

SANDSTONE HOLLOW

—Transformation of a Mountain Village

TANG FENG-CHANG



SANDSTONE HOLLOW is a small mountain village located in the foothills of the Yenshan Mountains south of the Great Wall in China's Hopei Province. The facts presented in this booklet speak vividly of the tremendous changes that have taken place in Sandstone Hollow, effecting a striking contrast with the old days.

Before liberation, Sandstone Hollow was a poverty-stricken, rock-bound hilly waste where "earth was as precious as pearls and water as oil." Life for the people there was extremely difficult. They subsisted on wild greens, sour dates and bran, and had only thin clothing against the coldest weather of winter. After liberation, led by the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao Tsetung, the poor and lower-middle peasants persisted in taking the socialist road, built fields on the rock faces in the revolutionary spirit of the legendary Foolish Old Man who removed the mountains, and planted trees in the rock crevices. Twenty-some years of hard struggle has transformed Sandstone Hollow into a thriving, socialist new village.

This booklet brings before the reader the revolutionary, heroic images of the liberated Chinese people who rely on their own efforts and hard work to rearrange their mountains and rivers in the spirit of persistent, unswerving struggle.

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a Mountain Village

Tang Feng-chang

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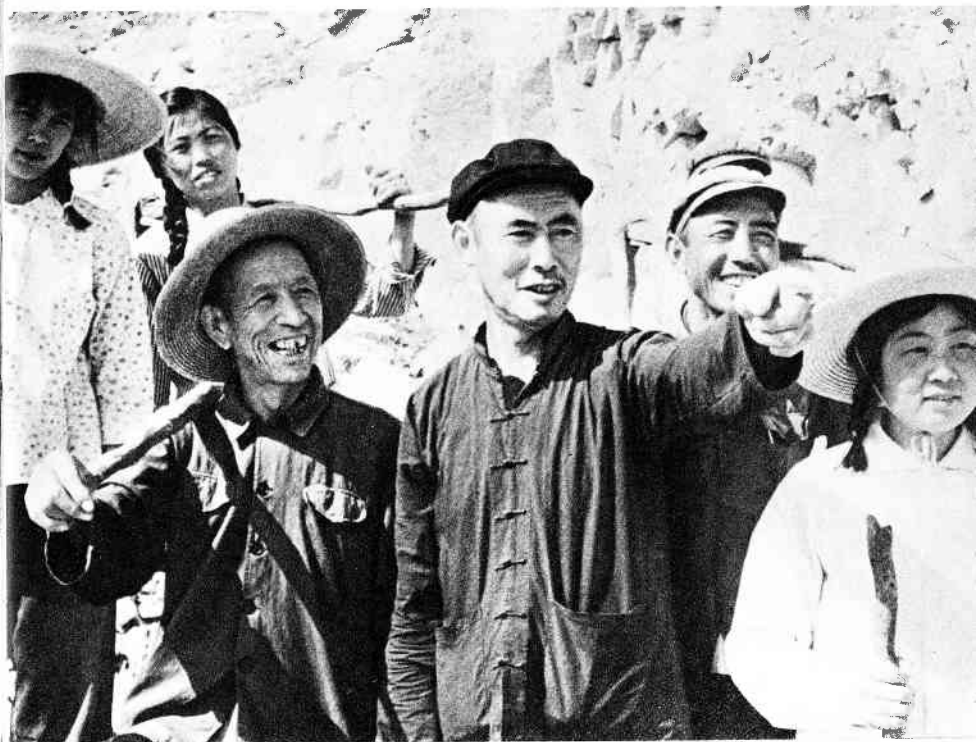


The village of Sandstone Hollow.

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Sandstone Hollow leading members at political study.



Wang Kuo-fan (*third from left, front row*), secretary of the Tsunhua County Party committee and member of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, studying the long-range plan for remaking Sandstone Hollow's hills together with the Party branch secretary Chang Kuei-shun (*second from left, front row*) and other brigade cadres and members.



Young people learn Sandstone Hollow's revolutionary tradition from the old folks.

Chang Kuei-shun does not leave work to others.



Rocky slopes being carved to give way to garden-like farmland.

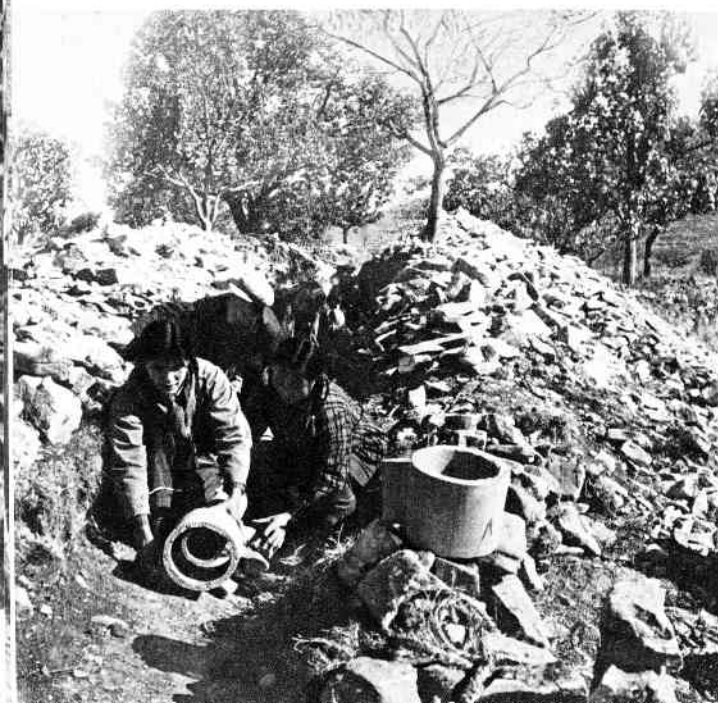
Chang Kuei-shun teaches the educated youths farming skills.



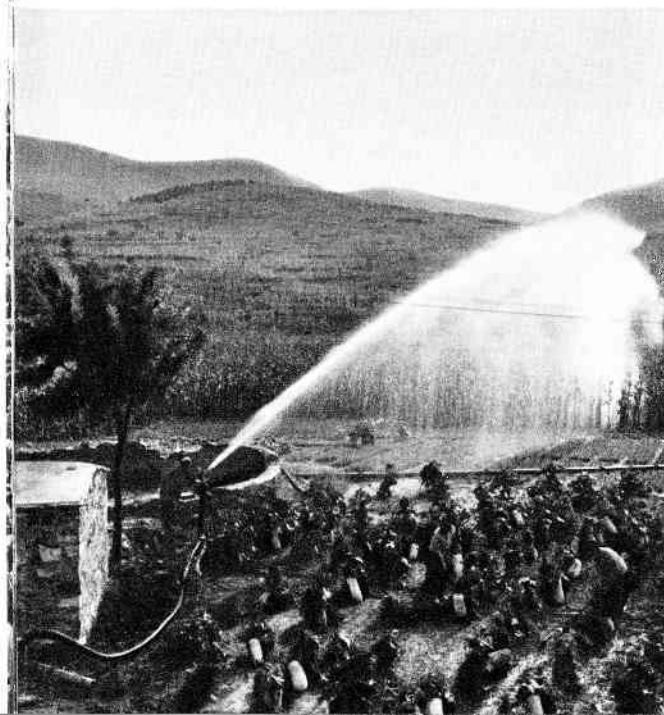
Crops grow luxuriantly in the "pace-setting field."



Cistern hewn out of the rocky hill face.



Laying a pipeline to conduct the water.



Plenty of clear water is led up the hillsides.

Pumps now benefit this village where water was once "as precious as oil."



The former rock-bound East Gully has become a granary.

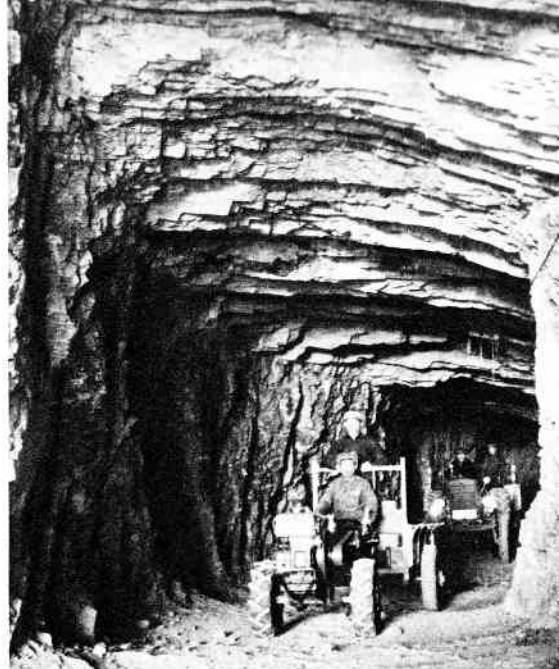


The "iron girls" carry earth to create a plain.



Tunnelling a short cut through North Hill.

The roadway through the hill.

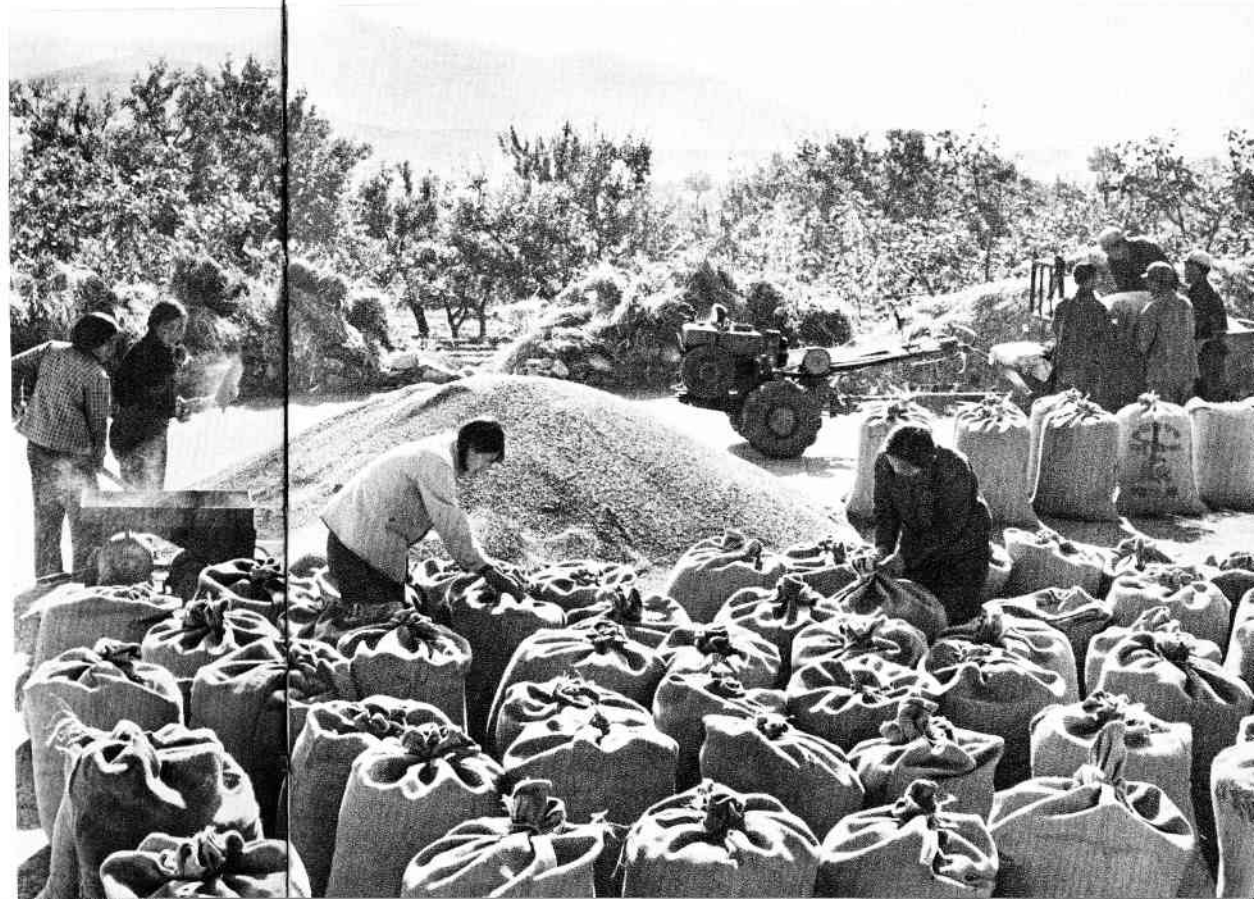


Plump millet ears.





Golden wheat grows at the formerly desolate Wolf Lair.



Commune members enthusiastically deliver sunned and winnowed grain, paying their tax and selling their surplus to the state.



Fragrant fruit perfumes Sandstone Hollow's hillsides.

Green are the hills.



A fine harvest
of walnuts.

With grain in abundance, every
family has a bank account.



In the courtyard of a peasant's home, with
granny telling about her happy life today.



Launching a mass movement
of revolutionary criticism.



A "barefoot doctor"
on one of her
regular rounds.



All children go to
school when they
reach school age.



The Tsunhua County theatrical troupe performing in the mountain village.

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Introduction

THE magnificent Great Wall, which rises with Shanhai-kuan Pass at the shore of Pohai Sea in eastern Hopei province as starting point, snakes up the Yenshan Mountains where peaks serry one upon another. Built in country difficult for travel, it twists and turns westward. . . .

At the foot of the Great Wall, nestling among the foothills, lies a small village. It is the Sandstone Hollow (Shashihyu) Production Brigade of the Yuehkojuang People's Commune in Tsunhua County, Hopei Province, which has won the honoured name of "the home of today's Foolish Old Men."

In his article "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains," Chairman Mao tells us about an old man who lived long, long ago and was known as the Foolish Old Man. Two great mountains stood before his doorway and he led his sons, with great determination, to remove them. Another greybeard, known as the Wise Old Man, saw them and laughed at them. "How silly of you to do this!" he said. "It's quite impossible for so few of you to level these two big mountains." The Foolish Old Man replied, "But when I die, my sons will carry on; when they die, there will be my grandsons, and then their sons and grandsons, and so on forever. High as they are, the mountains cannot grow any higher and with every bit we dig, they will be that much lower. Why can't we clear them away?"

The people of Sandstone Hollow kept reminding themselves of this story. Led by the Party branch, they learned from the Foolish Old Man and with his revolutionary spirit in removing the mountains, they created fields on slabs of stone and planted trees between rocks. Their hard struggle for more than 20 years brought radical changes to Sandstone Hollow.

The poor and lower-middle peasants of Sandstone Hollow, however, can never forget their bitter past, the oppression and slavery they suffered in the dark days before liberation.

The village is said to have been founded a century ago by a poor man called Li Lao-erh who lived originally at Yinchia-tai in the same county. When Li killed the official who came to collect the imperial grain tax, the yamen ordered his house ransacked and all his family members beheaded. Li Lao-erh fled his home village and took refuge in this deep and barren hollow where grotesque rocks stood like a forest and packs of wolves descended from time to time. After that other destitute people who couldn't pay their rent or debts and were driven to desperation by the landlords began drifting to this desolate place and settling down. They built huts of stone, reclaimed wasteland and planted crops on the bald stony slopes. In time a village of several scores of households took shape.

But in the old China, the roads over which poor people fled famine areas were long, and their cries from the pangs of hunger and cold could be heard everywhere. For all landlords are cruel, and the poor people could find no way out.

When the evil officials and landlords heard about this new village, they rushed in too, and the poor people again became tenant farmers or hired hands. They had escaped from the tiger's den only to be trapped in the wolf's lair! Again, the grain grown by the broad masses of poor and lower-middle peasants with their blood and sweat did not even pay the

rent. Sixty-seven of the village's 78 households worked for the landlords or else begged. They wore rags even in bitter winter weather and never had a real meal, living much worse than the landlord's dog. Unable to pay the rent, 13 households had to sell their children and wander about homeless. A folk song arose:

The gateway to hell, this stony hollow,
Where is there land in this mountain waste?
With landlords rapacious as wolves,
No grain's left after paying the rent.
Wild greens, sour dates and chaff fill our bellies,
No padded clothes in the depth of winter.

The song was a description of the miserable existence of Sandstone Hollow's poor and lower-middle peasants in the old society as well as their accusation in blood and tears against that society.

After liberation, under the brilliant leadership of Chairman Mao and the Communist Party of China, the poor people in this forsaken place organized themselves to reduce rent and interest and carry out the land reform movement. They stood up after they overthrew the landlords and set up a people's government, which gave the village its name—Sandstone Hollow.

But though the poor and lower-middle peasants had won their liberation politically, the poverty and backwardness of the place remained largely unchanged. The village had 800-some *mu** of poor hilly land, while the per-*mu* grain yield in a good year reached only 70-80 *jin*** The village of 80 households would need 50,000 to 60,000 *jin* sent in as planned supply, and 1,000 to 2,000 yuan in relief funds each year,

* One *mu* equals 1/15 hectare or 1/6 acre,

** One *jin* equals 1/2 kg. or 1.1 lbs.

with the addition of over 100 suits of padded clothing and quilts when winter set in, all from the state.

Class enemies took advantage of this to spread rumours, saying, "Stony hills, stony gullies; how can you plant on slabs of stone? It's the fate of the poor to live on relief!"

Was this really their "fate"? By no means!

As our great leader Chairman Mao points out: **The wealth of society is created by the workers, peasants and working intellectuals. If they take their destiny into their own hands, follow a Marxist-Leninist line and take an active attitude in solving problems instead of evading them, there will be no difficulty in the world which they cannot overcome.** In the more than 20 years since liberation the Sandstone Hollow Party branch has been active in leading the poor and lower-middle peasants and all commune members to firmly carry out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, take the socialist road, and fight class enemies and wrong lines. At the same time, the Sandstone Hollow people have waged unswerving struggles against the elements and to remake the hills. They have demonstrated the truth of Chairman Mao's teaching by revolutionary action.

Today, climbing North Hill and looking around, we see plane terraced fields, water flowing in winding channels round the hills and trees covering all slopes. The threshing grounds are bustling with life, the people working briskly, horses neighing and machines humming. Tractors and carts loaded with farm and agricultural sideline produce pass through "The Foolish Old Man Tunnel" in North Hill, cross the big stone bridge over South Gully, and are out of the hills. Groups of young men and women in the terraced fields and orchards sing happily as they gather in crops of grain or apples.

Sandstone Hollow, slope on slope,
Changed into new by today's Foolish Old Men.

