the 34th anniversary of the publication of Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art*, mass song recitals were held in Peking, Shanghai and Tientsin. The items praised the great victories won in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the struggle to repulse the Right deviationist wind which attempted to reverse correct verdicts, and gave praise to the great victories of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

Sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and the Revolutionary Committee of Peking Municipality, a mass song recital was organized on May 23 in Peking by the workers, peasants and soldiers of the capital, in order to praise the Cultural Revolution and beat back the



Right deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts. Over eighteen thousand workers, peasants and soldiers and many literary and art workers from various fronts of the capital took part. They sang Chairman Mao's two new poems: *Reascending Chingkangshan* — to the tune of *Shui Tiao Keh Tou* and *Two Birds: A Dialogue* — to the tune of *Nien Nu Chiao*. They also presented forty popular songs in a variety of forms — choral singing as well as solos and ballads to different types of accompaniment. The warm revolutionary atmosphere and militancy of these performances showed the masses' love for the Cultural Revolution and their hatred for the crimes of the arch unrepentant capitalist-roader Teng Hsiao-ping who tried to reverse correct verdicts. These worker-peasant-soldier participants were mostly activists in amateur art activities. They themselves created many of the new songs.

Mass song recitals praising the Cultural Revolution and criticizing Teng Hsiao-ping in a deep-going way were also held in Shanghai and Tientsin, with nearly twenty thousand participants. Amateur worker-singers joined professional literary and art workers in a choral presentation of Chairman Mao's two new poems. Choral groups

from different units in those cities performed various items and also acted or danced to accompany their singing. The warm revolutionary atmosphere showed that the people of Shanghai and other cities are marching forward, determined to carry through to the end the struggle to criticize Teng Hsiao-ping and to beat back the Right deviationist wind.

National "Chuyi" Festival

A national festival of *chuyi* (ballad-singing, story-telling and cross-talk) was held in mid-June in Peking. During the festival, artists from 28 different provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions as well as from army, railway and broadcasting units presented over 400 items in 182 different types of *chuyi*.

Chuyi is a traditional art of recitation or ballad-singing long popular among the Chinese people. Since the start of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, *chuyi* artists have followed Chairman Mao's directives: **"Make the past serve the present"** and **"Weed through the old to bring forth the new"**, and have earnestly studied the model revolutionary theatrical works. Inspired by these works, they have transformed this folk art, in both form and content, and have begun to perform a new kind of *chuyi* for the workers, peasants and soldiers.

One merit of this short, lively art form is that it is well suited to reflecting current struggles. All the items presented depicted our new era, new people and new deeds and, in addition, quite a few had as their themes the struggle to hit back at the Right deviationist wind and the struggle of the proletariat against the capitalist-roaders in the Party.

Among the varied and colourful *chuyi* items put on were story-telling, drum-ballads, fiddle-ballads and cross-talk as well as ballads of minority nationalities, some of which were performed in the capital for the first time.

The Literary and Art Publishing Front Is Flourishing

Since the start of the Cultural Revolution, the situation on our literary and art publishing front has been excellent. One hundred and seventeen works of literature were published in seventeen provinces and municipalities and by the People's Publishing House from 1972 to 1975, an average of twenty-nine yearly. Forty-seven were published in 1975 alone, more than double the number in 1958, the peak year for literary output before the Cultural Revolution, when only eighteen works of this kind were printed. In addition, more copies of each of these books were printed. Among the works published are the novels *Rippling Waves*, *On the Eve*, *A Road Across the Sea* and *The Trek*; collections of short stories *Towards the Sun* and *The Prelude*; and the long poem *The Song of Our Ideals*. They all record various phases in the Cultural Revolution and praise new socialist things such as the revolution in education, educated youth settling in the countryside, and the barefoot doctors.

The excellent situation on the publishing front also shows that a radical change has taken place in the ranks of our writers. Owing to the influence of the revisionist line pushed by Liu Shao-chi before the Cultural Revolution, the publishing front relied on a few "authorities" and "experts" to write books. Now a contingent of worker-peasant-soldier writers has appeared to change the previous practice of relying on a few "specialists". Since 1972, the People's Literature Publishing House has put out twenty-six novels and five long poems, most of them written by worker-peasant-soldier amateurs who matured in the course of the Cultural Revolution.

These books take class struggle and the struggle between the two lines as their theme and reflect the struggle of the broad masses on various fronts against the capitalist-roaders and against traditional conservative ideas. Their role in strengthening the revolutionary masses' high resolve and defeating the class enemies' arrogance has been warmly welcomed by our workers, peasants and soldiers.

New Peasant Paintings Exhibited

More than six hundred new peasant paintings on the themes "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution Is Fine" and "Beating Back the Right Deviationist Wind" were recently exhibited by amateur artists of Huhsien in Shensi Province which is known as "the home of peasant paintings". These new paintings show vividly the spirit of our age and are highly militant, giving glowing praise to the great victories of the Cultural Revolution and the struggle to beat back the Right deviationist wind. Most of these new works are by amateur artists who have grown up in the Cultural Revolution. Fresh and bold in conception, they are permeated with revolutionary spirit.

There are now more than one thousand amateur peasant artists in this county, eighty per cent of whom grew up in the course of the Cultural Revolution. They are from more than five hundred brigades in twenty-one communes. These amateur artists who were vanguard fighters in the Cultural Revolution are now outstanding in productive labour and the mainstay in grasping revolution and promoting production.

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