It is true. With their own two hands the hard-working people have brought a socialist new life to Sandstone Hollow and changed its "nine hills and 17 gullies" beyond recognition. The 23,000 scattered, tiny plots on the hill slopes have become 6,300 larger plots on fine terraced fields. Between 1966, when they began cutting into the hills to build terraced fields, and 1972, they carried 400,000 basketfuls of earth and built more than 500 *mu* of Tachai-type* terraced fields. They built a dam in South Gully to detain floodwaters and a "March 8" Reservoir with a storage capacity of 17,000 cubic metres. Out of solid rock, in five winters and six springs, they dug a large storage pond that glistens like a bright pearl at the foot of North Hill. Clear spring water pumped from three wells 100 metres deep is sent up the hills through many pipes and into winding channels and ponds, there to water by gravity the fields and orchards on the terraced slopes. The hill tops around Sandstone Hollow are now covered with a rich growth of pines and cypresses, while the lower slopes and foothills abound in fruit trees. Vegetation now covers 980 *mu* of the former 1,200 *mu* of barren hills, while between rocks and pebbles 90,000 fruit trees grow, netting 200,000 to 300,000 *jin* of fresh and preserved fruit annually.

These represent very great changes in Sandstone Hollow's physical features. In stone and earth work alone, the people there in the 20-some years completed a million cubic metres by giving full play to the spirit of the Foolish Old Man. This amount of earth and rock, if used to build a dyke a metre high and a metre thick, would build one 1,000 kilometres long. The people, and the people alone, could perform

*Tachai is a village in Hsiyang County, Shansi Province, and a national pacesetter in agriculture. Self-reliant and hard-working, the commune members there turned rocky hills into fertile land and have ensured bumper harvests every year.

such a task! Now, with permanent projects in forestry, agriculture and water conservancy going forward, grain yield increases each year. In the early days of its liberation, Sandstone Hollow's average per-*mu* grain yield was only 70-80 *jin*. In 1971 it reached 650 *jin*. Because of the thin soil and lack of water, the people gathered only one crop a year and had never planted wheat. Then, after an experiment the year before, in 1973 the commune members planted 200 *mu* to wheat, and this yielded an average of more than 400 *jin* per *mu*. Grain had changed from one crop a year to two crops, and the double 1973 harvest averaged 800 *jin* per *mu*, or a total of 618,000 *jin*. This was nine times the pre-liberation output and 40 per cent more than 1971, their peak year. They also produced 270,000 *jin* of fresh and preserved fruit. In the 15 years from 1957 to 1971 the brigade supplied to the state 530,000 *jin* of marketable grain, 30,000 *jin* of ginned cotton, 3 million *jin* of fresh and preserved fruit and 3,000 pigs. They had a collective grain reserve of 50,000 *jin* and 255,000 yuan in accumulated public funds, an average of 2,000 yuan per family.

In the old society, life for the poor and lower-middle peasants of Sandstone Hollow was an ordeal. Enough to eat and wear, and spacious, bright new houses of brick were a luxury to them. Old poor peasant Kao Sheng-ho, whose family with the exception of himself, then a 12-year-old child, had been driven by a landlord into fleeing Sandstone Hollow before liberation, had worked like a beast of burden to eke out a living. Now he has a family of five, a three-room house of brick, a bicycle, flower-patterned quilts, a red lacquered chest, and more than 1,000 yuan saved up in the bank. And Kao Sheng-ho's family is only one of many like this in Sandstone Hollow. Since liberation, 460 rooms of new housing have been built in the village, and the commune members own 113

bicycles, 36 sewing-machines, 27 radios and 27,000 yuan in bank savings.

There was not a poor person in the old society who was literate. Now the 140 primary school-age children are in school, and of the poor and lower-middle peasants' sons and daughters, 20 attend middle school and three have gone on to university. The brigade has its health station, and old people who are alone and without support are provided with food, clothing, medical care, housing and funeral expense by the people's commune.

People who suffered most from cold and hunger cherish most the warmth of their liberated life. The poor and lower-middle peasants of Sandstone Hollow, deeply oppressed and exploited in the old society, most appreciate the happiness Chairman Mao has brought them. When one talks with them about their past sufferings and present happiness, they say: "Chairman Mao's revolutionary line is our lifeline; without the Communist Party and Chairman Mao's wise leadership there could be no socialist new China, no happy life for us!" They go on to say how after liberation, guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, the Party branch has relied on the masses and led them in one hard struggle after another. . . .

Will Flowers Blossom on Rocks?

SEPTEMBER 22, 1952, was a never-to-be-forgotten day for the Sandstone Hollow poor and lower-middle peasants. On that day Sandstone Hollow's first elementary agricultural producers' co-operative was founded on the basis of 17 mutual-aid teams consisting of 36 poor and lower-middle peasant households.

With the co-operative and some mutual-aid teams, the remote mountain village buzzed with life and activity. Poor peasants who had thought it impossible to make a living in Sandstone Hollow, where "earth is as precious as pearls and water as oil," began to smile a little. They gathered round Chang Kuei-shun, the co-op chairman, asking eagerly, "Will our village really prosper now that we have a co-op?"

"Can the bright road pointed out by Chairman Mao lead us elsewhere?" Kuei-shun replied, speaking happily as he turned from their past experience to their present life, and the future. "With the co-op we can rely on collective effort to build our poverty-stricken mountain village into a beautiful and thriving new socialist village."

But the class enemies hated the co-op and unleashed a storm of rumours against it: "Sandstone Hollow, poor, Sandstone Hollow," they chanted, "all rocks and no soil. The poor are fated to live on relief. Can they stand up on their own feet

by getting organized? Can a dream be fact?" And, "When all our land is lumped together, it's as good as confiscated!" Also, "Even family members divide up the household property and live apart. Can many households in a co-op get along?"

Some middle peasants wavered; others stood aside. Still others wanted to compete with the co-op and make it a laughing-stock of the village. Whenever they were asked about joining, they would say with a horse-laugh, "Join the co-op? Tell me first, how long will that co-op of yours last?"

With such remarks rampant, the mountain village in upsurge was dangerously near lapsing into its old apathy again. Some of the more impatient of the co-op members put the blame on their fellow villagers, saying that they were too backward.

But the Party secretary, Kuei-shun, said, "No, that's not true. It's the class enemy spreading rumours to slander our co-op, trying to ruin it. And we? Why, we must talk about the advantages of having a co-op, and make it a success."

Encouraged by the village Party branch committee, the co-op members worked out skits and rhymes for a folk *yangko* dance, while Party members and cadres took the lead in rehearsing and performing it, singing to the rhythm of the gong:

It's our co-op strong and true
That dares change the look of Sandstone Hollow.
Farming on your own, you'll have hardships galore,
Getting organized, we'll suffer poverty no more.
The co-op practises voluntariness,
For socialism's good beyond compare.
Get organized, expand production,
We'll pull out the thousand-year root of poverty.

The village reverberated with singing and the sound of gongs. The lively propaganda inspired the masses and dealt heavy blows at the class enemy.

After the first month of the lunar calendar there began the busy spring farming season. The co-op of 36 poor and lower-middle peasant households had neither seed nor draught animals. So they saved their food grain for sowing, eating wild plants and chaff instead. They pulled the plough and dug the land with picks, and in this way got the first spring sowing on their collective land started. Seeing the difficulties confronting the co-op, those middle peasants who wanted to get rich on their own became cocky and said they would compete with the co-op.

There were eight *mu* of land on the western slope of the village, the upper half of which belonged to the co-op and was planted to sorghum. The lower half belonged to the middle peasant Li Yung-chuan and was planted to maize. It was on these eight *mu* that the competition began.

One evening Li Yung-chuan's daughter, Li Shu-lan, who was keen on joining the co-op, ran excitedly to the cadres and exclaimed, "My father and his bunch got together and said they were going to challenge the co-op and defeat it!"

"Really, Shu-lan! How much fertilizer did your father apply to that corn plot before sowing?"

"Two cartloads," the girl replied. "Then he manured it again a few days ago, on the sly. He covered the manure over with earth so it doesn't show." Before leaving, Shu-lan stressed, "His plots on the lower half of the eight *mu* are cultivated with great care. You people mustn't slacken your effort!"

Kuei-shun said cheerfully, "Please tell your pa, Shu-lan, that our co-op is happy to have competitors!"

Shu-lan, open and active, was a Youth League member. On arriving home, she said to her father point-blank, "Pa, we can't win, as I see it. Why don't we join the co-op?"

"A lot you know!" retorted the father. "We have plenty of draught animals and fertilizer. Can't win? Ha, that's news to me!"

Meanwhile, the co-op got its members together at a meeting.

When they learned that Li Yung-chuan and some others had thrown down the gauntlet to the co-op, the members cried out, "We'll take them on, by all means! It'll show which is better — the co-op or working on their own."

"We're short of money and means but we're long on determination. We won't let the co-op down!"

They decided to cultivate all plots carefully, whether they bordered the middle peasants' or not, and prove the superiority of the co-op by reaping good autumn harvests from all the land.

The next morning the co-op applied dozens of pannier-loads of manure to each *mu* of its land contiguous to that of the "go it aloners." With some members transporting the fertilizer and others spreading it, the organized peasants worked in an energetic and orderly fashion never seen before in that mountain village.

Yung-chuan was puzzled and angry.

"Who spilt the beans?" he demanded.

Shu-lan smiled as she replied, "They aren't fools, are they? They found out."

Peeling off his jacket, Yung-chuan cried, "Come, let's go to the field!"

But it was not much use, for there were only three in the family, and when Yung-chuan asked for help from six middle-peasant households, everyone gave the same answer — they were short of hands themselves.

"See? That's what I told you long ago. Working on your own, each of you has his own axe to grind," she said. "Look

at the co-op. They have plenty of hands and act with one mind. Whatever they say, they can do. It works just fine!"

Yung-chuan flared up. "Shut up! No need of your lecturing me!"

He called all the family out and they worked from dawn till dusk, finally managing to carry enough manure to all their plots. But that night there was a heavy rain followed by five cloudy days in succession. The manure was washed off the field. Meanwhile, the co-op had manured all its land once more and added another 30 *jin* of chemical fertilizer to each *mu*. The sun came out on the seventh day, and both crop and weeds shot up. The co-op finished hoeing its field very soon, while Yung-chuan and the other middle peasants couldn't get around to it and the weeds grew taller than the crop in their fields. When the co-op members offered to help them, Yung-chuan flung at them: "We have two hands the same as you. Why should *we* have help from *you*?"

That autumn, grain was piled high on the co-op threshing ground. As to yield from the eight *mu* on the western slope, the co-op reaped 350 *jin* of sorghum per *mu*, while Yung-chuan's corn planted on the lower half of the land barely amounted to 200 *jin* per *mu*.

In the village as a whole, the average co-operative grain output was 155 *jin* per *mu*, 34 per cent more than the previous year, while that of the middle peasants was only 120 *jin*. It was clear which was superior, the co-operative way, or working on one's own.

The result of the competition impressed the villagers with the advantages of the co-op. It helped the peasants see more clearly the road they should take. And Li Yung-chuan finally said to Kuei-shun as he grasped his hand: "Now I'm convinced. I want to join the co-op!"

Another nine middle-peasant households followed Yung-chuan's example, and the co-op membership grew from 36 households to 46.

The first rich harvest enabled the co-op to buy animals and farm implements. It was an up-and-coming co-op all right, though still poor compared with those of neighbouring villages.

Poverty, however, spurred the poor and lower-middle peasants of Sandstone Hollow to work harder to make revolution.

It was a touchstone by which the strength of the Sandstone Hollow Party branch was tested—whether it dared to lead the masses in struggle.

One day when the cadres met to discuss a plan for rebuilding Sandstone Hollow, there was a commotion outside. Opening the door, they saw people carrying in the state relief grain that was arriving.

Kuei-shun's eyes moistened as he thought how, peasants as they were, they not only contributed no grain to the state but each year were issued state relief grain. What have I done as Sandstone Hollow's Party branch secretary? he asked himself. Why couldn't Sandstone Hollow make some contribution like the other co-ops that sold grain surpluses to the state every year?

At the Party branch committee meeting Kuei-shun spoke out what was on his mind, stimulating all present. While they were grateful to the state for the relief grain, they reproached themselves for not changing Sandstone Hollow quicker. But then, Sandstone Hollow was limited by its bare rocky hills, sparse soil and lack of water. How could it go from poverty to prosperity? The Party branch decided to mobilize the masses to see what could be done.

Li Shu-shen, an old poor peasant, pointed out the importance of painstaking work in farming. He said, "Of all the

occupations, the raising of crops comes first, as the saying goes. It's true that our hills are rocky and barren. But suppose we filled in the gullies and built terraced fields on the slopes. Wouldn't we have more land then, and gather in more grain?"

Yen Yao-lien, a lower-middle peasant, said, "Why has every plot of our land become bare rock? It's because there aren't any trees on the hills and the soil has been washed away by rain. To have more land we must first afforest the hills, plant saplings in fish-scale pattern on the slopes. That will conserve soil and water. Let's build fields on the lower slopes and plant trees above. What do you think?"

The discussion strengthened the cadres' confidence and roused the masses' enthusiasm. On the basis of these suggestions by the masses, the Party branch decided that afforestation should be the first step towards transforming Sandstone Hollow.

Little did they expect that their planting of apple and peach saplings on the slopes would stir up a hornets' nest!

It began with one woman co-op member standing at Kuei-shun's door and pouring abuses on him, followed by several middle peasants vehemently demanding that the fruit trees planted in their fields be removed. The result was that some co-op members were planting trees like mad at one end of the field while others were cussing out Kuei-shun and pulling out the saplings with equal vehemence at the other end.

What's the matter? Kuei-shun asked himself, agitated to the point where beads of sweat stood out on his forehead. He and the other cadres put their heads together there in the field. As they thought over the matter, it struck them that nearly all who were creating the rumpus belonged to the village's better-off households. They were middle peasants who were performing, but could it be class enemies directing the

show from behind the scenes? They had had some experience of this sort of thing.

In 1951, when Chang Kuei-shun and six other poor peasants organized their households into the first mutual-aid team in the village, rich peasant Tou Chen-hai hated it intensely and spread slanders, wanting to dissolve it. The team was settling its work-point accounts — those who had contributed more labour to cultivating other members' fields than they had received were to be paid for the extra labour in rice, and vice versa. The family of team member Li Shu-shan was large, but as they had little labour power, they had to pay out rice. Seeing this as an opportunity he could exploit, Tou asked Shu-shan provocatively, "What next? Haven't you had enough of the mutual-aid team? A big family like yours is sure to suffer in it!"

When Shu-shan said nothing but just lowered his gaze, Tou poured oil on the fire, "Pull out, the sooner the better!" he said. "If you're short of anything, just come to me."

Li Shu-shan finally requested to withdraw from the team. But just then Li's already run-down house began leaking when it rained. It needed rebuilding, but he could not afford to feed helpers. What could he do? At this point Kuei-shun mobilized the team members to give him a hand, with no charge for either labour or food. Li's house was rebuilt in two days and, very much moved, Li saw through Tou's plot and disclosed his crime of sabotaging the mutual-aid team.

Now, two years later, the class enemy was making trouble again, instigating the tree-uprooting commotion. A middle peasant had owned some orchard trees which bore no fruit before he joined the co-op but became productive again after being pruned as co-op property. He nursed some regrets: if they were still his, he'd be rich! Tou was quick to see this chance to sow confusion and said to him, pretending sym-

pathy: "If all the fertile land you've invested in the co-op were still yours, you'd be sitting pretty today." Finally, this middle peasant, too, insisted on backing out.

The Party branch committee members viewed these events in the light of past lessons and concluded that an ill wind still blew. They went separately to talk things over with various middle peasants. Kuei-shun said to one of them:

"Uncle, you must look farther ahead. If we don't cover our bare hills with trees, how can we ever bring prosperity to our village? Don't pull up the saplings we've planted in your field!"

But the middle peasant did not see it that way. "No!" he blustered, and got into a nasty temper.

Later that afternoon Kuei-shun met him again in the field and warned: "Better look out that you don't play into somebody else's hands, uncle."

"I'll pull out every tree you've planted in my field," the middle peasant roared. "And as for your co-op, count me out of it from this very minute!"

Several other middle peasants had gathered round and joined in the din. "Pull out the trees, every one of them, and then we'll pull out of the co-op!"

"We can plant our own trees and make our own money — it's our own business. We won't have you trying to get the best of the bargain at our expense!"

The poor and lower-middle peasants, and in fact the majority of all the co-op members, were indignant and went to see Kuei-shun. Poor peasant Yen Shih-chun said, "Kuei-shun, don't go begging them any more. Plant all the trees in my field. My family will never withdraw from the co-op even if we're the only one left in!"

Others felt the same. "They can't break up the co-op. We have Chairman Mao to back us up," they said.

Kuei-shun's eyes moistened at this display of support for the collective. He had been almost ready to uproot every tree they had planted in the middle peasants' fields and announce their withdrawal from the co-op then and there. But, thinking of the Party's policy of relying on the poor peasants and uniting with the middle peasants, he said calmly, "Whether it's pulling out the trees or pulling out of the co-op they want, we still have to try our best to win them over."

The great agricultural co-operative movement, as Chairman Mao says in the Editor's Note to one of the articles in *Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside*, "is a raging tidal wave sweeping away all demons and ghosts. All sorts of people in society have been clearly shown up for what they are. It is the same in the Party." The renegade Liu Shao-chi was one of those demons who hated and feared the co-operative movement. Clamouring, "You're going too fast!" he slashed back many co-operatives under his sinister policy of "resolute contraction." And so, this evil wind of reducing the number of co-operatives hit Sandstone Hollow.

The barking of dogs was echoing in the mountain village when a teen-age boy ran to tell Chang Kuei-shun that someone had come to call on him.

The guest had not really come to visit Kuei-shun, but was a personage sent by some higher-ups. Presenting himself before the co-op chairman, he declared that he had come to "consolidate the co-op," but in another minute he was downing a meal in a well-off household. He flung himself into the arms of those co-op members who wanted to withdraw, soliciting their views separately or at discussion meetings. Before long this man announced that the Sandstone Hollow agricultural producers' co-operative must be dissolved. His

reason? Because "it was organized prematurely and the masses are not all in agreement."

In a strong wind the toughest grass remains unbent. Many veteran poor peasants and Party members came to see Kuei-shun.

"To get organized is the broad road pointed out for us by Chairman Mao," one said. "Let's go to Peking to get a decision on the man who tries to prevent us from taking that road!"

"The greater the opposition to our co-op, the better we'll run it!" another exclaimed.

The co-op's solid membership clarified their stand, and Kuei-shun felt he stood on firm ground. No difficulty could hold him back so long as he adhered to Chairman Mao's instructions, resolutely relied on the poor and lower-middle peasants and united closely with the broad masses. He brought his fist down on the table as he shouted:

"Come! Let's ask him his reasons for wanting our co-op dissolved!"

And so they demanded of this personage sent from above:

"Whose side are you on anyway? Liquidating the co-op would only please the landlords and rich peasants. It would hurt the poor people."

"Just look who those people are that are making such a fuss about withdrawing from the co-op. I'll tell you now, we poor and lower-middle peasants won't stand for any of your nonsense!"

"Remember what time it is. Don't dream that we poor and lower-middle peasants of Sandstone Hollow will bow our heads the moment you tap our necks! We have the support of the Party Central Committee and Chairman Mao."

The man was speechless before the concentrated assault and left soon afterwards without further ado.

Ten households had withdrawn from the co-op, leaving the remaining 36 more united and determined than before. The co-op had consolidated in the fierce class struggle!

When the Tsunhua County Party committee learned what had happened, they expressed support, commended Sandstone Hollow's poor and lower-middle peasants for resisting the evil wind of slashing back the co-ops and encouraged them to run theirs better. Meanwhile, people were sent to help Sandstone Hollow Party members and cadres to study documents on the Party's class line in the rural areas and sum up their experience of past struggles. All this paved the way for the continued sound development of the Sandstone Hollow co-operative.

Kuei-shun was deeply grateful to the county Party committee and slept little that night for recalling his past life. Gusts of wind sweeping down from the hills drummed on his paper window-panes; the light of his tiny oil lamp was dimmed by the flood of moonlight in the room. Smoking one bamboo pipeful of tobacco after another, he thought how, born and raised in stark poverty, he had fled the 1933 famine in his home village and arrived in Sandstone Hollow — all his belongings in two old baskets hanging from a pole over his shoulder. For years he had been a farm labourer for landlords. He and his family often suffered hunger and cold, living worse than beasts of burden. In 1938 Chinese Communist Party cadres reached Sandstone Hollow, and Kuei-shun took part in revolutionary activities. He joined the Party in 1941. In the War of Resistance, he watched the Japanese aggressors' movements and sent the information to the Eighth Route Army, sheltered revolutionary cadres, resisted payment of taxes and grain levies to the Japanese aggressors and their puppets, and led the local militia in interrupting enemy communications and attacking enemy

fortresses. He had never thought of his own safety or retreated a step before difficulties.

During land reform, rich peasant Tou Chen-hai manipulated his bogus peasants' association to sabotage the movement, threatening the Poor Peasants' Association. "If I catch anyone lifting a finger against us," he blustered, "I'll have his hide!"

Undeterred, Kuei-shun closely relied on the poor and lower-middle peasants and mobilized the masses in relentless struggles against the class enemy, eventually forcing the bogus peasants' association to disband and Tou Chen-hai to be discredited and stripped of power. The Sandstone Hollow poor and lower-middle peasants enjoyed a new life after land reform.

During the war against the invaders and, after that, the land reform movement, hardships had sharpened Kuei-shun's class vigilance. But now that their co-op was organized, he thought more of reconstruction and less of class struggle and consequently the class enemies seized every possible opportunity to sabotage. As Party branch secretary and co-op chairman, how could he forget class struggle and let himself be immersed in reconstruction work? The class enemy incited that rumpus for no other purpose than to prevent the collective economy from consolidating and showing results in Sandstone Hollow. How are we to explode the enemy's rumours and sabotage and raise the masses' socialist understanding so that they firmly take the socialist road? he asked himself.

The Party branch committee and the co-op members studied again Chairman Mao's important instruction given at the third conference on the work of mutual-aid and co-operation convened by the Central Committee: **If socialism does not occupy the rural front, capitalism assuredly will.** After

discussion and more study, they realized that class struggle in the countryside did not end with the establishment of an agricultural producers' co-operative; the contradiction between the two classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and the two roads, socialism or capitalism, remained the principal contradiction in the rural areas. Only when this principal contradiction was correctly solved and the struggle between the two classes and the two roads rightly handled could the superiority of the co-op be fully displayed, that is, people's abilities could be properly employed and the land and tools be fully used. Only then could the masses, educated by hard facts, raise their political understanding and socialism further occupy the rural front.

"The co-operative is strong with plenty of people," one poor peasant said. "We can do things that peasants working on their own can't do. I suggest we get started on some projects and show people which is better, socialism or capitalism."

Another followed up: "Yen Chen-liang is a middle peasant who carries some weight in the village. He goes in for fruit-growing, but he hasn't managed in all his life to produce even a fair showing of apples. If we concentrate on planting apple trees on that rocky Wolf Lair, people will see with their own eyes which is better, the co-op or working on your own."

The longer Kuei-shun listened, the more interested he became, while the other committee members all thought the suggestions excellent. Consequently, the Party branch decided to mobilize the entire labour force of the co-op to transform the rocky waste of Wolf Lair into an orchard, and the next morning the cadres and masses set out to do it.

Deserted and barren, Wolf Lair presented only steep cliffs and overhanging rocks. But everyone fell to as soon as they

arrived with picks, hammers and chisels. The rock was exceedingly hard, and a half day's work resulted in 17 picks damaged, with some members failing even to make a standard tree hole.

Carping comments began again to spread: "Hum. . . . So you fancy you're going to plant fruit trees on rocks, and that they'll even blossom and bear fruit!"

"They'll do that the day a rooster lays eggs!"

Some were disturbed by doubts. Would the trees grow, blossom and bear fruit in the rocky hills? In the afternoon some co-op members failed to show up for work.

The cadres responded by saying to Kuei-shun, "The masses are not sure this will work. We cadres should take the lead!"

"As a matter of fact, trees will grow in rock if we dig a big enough hole in the rock and fill it with earth. Then they will strike root, grow and blossom," said Kuei-shun. "Since certain people have said they won't, we'll have to let them see it for themselves. They'll join in the work then."

A mass meeting was called. Kuei-shun did not make a speech but asked the people to go with him to the north hill slope, where a huge walnut tree stood.

"Just look at that!" said Kuei-shun. "Would you say that walnut grows out of earth or rock?"

The tree roots, like leather belts five or six inches across, thrust deep into the narrow crevices of the rock. This walnut tree dispelled people's doubts that orchard trees could grow on rocky slopes, and they willingly joined in the project. The Party branch, however, did not ask all co-op members to go tree-planting at once, but rather organized a shock brigade of Communist Party and Youth League members together with the core members of the militia to select a few places for experimental planting.

When they had spread out over a slope, Kuei-shun gave the directions.

"The tree-planting holes should be a cubic metre in size. And no matter what kind of rock you hit, keep digging. Don't change place." Shaking off his padded jacket, Kuei-shun came down on the rock with his sledge hammer, and the battle against the rocky slope began.

A wintry wind swept unbroken over the slope, but the shock brigadiers, digging with all their strength, were wet with sweat. Li Feng-yuan, Youth League branch secretary, led off, going out of his way to tackle the hardest rock and remove it. On the first day he dug one standard hole, on the second day three, going on to dig five on the third day and eight on the fourth. His attitude and hard work soon won the notice of the others, and they said one after another:

"Follow Feng-yuan's example!"

"Work with Feng-yuan's spirit and we'll conquer Wolf Lair!"

One morning when it was snowing hard and the hills around Sandstone Hollow were blanketed inches thick, some old people, concerned for the shock brigadiers, urged them to take the morning off.

"You haven't had a day's rest this whole winter. Better knock off in this snow."

But when the shock brigadiers opened the door and saw two lines of footprints leading up to Wolf Lair, they exclaimed, "The cadres have already gone!" And they followed the footprints up the hill.

Soon the young men and then the young women of the village went too, and a greybeard said admiringly, "With a new generation of people who won't bow to poverty, our Sandstone Hollow will surely change!" And the old man followed the young people up the hill.

At noon when Kuei-shun saw people lunching on the cold pancakes they had brought, and quenching their thirst with snow, he urged them to go home for a warm meal. They refused, however, saying:

"I'll save the time round trip to give that chisel quite a few more blows."

Kuei-shun went over to a cluster of older people munching their noonday meal and said, "It's really too cold! Go home and have something hot!"

But what was their reply? "There's nothing the matter with enduring a little hardship in order to dig out capitalism and plant socialism deep in Sandstone Hollow!"

Kuei-shun looked from the young people to the oldsters, then asked in a loud voice charged with emotion: "Comrades! Isn't it hard, working like this and eating out in the wind and snow?"

"No, not at all!" came the chorus, the voices echoing through the hills.

To this Kuei-shun replied: "Working and eating out in such weather is hard, whether you say so or not. But still the class enemies keep on slandering and finding fault with our co-op. Some of us have wavered, unable to see the superiority of the co-op. The hardship we're enduring today for the revolution will create a model at Wolf Lair by collective effort and demonstrate the superiority of the co-op. It'll give the lie to the class enemies and also strengthen our own will to take the socialist road. When we think like this, we look upon hardship as happiness."

The pioneers at Wolf Lair considered every blow on the rock as an attack on capitalism, a revolutionary action to ensure socialist occupation of the rural front. With this revolutionary spirit they eventually got the upper hand over

that barren slope, in 90 days digging 5,700 tree-planting holes in the rock.

Then Chao Feng-lan, who headed the village Women's Association, led the women co-op members over the hills and cliffs after soil from rock crannies to fill in the holes, carrying it in baskets. By then the tree-planting season was over, so they sowed millet and soybeans in their diminutive plots and reaped more than 6,000 *jin* of the two crops that autumn. That winter they planted 5,700 apple saplings of the White Dragon variety.

The conquest of Wolf Lair opened people's eyes wider to the advantages of the co-operative way, while the thriving apple saplings promised a good crop for Sandstone Hollow. Doubters now said: "Never mind ninety days, even in ninety years Sandstone Hollow hasn't planted so many trees, and we've never thought of planting any in a hole like Wolf Lair!"

Some who were undecided whether to remain in the co-op or withdraw made up their minds to stay, while others who had not joined now applied to do so.

In this new, favourable situation in Sandstone Hollow, Chairman Mao made the report "On the Question of Agricultural Co-operation" at a conference of Chinese Communist Party secretaries of provincial, municipal and autonomous region committees. Peasants of the whole country warmly responded to the call of Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee, and the agricultural co-operative movement spread throughout the land with tremendous speed. China's countryside with a population of 500 million witnessed an earth-shaking change when thousands upon thousands of peasant households got organized into co-operatives within a few months. Meanwhile, the Sandstone Hollow peasants built their elementary co-op into one of an advanced type and

the whole village went co-operative. On the collective strength of the advanced co-op a large-scale re-fashioning and afforesting of the hills began, followed by the appearance of a "militia forest," "women's forest," "youth forest," and many tree-covered areas in the Big and Small Black Mounds, Rocky Gate, Tiger Den, and Jacket, Chimney, Sparrow and other hills around Sandstone Hollow.

In 1956, the peach trees planted on Long Neck Hill showed their first blossoms, decking Sandstone Hollow in the pink of spring. In late summer, when big juicy peaches were harvested, Kuci-shun presented them to the old people of the village, saying, "Have a peach! Try one of the first fruits Sandstone Hollow has ever produced on its rocky slopes."

Such a thing was undreamed of by the old people, who caressed the peaches as they did the rosy cheeks of their grandchildren. Some smiled happily; others blinked back a tear or two. They said in gratitude:

"If not for Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party, and the founding of the co-op, we Sandstone Hollow people would never have any peaches!" They suggested presenting some to Chairman Mao. The co-op members all heartily agreed, and several dozen of the biggest and best peaches were selected and sent to their beloved Chairman Mao Tsetung in Peking.

Forward in Big Strides

SEPTEMBER 1957 was the fifth anniversary of Sandstone Hollow's going co-operative in response to Chairman Mao's call: **Get organized!** Five years are a very short period, but Sandstone Hollow had changed a lot and now presented a brand-new appearance: pine and cypress trees growing out of the rocks on West Hill, fruit trees at Wolf Lair bearing big apples that were a joy to the eye, and rich crops in the terraced fields up the slopes. The *per-mu* grain yield had increased from 70-80 *jin* at the time of individual farming to 278 *jin*. Sandstone Hollow had become self-sufficient in grain and for the first time sold a surplus of 5,700 *jin* to the state.

The National Programme for Agricultural Development (1956-67), formulated under the direct guidance of our great leader Chairman Mao at the Third Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, was publicized over the countryside as the Sandstone Hollow peasants were celebrating their co-op's fifth anniversary. The Programme pointed out the orientation of continuously developing socialist agriculture for the 500 million co-operative members.

The Party branch of Sandstone Hollow, like the other rural Party organizations, had been very busy. They had been organizing the Party members, cadres and masses for the

conscientious study of the National Programme for Agricultural Development, while mobilizing them to sum up their five-year experience in managing the co-operative and draw up a plan for fulfilling ahead of schedule the targets set in the Programme. The whole mountain village was in ferment.

Just then the county Party committee asked Kuei-shun to go to a national agricultural exhibition then being held in Peking, a great inspiration to the Sandstone Hollow people!

In the warm early winter sun villagers lined the streets to see Kuei-shun off to Peking. Among them an old poor-peasant Party member grasped Kuei-shun's hands firmly and said time and again, "You must report all the changes in our Sandstone Hollow to Chairman Mao when you see him in Peking. Also, you must not forget to learn from the others. You're not able to write their experience down, but you can learn it by heart."

Kuei-shun was greatly moved by this sincere advice and, looking up at the hills that were being made into fields and thinking of the difficulties ahead, he declared again and again, "Good, I'll do that! I certainly will do that!" And so, bearing in mind the expectations of the masses, Kuei-shun arrived in the capital.

At the Agricultural Exhibition Hall one day he saw hanging behind the large portrait of Chairman Mao a series of pictures showing how mountains and rivers were being re-arranged and tamed. He went nearer for a look and saw in bright characters **Transform China in the spirit of the Foolish Old Man who removed the mountains. Lichiachai is a fine example.** It was Chairman Mao's commendation of this village in Chunan County of Shantung Province, an advanced agricultural unit.

Right! Kuei-shun thought. Why can't we transform our small Sandstone Hollow in the spirit of the Foolish Old Man?

The great Mao Tsetung Thought gave Kuei-shun tremendous confidence, and as soon as he returned from Peking, he went straight to the county Party committee. "Secretary Tsao," he said happily, "at Peking I found how to build up our Sandstone Hollow."

Secretary Tsao went up to Kuei-shun, smiling. "You left for Peking with a heavy heart, and now you're back in high spirits! You must have learned something very valuable there. Come, let's have a talk!"

After hearing Kuei-shun's report on how Lichiachai Village had turned mountains into fields, Secretary Tsao said, "This is very useful experience for Sandstone Hollow. How is it that Lichiachai has been able to do this?"

"They're full of drive and aren't afraid of any hardship!" answered Kuei-shun.

"How did they get that way?" Secretary Tsao then asked.

"They've studied Chairman Mao's article 'The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains' and drawn strength from it!"

"Right! We should have the determination to follow the example of that Foolish Old Man!" Secretary Tsao said. He took out this article written by Chairman Mao and placed it on the desk. "The main experience of Lichiachai Village," he continued, "is to work in this spirit, as Chairman Mao says. This would be the way to learn from Lichiachai."

That afternoon Kuei-shun, armed with 50 Chairman Mao portraits from Peking and Chairman Mao's article about the Foolish Old Man, returned to Sandstone Hollow in the highest of spirits.

People quickly crowded into his small cottage as soon as he was back. The poor and lower-middle peasants were all smiles as each took a Chairman Mao portrait, all eager to know what good experience he had brought from Peking.

Kuei-shun took out the article "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains," held it up and said, "Our Sandstone Hollow can be transformed if we conscientiously study this article. If we have a good grasp of Chairman Mao's brilliant thinking, give full play to the spirit of the Foolish Old Man, we'll be able to overcome our difficulties."

After supper Kuei-shun first talked with the members of the Party branch committee, after which a meeting of all Party members was called to hear about the advanced experience of Lichiachai Village. Then he organized the study of Chairman Mao's directive in connection with Lichiachai Village. People said, "Lichiachai is located on a rocky hill, ours is in a rocky hollow. What they can do, we can do too. Let's follow them!"

Sitting by the kerosene lamp, Kuei-shun turned to "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains" and read aloud this brilliant article. It was the first time they had studied it, and the more they read, the more enthusiastic they became. They felt that Chairman Mao's every word touched their hearts. Even those who were lackadaisical in making the hills and fields were deeply moved and said, "If we want to change the face of Sandstone Hollow, we'll have to do as Chairman Mao says!"

"**Be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory**" became the powerful ideological weapon of the Sandstone Hollow Party branch. They asked the co-op members to make up their minds to learn from the Foolish Old Man and build Sandstone Hollow into a new socialist village.

Party members, cadres and the co-op members all discussed the article, becoming more united and keen as they did so. One said, "The Foolish Old Man cleared two great peaks away with only his family helping. We're a great collective

of a hundred families, why can't we remove these hills at our doorway?"

Another said, "It's the same sky overhead. Why can't we do what Lichiachai did?"

Some couldn't wait to get started. Slapping their thighs, they exclaimed, "The Party branch only needs to decide which gully is to be transformed first, which hill removed, and we're off!"

A cynical laugh was heard. "Don't brag!" someone said. "If you're so brave, level the two hills before my doorway first!"

It was again the middle peasant Yen Chen-liang who turned up to throw a monkey wrench at each stage in the transforming of Sandstone Hollow. Each time he had failed, yet he would never admit defeat. He did not believe that orchard trees could grow on rocky slopes, and now he was astounded to hear that the hills could be removed by hand. "How can fingers dig away hills? They aren't made of paper!" he said.

"Since he doesn't believe us, let's first remove those two hills in front of his door," Kuei-shun suggested.

The youngsters were again the first to volunteer. Then someone worried: If all of us go to remove the hills, who'll build the terraced fields? But Li Feng-yuan, member of the Party branch committee, said, "We'll build them in the daytime and dig away the hills at night."

Another added, "These winter nights are long. We'll still have a couple of hours after evening school to work on the hills." All agreed that this was the way to build socialism.

Next day, Kuei-shun and a few others went to Yen Chen-liang's house in South Gully and measured the two hills. Each was 40 feet high. The earth in them would fill the gully to make good farmland.

That night several dozen young people gathered before the two hills, and the cadres came too. Kuei-shun mounted a rock and gave a little pep talk to start the work off. "This is the first battle to turn the hills into fields by learning from the Foolish Old Man," he said. "Winning this battle is crucial, for then we won't have to worry about turning all of Sandstone Hollow's barren slopes into good fields! We'll do as Chairman Mao says and go all out to win victory."

The work started off with a bang. Lit up by lanterns and torches, the work-site resounded with the ring of songs, slogans and hammers, awakening the slumbering villages five *li* around.

Yen Chen-liang of course could not sleep, and felt ill at ease anyway. He climbed up to peer over his wall, got a start and pulled back. "They really are carrying away those hills!" he cried.

The job mainly involved splitting rocks—an arduous task, and done at night. The Party branch decided that older men should not join in this work. But two brothers, Yen Yao-lien and Yen Yao-sheng, neither of them young, insisted on joining in. They two had worked for the revolution during the War of Resistance, digging 25 secret caves in rock cliffs to shield the Eighth Route Army men and revolutionary cadres. After liberation they and Kuei-shun had organized mutual-aid teams and the agricultural producers' co-operative, always leading the way but never taking a rest. Now, excluded from bearing a hand, they felt very bad.

Yao-sheng went to the work-site and said to Kuei-shun, "I'm not so old and useless yet. Why don't you tell me when you start things like this? Why shouldn't I have a share in building socialism?"

Kuei-shun said smiling, "At seventy? You should be taking things a little easy."

When Yao-lien heard about this, he approached other oldsters and together they asked to be allowed to join in the work. They went to Yen Pao-yu, deputy secretary of the Party branch, but no matter how they argued, Pao-yu would not agree. Yao-lien got angry. "What's the use of talking to you?" he stormed. "I had a share in making revolution led by Chairman Mao, but now when it comes to building socialism, you want to count me out. Isn't my name on the Sandstone Hollow roster?" And the other old men joined in the request, till Yen Pao-yu was moved by their enthusiasm and finally agreed.

"All right!" he said, "you old-timers can help build the embankment. Will that satisfy you?"

"Good enough!" The old men smiled.

The more people took part, the greater their energy, and they wouldn't knock off until well into the night. And so the night work proceeded full steam ahead.

The Party branch thought highly of the masses for their revolutionary enthusiasm, realizing that once they had risen their enthusiasm should be encouraged and not dampened. They decided that work-points should be given for their two extra hours of work each day according to Party policy.

The project involved cutting and removing rocks with hammers and chisels. The Sandstone Hollow people had experience in handling rocks, but only on the surface. This time they were splitting open the hills and filling in the gully. It was their first really hard fight of its kind.

Fifty days passed and only half of the hill top had been levelled, while dozens of sledge hammers had to be repaired and many chisels sharpened.

An evil wind began to blow back and forth between the village and the work-site. "So many people have worked on it for nearly two months now and the hill is still there. What

a waste of effort! It would be much cheaper to buy land outside the hills."

"How can that rocky hill be turned into farmland?" And again some people began to waver.

The Party branch organized the cadres and co-op members to study once again the article "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains."

The poor and lower-middle peasants said, "If we learn from the Foolish Old Man and persist in struggle, there's no hill that can't be brought down, no slope that can't be made into fields."

More people joined in, "Carving fields out of rugged hills is for the revolution. We're determined to make good land where these two hills stood even if it takes a whole year. We'll see who has the last laugh, we or the sceptics, and also take the class enemy down a peg or two!"

With hearts on fire and a will as strong as steel, the peasants vied with one another: strapping young men cut into the hills, the middle-aged transported rock and still older ones fitted the cut stone into embankments all in nice co-ordination.

A fine work style evolved out of the hard fight. When the fields were to be made, Chao Feng-lan, who was in charge of the village Women's Association, led the women to the work-site. They said, "We've come to deliver the soil for the fields — as much as is needed."

School children, their teachers at their head, came to offer their voluntary labour, and some village greybeards helped remove stones and spread the soil.

After many nights of work the two hills had indeed disappeared and 5,000 cubic metres of rock filled the gully, the whole covered over with soil scraped from the crannies. The result was 3.2 *mu* of new farmland, the largest single plot so far in the village.

The first stage of the battle ended in success. The Party branch held a meeting at the work-site to celebrate the victory and commend the outstanding workers. The plot was named Youth Field. To inspire future builders to give greater scope to the spirit of the Foolish Old Man in reshaping their barren hills, they erected a stone tablet at the edge of the plot which reads: "Our young people have stamina — they build fields on rock; our oldsters' stamina is great — they shore up Youth Field with their Old Folks Embankment."

In the spring of 1958 the co-op members sowed the plot to maize and cultivated it carefully from morning to night till the crop was up. People who had not believed that a crop could grow in a field built of basketfuls of soil brought in now stopped at Old Folks Embankment to take a look and to exclaim, "I never dreamed this was possible!" In autumn the new Youth Field yielded 800 *jin* of maize, which was called "Foolish Old Man grain." To impress on the younger generation that they should never forget this first struggle, the Party branch decided to store the 800 *jin* and to replace it each year with the new crop from the plot.

Yen Chen-liang really had to admit defeat this time. Whenever he passed Old Folks Embankment and saw Youth Field, he would hang his head in embarrassment. Finally, on his death-bed, he called his children and grandchildren to his side and told them, "You must follow Chairman Mao and carry the revolution through to the end. Don't shilly-shally as I did!"

The victory of turning hills into farmland freed people's minds and they realized that once the working people have grasped brilliant Mao Tsetung Thought they can remake hills and grow high-yield crops on the new fields. They learned that land can change with the change in their thinking.

In May 1958 was issued the General Line of **going all out, aiming high and achieving greater, faster, better and more economical results in building socialism** as formulated by Chairman Mao. The Sandstone Hollow people concentrated on studying this instruction and made a leap in their thinking, realizing that advancing in big strides or mincing along in small steps involved the vital question of carrying out the Party's General Line for Socialist Construction. Sandstone Hollow could be built into a socialist new village in a short time only if they were far-sighted and advanced at a fast pace while displaying the spirit of the Foolish Old Man.

In the high tide of the Great Leap Forward they set up their people's commune. To hold high the Three Red Banners of the General Line, the Great Leap Forward and the People's Commune, the Party branch mobilized the people for the battle to convert hills into farmland on a much larger scale.

After the mobilization meeting called by the Party branch on Youth Field, Chao Feng-lan, a Party branch committee member and leader of the Women's Association, called the women together to form a shock team for building a reservoir. They said, "Today's Foolish Old Men should include women, too. What men can do, we women can do too!" To store water against drought and ensure their Youth Field against being washed away by flood, they were going to build a reservoir in the gully above Youth Field. Their suggestion was immediately supported by a dozen or so older men, who said they would help build the dam.

Soon the work was under way. Young women rammed earth and carried rocks, while their mothers and aunties collected the earth, leaving the work on the dam to the old men. Some women who had worked the day shift came again with lanterns in the evening, taking as their watchword: **Be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory.**

And so, in 50 days they built a reservoir with a total storage capacity of 17,000 cubic metres. They named it the "March 8" Reservoir.

Not resting on their laurels, the people of Sandstone Hollow then dug 34 storage ponds out of rock and sank two wells on the other side of South Hill, providing favourable conditions for still greater achievement.

Carry the Red Flag Forward Against Storm and Stress

IN the winter of 1961 with the north wind howling, freezing winds of another sort blew into Sandstone Hollow. Echoing the anti-China chorus of world imperialism, revisionism and reaction, Liu Shao-chi and his like viciously attacked the Party's General Line, the Great Leap Forward, the People's Commune and other revolutionary mass movements. They exaggerated the temporary economic difficulties brought on by three successive years of natural calamities aggravated by the sabotage of the Soviet revisionist renegade clique, who had torn up contracts and withdrawn their experts. Liu Shao-chi and his followers trumpeted with might and main *san zi yi bao** and "four freedoms,"** pushing their counter-revolutionary revisionist line. The ill wind of capitalist restoration which they stirred up did not bypass Sandstone Hollow.

A rich peasant of a neighbouring village went out of his way to spread rumours, demanding that the poor and lower-

*The extension of plots for private use, extension of the free market, increase of small enterprises with sole responsibility for their own profits or losses, and the fixing of output quotas on the individual household basis.

**The freedoms of usury, hiring labour, land sale and private enterprise.

middle peasants of Sandstone Hollow give back the land that had been divided among them at land reform. Rich peasant Tou Chen-hai of Sandstone Hollow also went around sermonizing, "If you go on like this you'll end up starving with the red flag draped over your shoulders!" Tou hacked down a dozen of the brigade's trees to give vent to his inveterate hatred for socialism. His wife, also classified as rich peasant during land reform, began making rounds of the poor peasants' houses to check on the household items that had been distributed at land reform to be sure her former possessions were still there.

Class struggle in society at large inevitably finds expression within the Party. With gusts of counter wind blowing from time to time, someone proposed that the major share of the 60,000-*jin* brigade date crop that year be distributed to the commune members, leaving the minor share for sale to the state. Was this right or wrong? The question was hotly debated at a Party branch committee meeting, all but one member maintaining that the proposal should be reversed. But that one member was adamant, claiming, "Dates aren't on the list of items for planned purchase by the state, so it's no violation of policy to distribute more to the commune members. And since our brigade has no income from side lines, why can't we share out the dates and give the members a chance to make a little money?" This committeeman argued so plausibly that some Party members who couldn't see the issue involved finally gave in. In the end only 40,000 *jin* went to the state, the rest going to the individual commune members. After the distribution, fewer people joined in the work of transforming the hills, while the fairs were more crowded on market day.

One day an old peasant looked up Kuei-shun and said to him, "The brigade should find a way to get some cement for

me. I want to make concrete tiles for my house. You cadres are supposed to serve the people, aren't you?"

Kuei-shun said in reply, "The brigade considers it a good thing for the commune members to build new houses. But right now our country is suffering from natural calamities and the Soviet revisionists are taking advantage of this unfavourable situation to demand immediate repayment of our debts to them. In any case we shouldn't be looking for ways to buy state-controlled construction materials at this time. It would disrupt the state economy."

The old man kept nodding his head as he said, "Right. We poor and lower-middle peasants of Sandstone Hollow have no intention of buying things by crooked means. But what am I going to do with my money?"

"Where did you get the money? Isn't your family short of labour-power?" asked Kuei-shun.

To this the old man replied, "I went to the fair and sold my share of the dates the brigade distributed." Kuei-shun now realized that the problem of the date distribution had far-reaching implications.

The Party branch took great pains to explain to the commune members that the question of to whom the dates were sold was not one just of a little money but was a question of orientation and line — of whether the socialist or the capitalist road was being followed. At a time when the country was in temporary economic difficulty, the dates should have been sold to the state, certainly not on the free market. Then, to use the money to buy state-controlled materials through "back-door" channels would be making matters even worse. Through organized education the broad masses came to understand that selling the dates at a high price on the free market was taking the capitalist and not the socialist road, and those who had done so now saw it as a mistake. They would put

the money in the bank and not throw it about on the free market, which would disturb the state economy. Many commune members regretted what they had done and said, "We always thought that buying and selling existed from time immemorial. Who knew it was wrong this time to sell the dates? We really let Chairman Mao down!"

Someone else said, "If we only think of our personal interests and fail to see the great revolutionary direction, we're sure to go wrong."

The commune members linked other brigade practices with the date-selling and had more to say. "Our brigade truck goes long distances hauling fruit to sell here and there. That's not the socialist way either. If our truck goes on like this it'll knock our red flag pole down before we know it!"

The Party branch said the masses were entirely correct and put an immediate halt to the long-distance business trips the truck had been making. They also made a self-criticism before the commune members in which they said: "The business hauls were made by the masses, but the root of the mistake is in the Party branch. We buried our heads in the account books and never looked up to see where we were going. We shared out those dates to the commune members and sent the truck long distances to sell fruit, thinking only that this would benefit the commune members and increase the brigade's income. We didn't give a thought to where we were headed. This is a lesson we must never forget!"

But the struggle was not over yet.

One day after supper while Kuei-shun was poring over the preface and Editor's Notes written by Chairman Mao to the book *Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside*, a member of the Party branch committee drew aside the door curtain and stepped into the room. Kuei-shun immediately greeted him: "Please sit down." Then, glancing back at his book, he con-

tinued, "Let me ask you a question. What does Chairman Mao's teaching **only socialism can save China** mean to you?"

That committeeman closed the book, which Kuei-shun had placed open on the table, and sat down on the edge of the kang.* "Kuei-shun," he said, "suppose we deal with immediate questions first and not cross bridges till we get to them. We've got ourselves to blame for our present troubles. For all the time and energy we spent on those rocky hills we didn't dig up any gold, did we? Don't be so hidebound! I hear there's a new regulation out."

"What's the new regulation?" asked Kuei-shun in surprise.

The man leaned over to him and whispered into his ear: "This morning when I went to see some relatives I heard that the authorities have sent a work team to their village. It's sharing out land among the separate households, leaving just enough to produce the brigade's tax grain. The people will like this, and it'll save the cadres a lot of trouble. We'll soon be doing the same."

Kuei-shun saw through this at once. "So the people will go for that, and the cadres will be saved trouble? Some new regulation!" he exclaimed.

"It's a good one, don't you think?"

"No, I do not! What it means is to 'go it alone.'"

"It's orders from the higher-ups. Some villages have already done it. We should keep in the swim."

At mention of "keeping in the swim," Kuei-shun was immediately reminded of the trend to slash back the co-ops in 1954. At that time talk about "going with the current" had been rife. But in the preface to *Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside*, Chairman Mao seriously pointed this out as a capitalist counter-current. The poor and lower-middle peas-

* A brick platform bed with a heating device.

ants of Sandstone Hollow had listened to Chairman Mao's teaching and withstood this trend which ran counter to socialism, and held fast to the socialist road. They had taken the first step in changing the face of Sandstone Hollow.

Was there any basic difference between "the fixing of output quotas on the individual household basis" now and the trend of slashing back the co-ops then? None at all! Kuei-shun replied firmly: "No! That regulation is clearly part of a capitalist counter-current. Chairman Mao teaches us that **only socialism can save China**. To go it alone would ruin us. I'll not do that even if it costs me my head!"

"Are you trying to resist the orders of the higher-ups?" demanded the committeeman.

"Yes. We will resist this counter-current of 'going it alone!'"

"I was talking about it with some people this afternoon and they all agreed."

"What people were you talking with? Tou Chen-hai, or those people who wanted to pull up our fruit trees and withdraw from the co-op?"

The committeeman lost his temper. Jumping up and pounding the table, he yelled: "Kuei-shun, don't go too far. In any case it's the policy of the higher-ups and a cadre has to obey."

"Which higher-ups are you talking about? Chairman Mao says to get organized and take the road to common prosperity, and that's what we poor and lower-middle peasants firmly support. Going it alone would please nobody but the landlords and rich peasants. The poor and lower-middle peasants of Sandstone Hollow are heart and mind for socialism. We will never go in for private enterprise!"

Every argument of the one met with stiff rebuttal by the other. Kuei-shun spoke calmly, but every sentence carried weight. The committeeman, finally left with no leg to stand

on, shrugged his shoulders and said huffily: "Kuei-shun, don't you think you can stand up against our superiors. It's not up to you to decide whether or not we fix output quotas on the individual household basis. Just you wait and see!"

After the argument was over, the villagers were all talking about it. Most supported Kuei-shun's stand, but someone said, "Kuei-shun thinks only of the state and doesn't care about the masses."

Kuei-shun was unshaken, however, and had serious talks with the poor and lower-middle peasants in the next few evenings, listening to their views on "fixing output quotas on the individual household basis." Many old poor peasants said, "It's because we followed Chairman Mao's teaching that we prosper today. To fix production quotas on the individual household basis is to go in for private enterprise. We must never go back to that miserable old way! Whatever happens, we must stand against this ill wind!"

Kuei-shun also consulted a leading comrade of the county Party committee. "There's somebody in our committee who wants to fix output quotas on the individual household basis and not do as Chairman Mao says. Is there a renegade in our Party?" he asked.

"You're an old Party member, and you must take a firm stand in this struggle," was the reply. "No matter what others say, you shouldn't deviate from the socialist road as pointed out by Chairman Mao. No matter how furious the storm, you mustn't waver!"

Returning to the village, Kuei-shun relayed the view of the county Party committee comrade at the brigade Party branch committee meeting. But that one member clung to his opinion. He said, "I've asked others too, and they also say the new regulation is the leadership's instruction, that we must carry it out."

Kuei-shun asked, "Must we carry out what is wrong? Shouldn't we even be allowed to discuss the question?"

The committeeman got more irritated and shouted at the top of his voice, "You look down on the higher authorities? Who do you think you are, anyway! Even if I lose my Party membership, I'll fight this out with you!"

Li Feng-yuan, another member of the Party branch committee, looked stern. "If you're in the right you're quite free, but if you're wrong you'll find it hard to move an inch. What's the use of your oaths? The class enemy clamours that the people's communes are a mess, and you echo them by shouting for production quotas to be placed on individual families, wanting to go back to private enterprise. What kind of people are you serving?"

The man was shouting almost hysterically, his face scarlet. "You may as well adjourn the meeting since what you say goes anyway!" he stormed.

"As long as the question isn't solved, the meeting must go on," said another committee member. "It's through this meeting that we'll raise the Three Red Banners still higher, and we'll straighten out the kinks in your thinking too!"

Realizing that it was impossible to solve ideological problems at one or even several meetings, Kuei-shun spoke next, softly: "Yes, it's your thinking that the comrades are concerned about. You're an old comrade and you know what our Sandstone Hollow was like before liberation. You know very well the great changes that have taken place here in the past ten years, too. You should consider carefully: can we go back to that old way?"

This debate brought the Party branch committee to the decision to reject the "new regulation" issued by certain higher-ups to fix output quotas on the individual household basis. They had made up their minds to support Chairman

Mao's General Line for Socialist Construction, the Great Leap Forward and the People's Commune. They would rely on the strength of the collective and continue to work in the spirit of the Foolish Old Man to bring about a still bigger leap in agricultural production.

The revolution developed and the struggle continued, Kuei-shun and other members of the Party branch committee going separately each evening to visit various families, explaining how it was better to take the collectivist road. Meanwhile, that one committeeman was stealing around to the few commune members who inclined towards taking the capitalist road, telling them the "advantages" of fixing output quotas on the individual household basis. The debate went on in varying intensity into the autumn of 1962.

Finally, succeeding in standing the test of this class struggle, the Sandstone Hollow peasants greeted their fifth good harvest year since founding their people's commune. They were especially jubilant because they had withstood the evil wind of *san zi yi bao* stirred up by Liu Shao-chi and company and overcome the repeated natural calamities of drought, hail, windstorm and insect pests to win good harvests during the three hard years. Their per-mu grain yield rose from 415 *jin* in 1960 to 560 *jin*. It was at the time of the 10th Plenary Session of the Eighth Party Central Committee presided over by Chairman Mao, and the Communique brought Chairman Mao's great teaching: **Never forget classes and class struggle.** When the good news reached the villagers, they said joyously to each other: "Now that Chairman Mao has given us the direction, we'll stand firmly against anyone who tries to smear the Three Red Banners under any guise, even 'orders from the higher-ups.'"

Besides being Sandstone Hollow's fifth year of bumper harvests since the setting up of the people's commune, 1962

also marked their 10th anniversary of collectivization. During the double celebration, the Party branch decided to mobilize the commune members to study Chairman Mao's teachings and contrast Sandstone Hollow's grim pre-liberation days with the changed situation after 10 years of collectivization. In this way the commune members would see for themselves whether fixing output quotas on the individual household basis was a socialist or capitalist measure, and whether it would work or not. It was also decided to combine a discussion of a brigade 10-year development plan with a socialist education movement among the cadres and commune members to repudiate capitalism and further raise their political consciousness. Houses and courtyards, the edges of fields and threshing grounds all became virtual battlefields. Drawing on their own experience, the poor and lower-middle peasants opened fierce fire on their target — capitalism.

The moon and stars were especially bright over one of Sandstone Hollow's threshing grounds one night as a discussion meeting called by the brigade leadership proceeded heatedly.

Yen Pao-yu, the deputy brigade Party secretary, was speaking at the meeting:

"Before liberation, three knives hung over the heads of us poor people in Sandstone Hollow: lack of soil, shortage of water and exorbitant rent. Every year at Chingming Festival when we swept the graves and offered sacrifice to our ancestors, we cursed them for having fled to this hell of a place. After liberation, under the leadership of the Party, we followed Chairman Mao's instruction to get organized and persisted in the spirit of the Foolish Old Man who removed the mountains. In 10 years Sandstone Hollow rid itself of the 'poor brigade' label. But some people spread the nonsense about 'people's communes being in a mess,' 'fixing output

quotas on the individual household basis being better than organizing people's communes,' etc., etc. Are those people right?"

Yen Pao-yu had barely finished when poor peasant Li Chang-shun jumped to his feet and said indignantly: "Class enemies at home are hand in glove with imperialism, revisionism and reaction against the Three Red Banners of the General Line, the Great Leap Forward and the People's Commune, because both are out-and-out counter-revolutionaries. But there are others in Sandstone Hollow who echo them, saying that fixing output quotas on the individual household basis is fine. These people forget their past sufferings and are babbling nonsense. For such a course is just what the landlords and rich peasants want to take, but it would only lead us poor and lower-middle peasants to ruin. We must see the issue more clearly and not allow ourselves to be taken in." Li then recounted with great bitterness the story of his family's past miserable life, and warmly praised getting organized as the better way.

"In the old society," he said, "my grandfather left my father nothing but a 600-yuan debt with compound interest attached. My father worked for a landlord for 40 years to pay off the debt, but before he could clear it he became disabled from overwork. The evil landlord threw him out on the street when he could no longer work and I went begging with my mother. She carried a stick in one hand to ward off dogs, and in the other she had a broken begging bowl. But for all our pains we couldn't feed the six mouths in our family. My parents sold my 11-year-old sister. My five-year-old brother was so hungry he ate sheep dung and finally died in mother's arms. An elder brother also perished at that time. Only my parents and myself clung to life by begging. After land reform we began our new life, with land of our own.

But father was ill, mother was weak and I was still too young to work the land, so after two years we had to sell our three *mu*. We cried, for it looked like we had no way out but to go begging again. . . .

"Thanks to Chairman Mao's call to get organized and to take the road to common prosperity, we poor and lower-middle peasants really began living a happy life.

"The first year after I joined the co-operative, we reaped a bumper harvest. My mother touched our bulging grain sacks fondly and beamed all over. She said to me: 'Chang-shun, there's never been so much grain in our home in all my life!' Since then we've reaped more and more grain each year and things have got better and better each day. We have a big three-room brick house now instead of the tumble-down straw shed we used to have. Just see how my family lives today, how the people of the whole village live! The facts speak for themselves. I don't need to say any more. In the past two years there have been some who wanted to return to the old way of going it alone. They had better give up that idea! So long as I live, I'll follow Chairman Mao and take the socialist road, come what may."

Grandma Han Shih-lan was the next to speak. In the old society her eyes had been dimmed with crying when the landlord pressed her for repayment of a debt. Tapping the ground with her walking stick, she said angrily, "Where does this evil wind blow from? Putting an output quota on each of our families is better than our people's commune way? Never! Before we got organized, what was Wolf Lair like? Was there a single pine or cypress tree on West Hill? Was Small Black Mound covered with blossoms and fruit? How did Long Neck Hill become an orchard with peach, date and apricot trees? How are we able to supply the markets with truckloads of fruit every year? The commune members of

Sandstone Hollow cannot fail to see all this. Even a nearly blind old woman like me isn't in the dark about it. The fruit trees strike root on the hills of Sandstone Hollow; socialism strikes root in our poor people's minds. I'll fight to the finish anybody who dares to oppose our taking the socialist road!"

The poor and lower-middle peasants spoke up one after another. They drew on their personal experience to condemn the man-eating old society, denounce capitalism and praise Chairman Mao, the Communist Party and socialism.

In addition to this, the brigade Party branch asked the accountant for a detailed report, in order to emphasize the superiority of getting organized and the significance of the Three Red Banners.

Between 1949 and 1955 Sandstone Hollow received 360,000 *jin* of relief grain from the state, its own per-*mu* yield being less than 100 *jin*. After getting organized, however, its grain output increased each year, till in 1956 it became self-sufficient. Between 1957 and 1961 a total of 160,000 *jin* of surplus grain was sold to the state, reversing the process, and now over half of the families in the brigade have grain to spare. In 1961 Sandstone Hollow delivered and sold to the state 32,200 *jin* of fresh and preserved fruit, 20 times as much as in 1951.

Before liberation the poor lived in matsheds and huts of stone. By 1961 the commune members of Sandstone Hollow had built 405 rooms, an average of three and a half rooms per family. Before liberation an entire poor family huddled under a single tattered quilt, and many families had none, bedding down in winter in discarded cotton and hay. Now there are 667 quilts in the village, more than one per person and 511 more than in 1951. . . .

Figures like these opened people's eyes and gladdened their hearts, at the same time waking up those who were for fixing output quotas on the individual household basis.

At various meetings the commune members criticized the reactionary rich peasant Tou Chen-hai and his wife for their sabotage of spreading rumours and instigating others to go it alone, and for their attempt to take back their household items that had been divided among the peasants at land reform. They denounced and reasoned with these two bad characters and put them to work under the masses' surveillance.

The meeting further raised the consciousness of class struggle of the Party members, cadres and commune members. That one member of the Party branch committee who was keen on fixing output quotas on the individual household basis said, "I was fooled. But I'll never be shaken again when some ill wind stirs the grass."

With everyone clearer on the question, the Party branch called on the masses to discuss and work out the 10-year development plan. Guided by the Party's General Line for Socialist Construction, they would transform their nine hills, send water up the slopes to irrigate the terraced fields, build bridges, cut tunnels and link the remote Sandstone Hollow with other places by modern communication means. . . .

Socialist revolution on the political and ideological fronts had brought about a big leap forward in production. For as long as people could remember, Sandstone Hollow had only one small rugged path in South Gully, and commune members had to climb over mountains as soon as they left the village, with loads of manure and produce on their shoulders or on donkey back. Labour was wasted and production suffered. The transport problem had been a headache for the commune members for many years. The Party branch now decided that

their building plan for the next 10 years should include a road and a good-sized stone bridge to accommodate animal-drawn carts from South Gully straight to North Hill.

The commune members were overjoyed and said: "They will be a 'leap forward' bridge and road that will save us a lot of labour that we can put into the battle to remake our hills. The Party branch then decided to organize the people, both men and women, first to build the bridge, and the work was done in just 10 days and nights of hard struggle. The village was opened for the first time to animal-drawn carts!

The brigade Party branch, going on from there, led the commune members up the hills and down into the gullies in the winds of early winter to turn the 23,000 plots scattered over the hills and cliffs into terraced fields.

They had to dislodge boulders underground and remove the rocks from the plots, using them to shore up the fields. The project was not easy, but after trials of strength in class struggle, the Party members, cadres and poor and lower-middle peasants became even more enthusiastic and determined. "Guided by Mao Tsetung Thought and the General Line of the Party, we can overcome every difficulty!" they said. Led by members of the Party branch committee, a shock brigade newly organized of Party and Youth League members climbed the precipices of North Hill and began the battle against the scattered plots. In three days they dug more than 100 boulders from 20 plots with hammers and chisels and removed more than 100 cubic metres of rock from the plots, making one *mu* of level terraced field.

It was this first *mu* of land that began a great change in Sandstone Hollow's hills. A militia shock company, a women's shock team and an old men's team were then organized to transform North Hill. Braving wind and snow, people

worked on through the year, resuming on the very next day after the Spring Festival. Battling through the winter of 1962 to the spring of 1963 in the spirit of the Great Leap Forward, they dislodged more than 7,000 boulders and cut more than 10,000 cubic metres of rock out of the slopes and gullies. They joined up more than 23,000 bits and pieces of land into 6,630 plots, increasing their original 780 *mu* of farmland to 1,200 *mu*, 500 *mu* of which they levelled and terraced.

When the many visitors to Sandstone Hollow shake the hands of the commune members there, they are apt to say of them:

Yours are the hands of heroes,
Hands that have removed hills,
That have carried the Red Flag forward
Against storm and stress!

The "Foolish Old Man" Spirit Conquers Heaven

IN 1964 when the Chinese people's great leader Chairman Mao Tsetung issued the call to the nation: **In agriculture, learn from Tachai**, a vigorous mass drive towards this goal was launched among the people of Sandstone Hollow.

That year the crops in the terraced fields were a heartening sight. The sturdy big leaves of young maize plants, over a foot high, rustled gently in the breeze. Pale pink blossoms dotted tiers upon tiers of cotton fields. The 10,000 apple trees on East Hill and Wolf Lair were heavy with fruit. Little did people expect, in these happy days, that disaster would strike.

On June 12, when people were busy hoeing and giving the crops an additional manuring, a violent wind suddenly arose from the northwest, driving a huge mass of dirty yellow sand towards Sandstone Hollow. Then, just as suddenly, rain deluged the hills, 180 mm. falling in 18 minutes. But that was not all, for the cloudburst was followed by a hailstorm, the hailstones as big as eggs and pelting down thick and fast. The crops were stripped to bare stems in an instant, and the ground was littered with torn-off leaves and battered green fruit. Then, a flood broke loose in full fury, rushing

down the hills and into the gullies. The 800 embankments and more than 100 *mu* of terraced fields were all washed away by the raging torrent.

Not waiting for the hailstorm to stop completely, Kuei-shun, followed by other brigade and team cadres as well as many commune members, rushed up the hills to survey the damage.

The thriving scene of 20 minutes ago was now gone. The calamity was the most serious one Sandstone Hollow had ever known.

The washed-out terraces and embankments, the ruined crops and orchards were like knives thrust into the people's hearts. Kuei-shun and the other cadres went over hill and dale through the floodwater and hailstones to investigate the damage. Then, calling together the cadres and commune members, Kuei-shun said, "The disaster is serious. But though the crops are hard hit, our thinking should on no account be affected. So long as we arm the masses with Mao Tsetung Thought and fight against nature, no disaster will deter us!"

A voice piped up at once: "Words are of no use to us now. We'll have to report the situation up to the commune leadership and request immediate help from the state. We can't make out otherwise!"

To this Kuei-shun replied seriously, "That's not right. We certainly can 'make out' if we follow Chairman Mao's principle, **Be self-reliant, work hard**, his teaching, **Be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory**, if we continue to display the spirit of the Foolish Old Man and persist along the Tachai road."

At this, many old poor peasants said, "You're right! We'll 'make out' and even be able to overcome still bigger difficulties if we do that."

The Party branch committee began by organizing the cadres and commune members to study the experience of the Tachai Brigade in overcoming their natural calamities in 1963. First of all the team leaders checked their own teams, and when they reported all the villagers secure, together with their houses and the draught animals, Kuei-shun's face lit up. "It seems that our disaster is not nearly as bad as what the Tachai people suffered," he said. "Last year they had too much rain. It caused mountain floods that washed out their terraced fields and embankments. The floods also damaged a great number of their homes. But instead of bowing before it, they persisted in self-reliance and hard work and wrested a bumper harvest. Since they succeeded in bringing in a good crop in a year of such severe disaster, is it not possible for us to reap a good harvest too?"

The Party branch committee members, together with the cadres and commune members, once again studied Chairman Mao's brilliant article "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains."

Learning of the study, old commune member Yen Yao-sheng walked over a muddy road to join in. "The disaster is a lot worse than the one that occurred in 1895, the twenty-first year of the Ching emperor Kuang Hsu's reign," he said. "But times are different now. How many of the villagers starved to death that year! Today, with the Communist Party and Chairman Mao leading us, we can certainly conquer Heaven if we cope with it the way the Foolish Old Man did."

More and more people came to join in the voluntary study so that they had to hold the meetings outdoors. . . .

The Party branch told the peasants how in disasters of even bigger proportions the people of Tachai had a bumper harvest without taking loans and material supplies from the state or help from other production brigades. They had not

even decreased their quotas for total grain output, marketable grain sold to the state and the commune members' food grain. Hearing all this, the commune members were moved to tears. "What the Tachai people can do, we can do too!" they said.

Chairman Mao's call, **In agriculture, learn from Tachai**, showed the Sandstone Hollow people the way to defeat the disaster, and the indomitable revolutionary spirit of the Foolish Old Man gave them confidence and courage to overcome difficulties.

The cadres and commune members proposed to the brigade Party branch that they should follow the Tachai people's example and refuse the three kinds of aid and maintain the three quotas. "We have the determination to learn from them and pledge to do the same!" they said.

At this moment, the comrades from the commune grain station, having trekked over a rugged muddy path with heavy loads on their shoulders, arrived with more than 800 *jin* of seed grain for Sandstone Hollow. The credit co-op also came to offer them a loan of 1,000 yuan. At this, the commune members clasped the hands of the comrades and, with tears in their eyes, cheered again and again, "Long live Chairman Mao!"

The question before the people of Sandstone Hollow was: Should they accept the seed grain and loan delivered to their doorstep by the state at this time of serious natural disaster, or not?

Debate followed. The Party branch committee members voiced the opinion that they should adopt the communist style of the Tachai poor and lower-middle peasants and pass the grain and money on to other disaster-afflicted production brigades. This idea was favoured by the majority of the cadres and commune members, so Kuei-shun, on behalf of Sandstone Hollow, said to the comrades from the commune grain station

and the credit co-op, "You comrades have sent us grain and funds. We're very grateful for the profound concern shown us by the Party and Chairman Mao. But Sandstone Hollow is not the only brigade struck by disaster and facing difficulty. The grain and money should go to others that are even harder hit!"

The commune grain station and credit co-op comrades tried their best to persuade him to accept the grain and money, but Kuei-shun only thanked them and asked them to take them back.

Then someone called Kuei-shun aside and whispered to him, "As the saying goes: 'The money's already in hand and the rice at the mouth. Once you've got them, why let them go!' We didn't ask the state for the grain and money. The state offered them. So what's the matter with accepting them?"

But Kuei-shun could not agree. "Learning from Tachai means relying on the collective to secure our own relief through production," he explained. "It means following the communist style of Tachai's poor and lower-middle peasants who put the interests of the state before everything else and offer others conveniences while taking difficulties for themselves. Such a spirit is far more valuable than the grain and money sent us!"

The comrades from the grain station and credit co-op had not been gone long when representatives from other production brigades came to express their concern. They too brought grain and money, which the cadres and commune members of Sandstone Hollow likewise turned back with profound thanks.

The proffered aid from the state and the neighbouring production brigades, though declined by the people of Sandstone Hollow, was a great education and inspiration to them. They

became more determined to follow the example of Tachai and overcome the disaster with their own effort.

Old poor peasant Kao Sheng-ho took out 180 yuan he had put aside for house repair and, offering it to the brigade cadres, said, "When hit by disaster the poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai thought first of making collective production a success and helping other brigades. I want to learn from them and loan the money to the brigade, either for our use or for other brigades." Poor peasant Li Yi-chuan also offered to lend the brigade the 140 yuan he had saved for a bicycle. Chou Chin-chang, another poor peasant, felt ill at ease with people offering either money or grain for brigade use, for he had neither to spare. But then he thought of his several hundred *jin* of straw and offered that. He said, "I've nothing much to give, but I can add a little weight to the collective. I'll lend the brigade my store of fodder straw."

Displaying the fine style of cherishing the collective and socialism like the Tachai poor and lower-middle peasants, the cadres and commune members of Sandstone Hollow pooled more than 3,500 yuan and upwards of 5,000 *jin* of grain. In the end they not only solved their own temporary difficulties but also helped other brigades, loaning them over 200 yuan and 2,000 *jin* of seed grain.

It is common knowledge that fighting natural calamity is like putting out a fire, for the change of seasons awaits no man. Crops sown half a day ahead of time will ripen 10 days early. A battle began against time to wrest the grain harvest!

Kuei-shun led a field-building force in a round-the-clock effort to repair the embankments. In the wake of the flood the stones from 800 embankments lay everywhere and each one had to be pried out of the mud. After the embankments were rebuilt, they used shoulder-poles, donkeys and carts to

carry back the soil which had been washed away. The 100-some *mu* of terraced fields were once again covered with soil and sown to crops.

Women were always out front rescuing the crops. They raised up the flattened young plants one by one and washed the mud from them in wash basins. They revived several hundred *mu* in this way.

The brigade leadership organized people to collect late maize seedlings thinned out by other brigades and transplant them in empty spaces. In order to get more from their fields they intercropped sweet potatoes with maize, or maize with peas.

And so, in less than 10 days they re-sowed all their fields without accepting a grain or cent from the state.

At harvest time, men and women, old and young, were in joyous and triumphant mood as they celebrated their first big victory in the drive to learn from Tachai in agriculture.

That year the Sandstone Hollow people reaped 440,000 *jin* of grain, an average of 550 *jin* per *mu*. Their previous total output had been 380,000 *jin*. It was an unprecedentedly big harvest, an all-time high in Sandstone Hollow's history both in per-*mu* yield and in total output.

The amount of surplus grain the brigade should deliver and sell to the state had been fixed at 40,000 *jin* that year. But the commune members said, "We've pledged that in spite of the disaster we must make a greater contribution to the state, not just refuse aid and maintain our standards." And Sandstone Hollow delivered and sold to the state a total of 90,000 *jin*.

March is the time for sowing in Sandstone Hollow, but that month in 1965 was very dry without a drop of rain falling. Ordinarily at this time the winter millet should have sprouted, and the fruit trees been in full leaf. But this year the seeds, just as they were first sown, still slept in the soil

while the orchards were only beginning to put out buds. The soil on top of rock was drier each day. The drought was becoming serious. . . .

The commune members urged the brigade Party branch committee: "We should take the bull by the horns and fight the drought. Even if there's no rain the whole year, we should do our spring sowing and wrest a bumper harvest."

A mass meeting was called by the brigade Party branch, at which the commune members voiced their determination before the portrait of Chairman Mao to wage a war against drought. Sandstone Hollow resounded with such slogans as: "If Heaven gives no rain we people will make it! The spirit of the Foolish Old Man will conquer Heaven!"

Even for drinking water the people of Sandstone Hollow had to travel five *li** to Talaoyu. What stupendous effort it would be to carry water on shoulder-poles for the sowing of 800 *mu* of crops and the irrigation of 10,000 fruit trees! But the Sandstone Hollow people armed with Mao Tsetung Thought were not to be daunted!

The members of the Party branch committee and the cadres led a great drought-fighting army to Talaoyu for water, which they carried up the hills from early dawn to late evening. When the wells at Talaoyu ran short of water, they went over three ridges to fetch it from Fanchialin, eight *li* away.

People of neighbouring villages were deeply moved by the resolve and tenacity of the Sandstone Hollow people going so far to fetch water for their fields. But there were also a few who ridiculed: "You must be mad to carry water like that." The Sandstone Hollow commune members gave these few the pointed reply: "To learn from Tachai and make revolution, we should indeed go at it like mad!" A commune

* One *li* equals ½ kilometre or ⅓ mile.

member from the Yuchkochuang Brigade was so moved at this that he climbed a high hill to send Sandstone Hollow two bucketfuls of "friendship water."

In a month people's shoulders were swollen and their feet blistered, but no one complained. In the battle against the drought there were many moving deeds. The women stepped out front as a great dynamic force. Li Shu-chen, who was in charge of organizing the brigade women's labour force, led an "iron girls" shock team, the oldest member being 23, while the youngest was 15. Climbing up and down the hills alongside the men, they carried water all that distance.

Once they had to take a path so steep and rugged that people would find the going hard even unburdened. However, they persisted in the fight, carrying two bucketfuls of water weighing about 60 *jin* and never faltering. A brigade cadre said to a teen-ager among them, "You're too young to carry so many heavy loads. Better take less and make fewer trips." But the girl replied, "One more bucketful of water means that much more grain. I can do this little bit for the Chinese and world revolution!"

There was also a shock team formed by a group of "iron matrons" fighting the drought, and this was headed by Chao Feng-lan, leader of the Women's Association. Besides arranging the household chores well, these mothers of several children also had their share in the battle, side by side with the men. During work-breaks Chao Feng-lan and her comrades sang verses on the Tachai theme to the rhythm of bamboo castanets. Once they sang:

Chairman Mao calls on us
To learn from the Tachai Brigade
And march ever forward.
In our fight against drought,
We fear neither steep hills
Nor dangerous paths.

Daring to compete with you men,
We women can build half the world.
Carrying water for thirsty plants,
We march well up front.
We'll wrest high yields
From our model plot.

The people, and especially the men, burst into applause and cheered, "Learn from our 'iron matrons'!"

At the end of the day's work Chao Feng-lan and her women's team defied fatigue and set to work on their high-yield model plot.

One day an old commune member said with concern, "You must be tired after working the whole day. You women can't work like the men, you know. You need more rest." Feng-lan smiled as she replied, "As Chairman Mao teaches us, **Times have changed, and today men and women are equal. Whatever men comrades can accomplish, women comrades can too.** Why can't we women work like you men?"

The drought continued and became more severe. Forty *mu* of millet perished. Then another 80 *mu* of maize dried up. But the more severe the drought the more intense the battle against it.

The commune members said, "Crops are planted by man. We can replant them if they die!"

Such was the granite will of the people of Sandstone Hollow! When crops perished from drought, they sowed them again. Some plots they planted four times. Then, making intense effort to keep the young plants alive, they moved their household water vats to the worst-stricken fields. The women led by Chao Feng-lan also took upon themselves the task of protecting the seedlings. Each with a jar of water in her hand, they kept a constant watch over the fields and fetched water to revive every dying plant. Children also

turned up to do their stint. Carrying water in kettles and basins, they helped save the crop.

But the drought continued and the days grew hot. Two months had passed, and still not a drop of rain fell, while the sun scorched the ground like fire, causing people great anxiety. Some commune members began to lose heart. A few people just stared vacantly up at the sky. Seeing this, Kuei-shun said to the villagers, "We commune members of Sandstone Hollow trust our shoulder-poles and don't bow to the will of Heaven. Now relax a while. I've got a ballad for you:

With a red heart
And a pair of strong shoulders,
We can conquer Heaven
In the spirit of the Foolish Old Man.
If drought will not go,
We'll drive the demon off.
If the water-controlling Dragon King refuses to come,
We'll pull this blessing in.
Dare to battle against Heaven,
And it can't but come round."

People took heart and, with fresh energy, swung into action again.

However, class enemies perked up again, spreading rumours behind the scenes. "It's like wasting lamp oil on blind men when Heaven doesn't give rain," they said.

But the commune members were not to be disheartened by remarks like this. And so, as the drought worsened, they became more energetic and tenacious than ever.

In order not to affect the neighbouring brigades' battles against drought, the cadres and commune members of Sandstone Hollow preferred to fetch water from places far away where there was plenty. They said, "Even if we dry up the lakes and seas, we'll carry on the fight till Heaven submits!"

A 50-year-old poor peasant who had worked as a farm hand for 20 years in the old society carried 20 *jin* more than other

commune members, and kept at it for two whole months. But as he was no longer young, and they went farther and farther away to get water, the brigade leader asked him to work in the fields instead, watering the crops and sowing. But he said, "In the old days I fetched and carried, but it was loads of blood for landlords. Today I carry water to fight drought for socialism and also for ourselves. This is a revolutionary load entrusted to me by Chairman Mao."

During work-breaks the first thing this former farm hand said as soon as people put down their buckets was, "Sit down, comrades, let's study Chairman Mao's article 'The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains.'"

The older generation's exemplary conduct was an inspiration to the younger. Deputy secretary of the Youth League branch Li Feng-chung had difficulty carrying water because of a slight lameness, but when the brigade leader asked him to rest, he refused. Even when driving a loaded donkey, he carried two bucketfuls of water. He said, "My leg is nothing. Kuei-shun and some others are up in their sixties, and see how they work! We younger ones must work the way they do if we're to qualify as successors to the revolution!"

So, in a drought situation of only 10 mm. of rain in 253 days, the commune members of Sandstone Hollow followed Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and fought an all-out battle with their unbending backs, strong shoulders and feet of iron. For 83 successive days, they carried water to grow crops on the 6,000 plots of land, totalling 800 *mu* in all, and to irrigate fruit trees. Altogether they carried 130,000 bucketfuls over a distance of 410,000 *li* — approximately 4 times the circumference of the earth! Finally they wrested a good harvest of 380,000 *jin* of grain and 200,000 *jin* of fruit.

Sandstone Hollow's success in fighting drought for two consecutive years further demonstrated the might of the movement to learn from Tachai.

What was more important was the tempering of the heroic Sandstone Hollow people by the severe trial. In this sense drought and disaster have their good aspect. The fight against drought carried the brilliant concept **Be self-reliant, work hard** still deeper into the hearts and minds of these brave people and helped them understand their own great strength as labouring people who create the world.

A Clear Stream Winds Around the Hills

THE drought of 1965 brought home to the Sandstone Hollow peasants the truth of Chairman Mao's words: **Irrigation is the lifeblood of agriculture.** They realized that it was impossible to develop socialist farming quickly unless the problem of water shortage was finally solved. The brigade Party branch committee decided, therefore, to launch a titanic water conservancy project on their rocky slopes and end for good Sandstone Hollow's history as a drought-stricken area.

The poor and lower-middle peasants there had many sad memories in connection with water. In the old days the poor people of the village, men and women alike, rose before dawn each day in snowy winter or sizzling summer and trudged silently patient down the rocky slopes to Talaoyu Village five *li* away with gourds and buckets to get water.

In 1937, when Japanese imperialism launched an aggressive war against China and the country was in turmoil, old man Chao of Seven-Family Hamlet gave his daughter Feng-lan, who was not yet of age, in marriage to Li Shu-hsiang, a poor peasant of Sandstone Hollow. When the bride arrived at her new home, her heart froze, for there were neither crops nor trees in the village, only rock-bound hills jutting into a leaden

dome of sky. On the third day she took off her bridal clothes to wash them and put them away. But just as she was pouring some water into an earthen basin, her husband's mother and grandmother both screamed at once: "Think what you're doing there! Wasting so much water washing clothes. You'll soon drain us dry!"

Finally the bride, with tears in her eyes, washed her clothes in the precious little bit of water, followed by the mother, who washed hers in the same water, and then the grandmother, who washed some rags. The few dirty drops left were poured into the pig trough. Feng-lan learned from this incident that Sandstone Hollow was not only poor in earth and grain, it had no water either. "So poor," she often brooded. "Even no water to drink, as though nothing to eat were not bad enough!"

Small wonder a bride from another village made such a "mistake." How could she know the cost of a bucketful of water? Why, it was a bucketful of sweat and tears!

Still, the carrying of water from the five-*li*-distant Talaoyu, up hill and down, was nothing to the oppression and browbeating they suffered at the hands of the Talaoyu landlords and rich peasants. Those man-eating jackals tried to cut the Sandstone Hollow peasants' nearest water supply by fencing off the wells, throwing dead dogs or cats into them or else posting their thugs to prevent people from drawing water. Any luckless enough to run into them would either have his water gourds smashed or his carrying-pole snatched away, or else would be in for a sound beating.

Poor peasant Chen Tsung-yu, who had saved enough to buy a pair of new buckets, was met by a landlord's lackey at the well the first time he used them. The thug at once crushed his buckets and, when Chen lifted his carrying-pole to give him a deserved blow, other thugs overpowered and beat him.

His new buckets smashed and himself badly bruised, he still did not get one drop of water.

Yen Chan-chun's grandfather decided not to put up with such humiliation and led his sons and grandsons to sink their own well. For more than half a century three generations of the Yens dug five wells one after another on the slopes around the village, but not one yielded any water. Finally Yen Chan-chun sighed deeply as he said, "Ai — ! Unless an immortal shows us where to dig, we won't find water here in Sandstone Hollow."

After liberation the Sandstone Hollow peasants dug many more wells in and around their village, but still they found no water.

Spring came early to Sandstone Hollow in 1951, decking the hill slopes with wild flowers in March. The Party branch had decided to dig a well for drinking water in the village with the collective strength of the newly organized mutual-aid teams.

The poor and lower-middle peasants were jubilant and enthusiastically presented their views at the meeting called to discuss the matter.

Uncle Yung-chuan said, "We ordinary mortals can't see where the water flows underground. To get the right location we must first consult a geomancer."

The old man's suggestion triggered off loud disputes. The young people argued that this was superstition, and they were dead set against it, while old village greybeards said the kids had not seen much of the world, so what did they know.

The Party branch tried its best to convince these old people that geomancy was fake and they should give up that idea.

But superstition still had firm hold on the minds of the old and even some middle-aged people at the time, and the many

past failures, especially, led them to pin their hopes on "an immortal." So now they insisted on calling in a geomancer.

The Sandstone Hollow Party branch committee met to discuss the matter. Through study everybody finally agreed that when the masses had not gained understanding it would be unwise to go ahead of them, issue orders and exert force. It would also be wrong to abandon the Party stand, tail after the masses and adopt their wrong idea, or to stand aloof and ignore the mistaken idea. The correct attitude was always to be with the masses, work unceasingly among them, patiently use facts and Party policy to persuade them and be warm towards them while waiting for them to increase their awareness and fight what was wrong of their own accord.

Consequently, the Party branch made the startling announcement: "All right then. Let's consult a geomancer."

The man was duly invited in, a paralytic who could neither walk nor ride a donkey. So the people turned a table upside down, let him lie on it, and asked eight strapping young men to carry him about in shifts while he inspected the lay of the land. From one ridge to the other, up hill and down dale, he was carried for five days inspecting the area. Finally, pointing out a spot on the east slope, he said: "There, dig down forty-five feet and you'll reach water. Dig another five feet and you'll have sufficient water to store. If you don't strike water, you can bury me in the well."

The old folks were beside themselves with joy and urged the cadres to organize a well-digging team at once. The young people were not so sure.

As a matter of fact, the cadres were less interested this time in getting water than in getting something still more precious, and that was the political understanding of the masses.

Each day of the digging was filled with people conjecturing and expecting — would they strike water this time?

The answer came when they had dug not just 45 feet, but 58 feet, and still no water. The people began exclaiming, "Another dry shaft! No water here either!"

Those who had insisted on consulting the geomancer stood by the dry well looking at each other helplessly.

Suddenly Uncle Yung-chuan stamped his foot and cried, "Come on! Let's drag that charlatan over and bury him like he said!"

"What good would that do?" the cadres said. "After all, it was we who invited him in. The important thing is to bury our own superstitions so that we won't be fooled again in the future."

Uncle Yung-chuan said, thumping his head: "I'm to blame. We dug deeper than the geomancer asked, but there is not even a drop of water." He looked at the debris heaped by the well and then at the blisters on his hands. "All for nothing," he said sadly. "The cadres had been trying to talk us out of it all the time, but I was stone deaf!" The old fellow broke down and wept like a child.

At this point the cadres explained to the masses how there were neither "immortals" nor "saviours" in the world — to change their poverty-stricken village into a prosperous place, they must rely on the leadership of the Communist Party and Chairman Mao, on the working people themselves.

This incident made people see things in a new light, and they burned the pictures of the "kitchen god" over their stoves, smashed their idols and threw away their incense-burners. Many people confided to members of the Party branch committee: "I burned incense to idols half my life and suffered as long. Chairman Mao has led us poor people to start a new life and yet I hung onto my old ideas. I've let the Party and Chairman Mao down. Now just tell me

what to do to get water. I'll do whatever the Party branch says."

Other old-timers came with suggestions and information about local water resources. "In the rainy season," one said, "water seeps out of the rock crevices on North Hill. Suppose we dig a pond down there to store up the water. It'd be enough for drinking this winter and next spring and save us the trouble of going all the way to Talaoyu for it."

The Party branch considered this a good idea. In the winter of 1952 the project was started with the village Youth Leaguers volunteering for the job. Sandstone Hollow had only recently organized its agricultural producers' co-op, which was still very fragile financially. With no money for explosives, people had to rely on hammers and chisels. Li Feng-yuan, secretary of the Youth League branch, assured the Party branch on behalf of all the Leaguers that even if the rock were steel, they'd carve a pond in it. Some of the older co-op members who had insisted on consulting the geomancer installed a forge and said to Li Feng-yuan and his group: "Bring all your blunted chisels here and we'll give them back to you sharp." And so in the bitter winter of 1952 the Sandstone Hollow youth began their assault on the rock of North Hill.

One day when Li Feng-yuan was holding the chisel for Liu Yi-chuan, Liu's hammer missed the mark and slid down Li's arm. It hurt, but Li swallowed the pain. "Come on!" he cried. "Give it another blow!"

People urged Li Feng-yuan to take the rest of the day off, but he insisted he was all right and kept working. By afternoon his arm was so swollen that the doctor gave him an injection and sent him home. But he stole back as soon as he heard the clanging of hammers and went on working as if nothing had happened.

In this way the Sandstone Hollow cadres and masses dug a storage pond of 2,700 cubic metres capacity out of rock. It represented more than 10,000 workdays in the slack farming seasons of winter and early spring between the end of 1952 and early 1957.

With the pond, the strain on drinking water for both man and animal was eased, and there was even water for dibbling in a dry spring or summer. People were indeed happy with this tremendous change.

But still the problem of water shortage was not entirely solved. What if rainfall was scanty and little water was stored? Or even if they stored enough for drinking and dibbling, the pond was still a far cry from what was required to ensure bumper harvests in either drought or waterlogging. The water problem continued to worry the Sandstone Hollow cadres and masses.

To solve the problem in a thoroughgoing way, the Party branch organized a special water conservancy team to sink wells, build canals on the hill slopes and use the underground water for irrigation.

Many more wells were dug in the valley of Sandstone Hollow, but none yielded water. The water conservancy team, however, persisted.

In December 1965, a well-digging team, heralded by a billowing red flag, marched out of the village through the cutting north wind and driven snow to the foot of a slope on the other side of North Hill, where a geological survey confirmed that underground water was abundant. The project included the digging of a well 10 metres in diameter, laying a pipe for pumping water over the hill to Sandstone Hollow and building a canal on the hill slopes to irrigate all terraced fields.

This bold plan and the indomitable spirit it expressed deeply moved the commune members of the neighbouring villages, though there were still doubters who jeered at it.

A verbose ex-fortuneteller of Talaoyu, known as "Wind-bag," heard the news and made a special trip to Sandstone Hollow to have a look.

"The saying goes: Man seeks promotion and water drains into a depression," he predicted, shaking his head. "Since the world began, has water ever flowed up a hill? You're wasting your time and energy, that's for sure."

The strapping young men and "iron girls" of the well-digging team retorted, "With a will as strong as that of the Foolish Old Man who removed the mountains, we'll lead the water-controlling Dragon King wherever we want to. Since you've never seen water flow up a hill, we'll open your eyes for you."

Digging the well was difficult, for it went down through layers of pebbles and clay. There were three cave-ins, and each time men were sent down to repair the damage. It was mid-winter, with an icy wind blowing from north of the Great Wall through people's cotton-padded clothes and chilling them to the marrow. The well-diggers, however, thought only of water, which they and their fellow-villagers badly wanted. To speed up the work they gave up lunch-break and took a snack of sweet potatoes and cakes when they felt hungry.

With people's fighting will high, the work progressed rapidly. When they had dug through the stratum of clay and had about reached the bottom of the pebbly layer, the two-foot-wide drainage ditch on top of the well froze and cleaved, so that instead of draining water off, it allowed water to fall back into the well, carrying with it the excavated clay and pebbles heaped near the well-mouth. It was a bad setback.

Li Feng-yuan, secretary of the Youth League branch and leader of the village militia company, jumped into the well, crying: "Hurry! Repair the damage!"

Wang Yi-chun, who had already worked several shifts without a break, rushed to the spot with a spade, but in the rush he was hit on the head by someone's pick and fell senseless to the ground.

His comrades came to his aid, some covering him against the bitter wind with their cotton-padded jackets while others hurried to phone the commune hospital. Soon Party secretary Chang Kuei-shun came with a doctor and the leading comrades of the commune, followed later by comrades from the county Party committee.

As soon as Yi-chun regained consciousness, he sat up and asked, "Has the flow back stopped?" Assured that it had, he smiled. Still, after a little rest, he took up a pick and went down into the well despite the protests of his comrades.

At noon when Yi-chun's mother heard that her son had been injured, she cried. But his father said, "Why should you cry over a thing like this? Chairman Mao said long ago: **'To die for the people is weightier than Mount Tai.'** Yi-chun was injured, but he's all right now. What's the sense of crying after it's over? With the leadership of the Party and the care of the collective, our boy will grow into a capable lad and an iron man."

The mother dried her eyes, made some dough and fried several crisp, delicious shallot pancakes for her son. On her way to the work-site, she thought about the rocks needed to line the well and picked up a big one, lifted it onto her shoulder and trudged with it and her shallot cakes through the snow to the site.

Yi-chun and the others crowded round to greet her. The old woman brushed the snow from her hair and then carefully

inspected her son's wound. "It's not very bad," she reassured herself. "With the Party branch, and you boys working together, I won't worry. It's only a lump on the head. Even if it were worse, I'm sure you'd still go on digging when it's for the revolution, for water for our brigade, wouldn't you?"

Yi-chun's mother then turned to the others and continued, "I'm old now, but my ideas are not. I'm quite prepared to give my son for the revolution." The mother worked for some time at the site before returning home.

Her son was comforted and the others encouraged. They all promised her: "You may be sure we'll follow Chairman Mao's teaching and surmount every difficulty to win victory. We won't leave the work-site till there's water in this well!"

The wind blew stronger, driving the snow into the well-diggers' faces. The Party branch suggested that they rest for a couple of days in the bad weather. But these young people replied, "The well-site is a battlefield. Would you care about the weather if you were fighting a battle?"

Li Feng-yuan, who headed the team, was known as an "iron company commander." He never wasted words but was a hard worker who beamed whenever a difficult task was placed before him. People said that the big projects in Sandstone Hollow all bore the marks of Feng-yuan's fine spirit and sweat. Now, he had slept very little for many days and nights, and Kuei-shun and other comrades urged him again and again to knock off. But each time he had a new excuse. "I'm not sleepy at all!" or "It's nothing!" or else "tomorrow."

What made Feng-yuan so energetic? He often said to his comrades, "We work very hard and don't spare ourselves for the great objective of realizing communism. A genuine Communist should not lose sight of this objective. Nor should he relax his effort for the work at hand." He spoke for his comrades as well as for himself. Because they always had

this great objective in mind, Feng-yuan and the other comrades like him could lead the masses to work so unflaggingly.

Feng-yuan began to look peaked, his face pinched, but he insisted on working as usual. One evening, feeling feverish, he took some medicine behind his wife's back and went to bed. In his troubled sleep he cried out: "Keep it up! Persistence means victory!" His wife felt his forehead. It was hot and she rushed out for a doctor. But by the time the doctor arrived, Feng-yuan was back at the work-site again.

Incidents like this happened every day on the site, inspiring the revolutionary fighting will of the cadres and commune members. Practically every villager helped with the work. Commune member Li Shu-chang carried some rocks to the well-site on his way back from the county hospital, disregarding his illness. Chao Feng-lan, head of the village Women's Association, led the women commune members carrying building materials over hills to the well-site in their spare time mornings and evenings. School children marched in long files carrying rocks to the site after school hours.

In time a sweet-water well 11 metres in diameter was completed after a winter and spring of hard work in which the efforts of the special well-digging team were co-ordinated with the mass movement. A pipe 1,300 metres long ran like a giant dragon up the hills to the village.

May 20, 1966 was a red letter day for Sandstone Hollow. On that radiant and cloudless morning a stream of clear water flowed obedient to man's will into the parched village.

Every man, woman and child in the village came to see the storage pond and gaze at the water streaming into it, laughing and talking in joyous excitement. Kuei-shun dipped up a bowl of the sparkling water before an old man, saying: "Drink some! This is a gift from Chairman Mao to us Sandstone Hollow people." Many a poor peasant who had sad memories

of the past held a bowl of the water, shouting with tears in their eyes: "Long live Chairman Mao!" Cadres and commune members came from neighbouring villages to see and offer congratulations. Even Windbag was convinced. Admiring the water running into the pond, he exclaimed, "You really are more capable than the immortals!"

This success was an impressive lesson to those who had considered undertaking water conservancy projects on the rocky slopes as "labour wasted" or "wearing oneself out for nothing." It further strengthened the people's will to go on building water conservancy works.

Helped by factory workers and hydrologists, the Sandstone Hollow villagers drilled two more pump wells in the south and east foothills and led the underground water on up the hills through pipes. Now a 14-li-long irrigation and drainage canal winds its way around the hills from Wolf Lair to Chimney Hill, linking with 24 big and small storage ponds dug along both sides of the canal like giant gourds on a vine. With a stream skirting its hill slopes and 800 *mu* of terraced fields yielding bumper harvests in either drought or water-logging, the Sandstone Hollow area ended forever its history of water famine.

How a Field Was Built

ONE afternoon in the winter of 1965, Kuei-shun, who had been sent to Tachai to study its experience in building a socialist countryside, returned to Sandstone Hollow after a most rewarding trip.

That evening he called a joint meeting of the Party branch committee members and the production brigade leaders. After that, he gave a report at a mass meeting attended by the commune members of the whole village. He spoke with great enthusiasm on how the Tachai people had built up their mountain area.

"Over the past ten years or more," he said, "adhering to the principle of putting proletarian politics in command and ideology to the fore, the Tachai people have surmounted all sorts of difficulties through self-reliance and hard work. They have brought into full play the communist spirit of loving the country and the collective. They have built one bow-shaped embankment after another in the seven gullies at the foot of Tiger-Head Hill and tiers upon tiers of stable, high-yield terraced fields on the eight ridges. The four thousand plots originally separated from each other have been gradually joined to form one thousand and seven hundred pieces of land, their layer of surface soil has steadily grown thicker and their ability to resist natural calamities has increased

each year. Most have already been turned into 'spongy fields' which conserve both fertilizer and water. With a steady increase in grain, the Tachai people have been making ever greater contributions to the revolution."

Here Kuei-shun paused and picked up some stones and loess soil that were lying on the table. He had brought them from Tiger-Head Hill and Wolf Haunt Gully. Then he continued, "It is with this kind of stone and loess soil that Tachai's poor and lower-middle peasants, armed with Mao Tsetung Thought, have succeeded in turning their 'three-run-off fields' (fields which were unable to retain water, and from which earth and fertilizer were washed away) into 'three-retention fields.' Now, comrades, what about our Sandstone Hollow? What shall we do with it?"

Kuei-shun had scarcely finished speaking when the people in the audience began commenting all at once.

"Sandstone Hollow certainly lags behind Tachai," one said. "Tachai has made 'spongy fields,' but what have we? A few inches of earth on rock! In drought the soil cakes as hard and as hot as if baked in an oven. And when the rains come, water rushes down the hill slopes. How can fields like these retain fertilizer or conserve water? We've to learn from Tachai and transform our terraced plots into 'spongy fields.'"

"Your words sound more beautiful than a song!" ridiculed another. "But, since, as the saying goes, even a clever housewife cannot cook without rice, how can we be expected to make Tachai-type fields without earth?"

"Right!" chimed in several old peasants. "As far back as we've heard tell, Sandstone Hollow has been a cluster of stony hills where 'earth is as precious as pearls.' How can we build Tachai-type fields on solid rock?"

Kuei-shun was always ready to listen to people's different opinions, for they invariably set him thinking and helped him

to solve problems. Now he went over to the old men and said, "It's all very true what you elders say — we haven't any earth. But can't we try to get some?"

An old commune member said, "There's only one way, and that's to carry earth in from the other side of the hills. That would mean a lot of work, because we'd have to go at least ten *li* round trip to get it. But so long as the masses are enthusiastic, the hard work doesn't matter very much."

The old man's comment greatly cheered Kuei-shun. He felt this was the golden key to the solution of the problem — to mobilize the masses and rely on them. Sandstone Hollow's Tachai-type fields could be built on stony hills!

After the mass meeting the Party branch committee met to formulate a plan. But one deputy secretary who was still not convinced said, "How can our Sandstone Hollow compare with Tachai? Their fields are built on earth; Sandstone Hollow's are built on rocks. Soil is too far away."

Kuei-shun, again picking up the rocks on the table, addressed the committee: "Now, these are rocks the Tachai people carried on their backs down Tiger-Head Hill, one thousand and two hundred metres above sea level. It's true our village is worse off than Tachai, for we hardly have any earth. But we've got plenty of rock, and that's a big advantage over Tachai. Natural conditions are a big factor, but we must not forget that conditions can be changed. The world began without any fields whatsoever. It was the labouring people who built them. Now we can reclaim land to make fields, and if we don't have enough, we can make more. We can change poor, thin fields into thick and fertile ones too. The most important thing is the determination to work hard and make revolution. We should not be afraid of natural conditions, however hard. As long as we can arouse the people's enthusiasm and launch a vigorous mass move-

ment, we're in a position to change unfavourable conditions into favourable ones. It's entirely possible for us to build Tachai-type fields on slabs of rock!"

There was a sudden stir among those present.

"You're right," said one committeeman. "When a thousand hearts beat as one, Mount Tai can be moved, as the saying goes. It's precisely by relying on the masses that we've transformed many of our hills into fields over the past ten years or so."

"What conditions had we when we waged our first battle against Wolf Lair?" chimed in another. "Not many people believed then that fruit trees could grow out of rock. And yet, when the masses swung into action, we in fact turned a rocky slope into an orchard."

"Sandstone Hollow was always dry. Furthermore, it was hit this year by bad drought. Who would have believed that our fight against the drought could have resulted in a bumper harvest? Wasn't that because the Party branch called on the masses in good time to bring in water from over the hills, overcoming all sorts of difficulties? Now that we're thinking of creating Tachai-type fields, why can't we organize the masses to carry in earth from over the hills?"

The more they presented facts and reasons, the more clearly they could see and think and the greater their confidence became in the building of Tachai-type fields. Finally it was decided that Party secretary Chang Kuei-shun, deputy secretary Yen Pao-yu and Party branch committee member Li Feng-yuan should lead the core members of the militia in the task. They would first build a one-*mu* Tachai-type field on the grey stone slabs of North Hill.

Again the same deputy secretary took a different view. He said, "Just do some digging on the field edges and mend the embankments a little. That'll be enough. Think

of the labour it would take to build Tachai-type fields on bare rocks! Even if we covered a *mu* with two or three inches of earth, how much grain could we expect to get from that?"

"But this isn't mainly a matter of building a one-*mu* field," interposed Kuei-shun, "but a question—and a very important question at that—of whether or not we guide the masses onto the Tachai road. If we can win this battle, you may be sure that one *mu* of Tachai-type field will multiply ten and a hundred times. The one *mu* is the starting point for radically changing Sandstone Hollow's conditions of production."

And so, on the third day of the first lunar month, the battle began. As North Hill had steep gradients and was covered with jutting stones, the only way was to carve troughs in the slope, build embankments and fill the troughs with earth brought in from Talaoyu, five *li* distant—a gigantic task! Again Kuei-shun, Pao-yu and Feng-yuan studied "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains" together with the young militia members.

Kuei-shun said, "To take the Tachai road we must again display the spirit of the Foolish Old Man. We must carry back on our shoulders the soil that has been washed down the hillsides over the years. Like starting out in the Red Army's Long March of twenty-five thousand *li*, today, in this Sandstone Hollow, we'll take the first step in our long march. This is our glorious task!"

One after another the young militia, high in spirit and strong in morale, assured the Party branch that they would make every effort to temper and steel themselves in the battle so as to qualify better as true successors to the revolutionary cause.

The news about building a Tachai-type field soon spread throughout the village. All the poor and lower-middle peasants were overjoyed, and even old poor peasants requested the brigade cadres to allow them to join in the fight. "Let's carry this 'mountain-removal' through to the end!" they said. "In making revolution you can't ask us old people to stand aside." Again, there were a few who adopted a wait-and-see attitude. "Say what you like, but how do you think you can get crops out of rock?" they said.

Directing their fire at Kuei-shun, the class enemies took the occasion to spread their lies and slanders secretly, saying that attempting to carve a field out of rock was a waste of money and a lot of labour down the drain.

Politically firm, Sandstone Hollow's poor and lower-middle peasants were clear-cut on who should be loved and who hated, and would wage tit-for-tat struggles against any class enemies who came out to disrupt. At the same time they would help and try to bring round those who did not yet understand the significance of the project. An old peasant put it rightly when he said, "This one-*mu* field which is to be cut out of hard rock will be a pacesetter showing our great resolve and correct orientation. With this as a demonstration field, we'll soon have a hundred *mu* and even a thousand *mu* of Tachai-type fields."

Early that morning snowflakes were whirling and shortly afterwards a raging north wind rose, driving blinding snow before it. In this biting cold weather the people on the work-site managed to make a few cracks in the solid rock and pry up several slabs. The gully rang with the clanging of hammers, the shouting of slogans and the echoing of lively songs.

They were hard at it when they came upon a huge boulder that looked like a cow lying there. A dozen people came immediately to tackle it and managed to upend it. Then they

tried to ease it to the edge of the cliff. Suddenly it turned on its side. Now they could neither move the boulder along nor lay it down, and in this position it was a danger to the people around.

Kuei-shun leaned against it with all his strength and called to his comrades to do the same. Then he shouted, "Push!" and all together they shoved the rock over so that the danger was averted.

It was a victory of a sort and Kuei-shun said, "Now, making revolution is like heaving that boulder. So long as we dare to tackle the problem, we can overcome it."

Work on the project progressed rapidly. A stone foundation one *mu* in size was nearing completion. In accordance with the proposals put forward by the masses, the Party branch decided to chisel rock and work on the field during the day and carry earth from Talaoyu at night.

"Leave this job to us militia," said Li Feng-yuan, "and we'll show you what we can do."

"Agreed!" said Kuei-shun. "But how big a labour force can you muster for night work?"

"At least a hundred," replied Feng-yuan.

"At least a hundred," repeated Kuei-shun, calculating. "Well, if each carries two baskets of earth a day, we'll have two thousand baskets of earth in ten days. That will mean the birth of our first Tachai-type field in that time!"

His eyes shone at the thought of it, and his face lit up with a smile. That night the crescent moon had hardly climbed to the top of East Hill when a biting north wind rose and in a moment the moon was hidden by dark clouds and the hills were plunged into pitch blackness. However, with the Party branch committee members in the lead, the hundred-odd young militia members made for Talaoyu with their spades and baskets. The going was hard over the rugged

path in the darkness, but the furious wind which kept hurling dust into their eyes was worse. Yet, militant and daring, they thought nothing of the hardships. They were thinking about how years ago the heroic Red Army crossed marshes and snow-covered mountains to seize victory in the revolution, and what a glorious task they were now undertaking to take the Tachai road and make Tachai-type fields.

On their way back, carrying baskets of earth on poles slung over their shoulders, they groped their way up the hill slopes, trudging on in the teeth of the sandstorm. Some stubbed their toes on stones but bore the pain bravely and plodded on. Others were knocked down by the wind and smothered with dust, but they quickly picked themselves up and went on. Kuei-shun would often keep their spirits up by quoting Chairman Mao's words in "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains": **We must persevere and work unceasingly, and we, too, will touch God's heart. Our God is none other than the masses of the Chinese people. If they stand up and dig together with us, why can't these two mountains be cleared away?**

Night after night they kept working like this, and the layer of earth on the stone field bed grew thicker as the days passed. One inch, two inches, half a foot. . . .

The indomitable spirit of the Party branch committee as well as the young militia members did move "God"—more and more commune members came to join the battle.

About a dozen old people in their 60s or 70s also volunteered. They carried in basketfuls of loess soil on shoulder-poles from beyond the hills. When urged to rest, they declined, saying, "You're never too old to work. The older you are, the more you should try to emulate the Foolish Old Man. If we can't see to work at night, we can at least work in the daytime. Even if we add only one clod, we'll feel easier."

Housewives arranged their households so that they could also turn out to lend a helping hand. With dust-pans and aprons they carried earth to North Hill where people were vying with one another for bigger loads and a faster pace.

The Communist Party's line is the people's line. When the political line is correct, nature takes on a new look.

With more and more people pitching into the work and the layer of earth on the grey slabs growing thicker and thicker, there was also a swift change in the way people looked at things. The more the poor and lower-middle peasants worked, the more eager they were for the battle, the greater their enthusiasm and the higher their morale. Those who at first jeered at people building the field on hard rocks began to think differently. They said, "Things can't be done in a routine way now. It won't do to be a stick-in-the-mud, nor will it do just to potter around. The only way for us is to take the Tachai road pointed out by Chairman Mao, for it is a sunny road that leads to happiness." And these former doubters also asked to join in the work.

The surging tide of the mass movement to learn from Tachai was pounding away at all sorts of conservative ideas. The deputy secretary who failed to see eye to eye with his comrades began to realize that he had been behind the times. While seeing to it that the fields under his charge were well tilled and levelled, he snatched time now and then to do his bit in the work.

Working against time, the people of Sandstone Hollow persisted in the battle for 10 days and nights and finally succeeded in covering the one *mu* of rock with a layer of loess soil a foot thick. To commemorate the event they erected at the edge of this "pace-setting field" a stone tablet bearing the inscription:

With 2,000 basketfuls of earth
Carried 10,000 *li*,
We made bare rocks give birth
To the *mu* you see.
And soon on this good land
Golden crops will stand.

A saying goes: "Add one inch to the layer of earth on a field and your bins will brim over with grain." In order to turn this plot into a high-yield "spongy field" they decided to put more earth on it.

The Communist Youth League branch proposed: "When you go out, take a container and bring a little earth back with you."

The women commune members said: "We're not afraid of high hills or the long haul. We'll contribute our share of earth precious as gold."

From old people in their 70s or 80s to youngsters under 10, all joined in the battle. The village again sprang to new life.

The militia going to sink wells beyond North Hill carried rocks on their backs to the work-site and brought back earth when their day's work was over. People returning from market or a meeting made it a rule to fill their containers or knapsacks with earth.

The League deputy secretary Li Feng-chung returned from his grandmother's with a sack of earth on his bicycle. When his mother asked him what present he had brought back, he replied, "Pearls!" His mother opened the sack curiously and then exclaimed, "So it is! Hurry and take the treasure to the 'pace-setting field'!"

Every day from early morning when the rosy glow of dawn burst through the morning mist till deep dusk when the rolling hills were hazed over, there was a continuous stream of people carrying earth from the mouth of South Gully to

North Hill. In a few days' time the layer of earth on the "pace-setting field" had increased from one foot to over two.

One morning, when people went to work, they found a heap of chicken manure lying in the new field. Nobody knew who had deposited it there, but the young militia members quickly took up the idea. After work that day they cleaned out their hen-houses and pigsties and that night quietly carried the manure to the field. The next day people were surprised when they arrived to find manure of every description spread over the field. Old commune members said proudly: "The young people of our Sandstone Hollow are really acting like worthy successors to the cause of revolution!"

With the creation of this "pace-setting field" Tachai flowers began bursting into bloom throughout the valley.

The project of opening up 23 *mu* of Tachai-type fields on North Hill was in full swing. With the militia as spearhead, every man, woman and child in the village plunged into action. They pried up slabs of rock, removed big boulders and fetched in earth from beyond the hills. After a hard struggle which lasted throughout the spring months, 23 *mu* of water-conserving and fertilizer-retaining Tachai-type fields lay at last, even and level, over North Hill.

The story of the Sandstone Hollow people spread far and wide. In the course of building the 23 *mu* of land, visitors came from all parts of the country, and the gift they invariably brought to Sandstone Hollow was — earth!

People's Liberation Army men came with earth in their knapsacks and in gunny bags. Women of the Korean nationality came carrying earth from beyond the hills on their heads. Comrades from the Tibet and Inner Mongolia autonomous regions came with earth in the laps of their gowns.

When the news reached people abroad, foreign friends sent "friendship earth" to Sandstone Hollow from across the seas,

while foreign visitors to Sandstone Hollow brought earth with them to pay their respects.

Earth, so commonplace a thing in people's eyes, was indeed a precious gift to Sandstone Hollow! With profound sentiments of friendship, visitors placed earth of various colours in these fields, and many were moved to tears at hearing how the "pace-setting field" came to be. It showed them what people could accomplish with the colossal drive and indomitable spirit of the Foolish Old Man, the bright prospects of the movement to learn from the Tachai Brigade in agriculture, and the might of Mao Tsetung Thought.

A Struggle to Defend the Lifeline

IN 1966, during the upsurge in the movement to learn from Tachai, the cadres and commune members of Sandstone Hollow ushered in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

In those days almost every likely place in Sandstone Hollow—street corners and open fields, peasant homes and courtyards—became a battlefield of revolutionary mass criticism, with men, women and children all pitching in and turning the whole village into a great forum of debate. Armed with Mao Tsetung Thought, the commune members exposed and denounced the renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi for his evil plot to restore capitalism. In the light of this nation-wide movement, they re-examined the struggles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between the socialist and the capitalist roads, and between the revolutionary and the revisionist lines that had taken place in Sandstone Hollow. In their indignant condemnation of Liu Shao-chi for his criminal attempt to subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat, many old poor and lower-middle peasants told their own stories, contrasting their sufferings in the old society with their happiness in the new. They said, “In the old days our village was so poor that it had not even a name of

its own. It was our great leader Chairman Mao who guided us onto the road of revolution and who has led us forward along the socialist road of agricultural co-operation. But the big scoundrel Liu Shao-chi, bent on restoring capitalism, has been trying to undermine Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line in a thousand and one ways. He was dead set against us poor and lower-middle peasants from the first. In 1954 there was a big rumpus in Sandstone Hollow about disbanding the co-op. In 1959 certain people openly opposed the General Line for Socialist Construction, the Great Leap Forward and the People’s Commune. In 1961 there arose the evil wind of returning to “individual farming.” Only now, in 1966, has everything become clear. It was that big scoundrel Liu Shao-chi who was behind all those wrong things! Today we must thoroughly settle accounts with him!”

At a mass meeting to denounce Liu Shao-chi’s criminal attempt to restore capitalism, poor peasant Kao Sheng-ho told the commune members the blood-and-tears history of his family. He choked up as he said, “When I was twelve, my father fled the village because a landlord pressed him for the rent. Years later I learned that he had died by the roadside. My big brother starved to death soon after, and my mother set out with my little brother and sister to look for father. I never saw nor heard of them again. . . . And so, from the age of twelve I was left all alone in the world without so much as a pair of chopsticks or a bowl to my name. I worked like a donkey for a landlord for the next eighteen years.

“Then, at liberation, thanks to the leadership of the Communist Party and Chairman Mao, we poor and down-trodden people stood up and took the road of socialism leading from the elementary co-op through the advanced co-op to the people’s commune. Conditions in our brigade are improving each

day, and so is the commune members' life. Like other families, mine has moved into a new house of brick. In summer we have decent light clothing and in winter we have enough padded things. We eat and dress well all the year round. But Liu Shao-chi is opposed to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. He wants to stage a capitalist come-back and unleash the landlords and rich peasants to ride roughshod over us poor and lower-middle peasants again. What a pipe dream!"

At the mention of oppression and exploitation by the landlords and rich peasants, the commune members one after another expressed their inveterate hatred for Liu Shao-chi. Poor peasant Li Shu-ching said indignantly, "That scoundrel Liu Shao-chi has been peddling the revisionist stuff that class struggle has died out and there is no more class struggle. As everyone knows, from the setting up of the first mutual-aid teams to the founding of the people's commune in 1958 and up to the present moment, the class enemies have never for a moment behaved themselves. Can you tell me one period of change in recent years when the class enemies have not come out and disrupted? The class enemies are still living. And they're not reconciled to their defeat but are always dreaming of restoration. Liu Shao-chi has been telling such barefaced lies because he supports the landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and bourgeois Rightists, and he wants them to ride on our backs again. We must never forget class struggle! We must march along the road of revolution pointed out by Chairman Mao until we reach the goal of communism!"

In such terms, whether spoken or written, the broad masses of poor and lower-middle peasants denounced the renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi. Big-character posters exposing and repudiating his crimes covered the walls along-

side the streets and lanes. Angry shouts of "Down with Liu Shao-chi!" shook the hills and gullies of Sandstone Hollow.

As the Cultural Revolution developed in depth, political swindlers like Liu Shao-chi, seeing that their days were numbered, hastened to change their tactics in a desperate struggle to save their necks. Using the counter-revolutionary tactics of "negating all," "suspecting all" and "overthrowing all," they completely denied the great achievements made by the Chinese people in socialist revolution and construction under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Their aim was to change the Party's basic line, subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat and restore capitalism. Not to miss what they thought a good opportunity, the handful of class enemies in Sandstone Hollow came out into the open and spread rumours to create confusion among the villagers. In the fond hope of regaining their "lost paradise," they tried for all they were worth to negate the socialist road taken by the people of Sandstone Hollow and their achievements in transforming the hills.

In 1962 the rich peasant Tou Chen-hai was sentenced by the People's Government to labour under mass supervision for destroying public property. After that he made a show of exemplary behaviour, hanging his head and keeping his eyes on the ground. But recently he had been acting quite differently. Instead of sighing and grumbling as he had been doing once he arrived home, he strode about with his square head in the air. One evening he grinned viciously and said to his wife, who was also a reactionary like himself, "Some higher-up has spoken for us. Our day for revenge has come." After whispering and plotting in their dingy dark room, they went about the village spreading rumours and sowing the seeds of dissension.

"Sandstone Hollow's gone wrong. We'll have to change everything," they ranted. "Sandstone Hollow's achievements are hollow. Its name as a standard-bearer is a fraud."

Within a few days the wholesome atmosphere of a socialist new village was poisoned. Some dubious characters began to get into the act too.

The poor and lower-middle peasants and veteran Party members, with their tempering and testing in long years of class struggle, saw through the class enemies' intrigues at once. They said firmly, "With the Party and Chairman Mao to back us up, we have nothing to fear. No fingers can pierce the blue sky; no teeth can bite off a huge rock; no storm can wash away Tachai-type fields. These wolves in sheep's clothing may make a big fuss but they can't budge our socialist state an inch!"

Kuei-shun said, "You're right. Without Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line we poor and lower-middle peasants wouldn't be what we are today. We'll fight to the death anyone who attempts to change Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and reject the socialist road."

A great mass debate took place in Sandstone Hollow. It centred around three questions: Was the road taken by Sandstone Hollow Brigade right or wrong? Were its achievements hollow or not? Was the fame it had won a fraud or not?

Young and old in the village followed this debate with serious concern. For days the old mother of Li Chang-shun, a poor peasant, kept reminding her son, "Chang-shun, I hear it said that Sandstone Hollow is on the wrong track, that our achievements were exaggerated and we should not be a standard-bearer brigade. It's obvious that some people are trying to turn back the clock for us. You must never let them get away with it!"

A person born and reared in poverty and misery most appreciates what Chairman Mao has done for the poor and down-trodden. And this is true of Chang-shun, whose family was among the many in Sandstone Hollow which had drained the cup of bitterness in the old days. Chang-shun had always loved the Party and socialism, had always been devoted to the revolution and the collective since becoming a commune member at the age of 16. One winter day while he was the brigade's stockman, a cow calved. Afraid that the calf might freeze, he laid it on his own *kang* bed and covered it with his quilt. Later, after he became a cart driver, his horse suddenly shied one day while pulling the cart along the brink of a precipice. That time Chang-shun risked his life to stop the horse and save the cart. After he was elected team leader, he worked even harder and was always doing the dirty and tiring jobs. He often said, "I till the land for the revolution, for realizing the goal of communism. I'm not afraid of hard work or poor conditions, but take conquering difficulties as an honour and a pleasure. Chairman Mao saved my whole family. To live up to his expectations I am more than willing to work wholeheartedly for socialism, pulling the cart of revolution all my life."

Now, understanding at once the gravity of his mother's words, Chang-shun said with emotion, "Don't worry, ma. No matter who it is that opposes the great road of socialism pointed out by Chairman Mao, or tries to negate Sandstone Hollow as a standard-bearer, I'll fight that person to the end."

Liu Yu-fu, son of the old poor peasant Liu Jen-yu, had been influenced by the rumours and was beginning to doubt the correctness of the road Sandstone Hollow had been taking. Testing the young man's thinking, Jen-yu asked him one evening, "Some people say that Sandstone Hollow's on the wrong

track, and that it's a phoney standard-bearer. What do you think?"

"It's hard for me to say," came the son's reply.

Impatient, the old man came back, "What's so hard about it? This is clearly enemy sabotage aimed at throwing us back into the miseries of the old days." Then the father went on to tell Yu-fu about the suffering he had gone through before liberation.

When Jen-yu was a boy, the family had fled famine in their home village and settled down in Sandstone Hollow. There they put up a stone-slab hut on the hillside and worked a plot of hilly land rented from a landlord. A year's toil and anxiety, however, did not even give enough to pay the rent, so they had to eat wild greens, sour dates and bran. In winter Jen-yu's grandfather and parents had nothing but worn-out gunny sacks to fend off the wind and cold. During the day Jen-yu and his two brothers would sit huddled up on the *kang* bed, without a rag on their backs, and at night they covered themselves with straw and shreds of cotton wadding, for the family had no quilt at all. One night when the three little boys burst out crying from the cold, their father removed the cooking pot from the cook-stove next to the *kang* bed and let them huddle together in the stove. Tears welled up in the eyes of the old man as he told this, and he added with mixed sorrow and anger, "In the old society I hadn't so much as a pair of trousers until I was eighteen, and I got my first pair of shoes only when I was twenty-five!"

Drying his tears, he looked up at the portrait of Chairman Mao on the wall and said with deep emotion, "It is our beloved Chairman Mao who has led us to struggle to our feet and take the road of socialism. It is to Chairman Mao that we poor folks owe all our happiness today. Take our family for example. We now live in a new house of brick and

we have new quilts on our beds. We have savings in the bank and sufficient grain in the house. I've never in my life eaten so well or been so well clothed. In the old days I wouldn't have dared even dream of such happiness. Yet now, when class enemies come into the open with their disruption, all you can say is, 'It's hard for me to say,' and you stand aside from the fight against them. How can you excuse yourself before Chairman Mao who gave you your good life?"

Deeply moved by his father's words, Yu-fu said before the portrait of Chairman Mao, "I am a descendant of poor peasants in Sandstone Hollow. I am determined to follow you and continue to make revolution. I'll fight Liu Shao-chi and his like to the finish."

At a meeting that very evening, in the middle of a heated debate, a scoundrel got up and yelled at the top of his voice: "The higher-ups have given the order to tear everything up, pull every authority down, and not to trust anybody! Isn't it clear? All we small fry can do is comply. I'm telling you, Sandstone Hollow's on the wrong track, its achievements are empty boasts and it's a phoney standard-bearer. . . ."

Unable to contain himself any longer, Chang-shun cut in indignantly, "Who do you mean by 'the higher-ups'? Aren't they your evil master Liu Shao-chi and his like? And who are the 'small fry' that follow them? They're none other than the whole lot of you unreformed landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, bad elements and bourgeois Rightists. We should not forget that before we got organized our grain yield was no more than seventy or eighty *jin a mu* and we had to eat grain from the state. We get five hundred or six hundred *jin per mu* now, and sell surplus grain to the state each year. Is that true or not?"

"True! True!" came the response from others. "Sandstone Hollow used to be nothing but barren, rocky hill slopes. Now

they're covered with pines, cypresses and orchard trees that yield hundreds of thousands of *jin* every year. Did these drop from the skies?"

"We poor and lower-middle peasants in Sandstone Hollow didn't even have enough water to drink," added another. "We had to carry every drop from five *li* away. Now water flows by our doorsteps. Did this happen by itself while we sat twiddling our thumbs at home?"

"In the old society we poor folks filled our bellies with bran and whatever we could pick from the hills. We hadn't one padded garment all winter. Ever since Chairman Mao led us onto the road of socialism we've had a good life and don't have to worry about our food and clothing. Is there one among us that doesn't love socialism and feel grateful to our great leader Chairman Mao! The way Sandstone Hollow is going is fine. You're toeing Liu Shao-chi's line. Both your mouths are watering for a capitalist come-back. But the dream you two share will never come true!"

By now the meeting was at the boiling point. Voices were raised one after another: "Well put!" "Right!" "Let him answer!"

The scoundrel, with no words left, could only keep on growling: "The old days were better than now, better than now! . . ."

"Tell us," came the crisp demand, "is it for you and the rich peasant Tou Chen-hai that the present is not so good as the past, or for the poor and lower-middle peasants?"

"H'm, h'm . . . I . . ." stammered the man, not knowing how to go on.

"Cut your stammering!" said a poor peasant. "Of course you and Tou Chen-hai are not so rich as you used to be, and if not for the liberation you'd have gone unpunished for your crimes. But the people are the masters now, and if you go

on opposing the Party and socialism, you'll be placed under the people's dictatorship!"

Like a tree stripped of its bark, this man exposed and shown in his true colours had been hit in a vulnerable spot. He broke out in a sweat, hung his head and fled from the room, his face as pale as death.

During the mass revolutionary criticism and repudiation the poor and lower-middle peasants recalled the momentous class struggles that had taken place in Sandstone Hollow since liberation and indignantly condemned Liu Shao-chi and company for opposing Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

The issue was quite clear, and both cadres and commune members now had a better idea of what was right and what was wrong. Those who had doubted the correctness of Sandstone Hollow's orientation and belittled its achievements began to see that they had been taken in.

Soon afterwards a public accusation meeting was held in the village and the cadres and commune members, united as one, exposed and repudiated the reactionary rich peasant Tou Chen-hai and his wife Feng Kuei-chih for sabotaging the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

"On our way to work at Moumouyu one afternoon," one said, "Tou Chen-hai said to me, 'Sandstone Hollow's on the wrong track. Its achievements are no achievements at all and it's a phoney standard-bearer.' Now, Tou Chen-hai, I ask you, didn't you cook up that story?"

"And you, Feng Kuei-chih!" accused another. "The other day you brought my old mother a few bunches of grapes as though you were very concerned about her. Then you took the opportunity to say to her how we'd still suffer from hunger even if we tried to carry the Red Flag in Sandstone Hollow for the next eighty years, that in any case the old days were better than now. What did you mean by that? You

told me that building Tachai-type fields was a waste of labour, that nothing would come of it. Well, as the saying goes, you can't expect to find ivory in a dog's mouth. Can you deny opposing learning from Tachai?"

Then the head of the village security committee produced the dozens of title deeds that had been concealed in Tou Chen-hai's house and showed them at the meeting. When the poor and lower-middle peasants saw these old title deeds, their anger knew no bounds.

"Down with Liu Shao-chi!" they shouted.

"Down with Tou Chen-hai and Feng Kuei-chih!"

"Long live the dictatorship of the proletariat!"

"Long live Chairman Mao!"

One after another these militant slogans rang out from the masses.

Faced by so many witnesses and ironclad proof of his crimes, Tou Chen-hai was indeed frightened at the might of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Quaking all over, he finally had to admit his guilt.

The actual events of class and two-line struggles fully confirmed the brilliant statement of Chairman Mao: **The current Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is absolutely necessary and most timely for consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, preventing capitalist restoration and building socialism.**

Veteran cadres like Chang Kuei-shun had been tempered and tested in this revolution and heartily welcomed criticisms or any other form of help from the masses. This renewed their revolutionary vigour and strengthened their ties with the masses so that they fought better in the van of the three great revolutionary movements—class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment. A contingent of new cadres had also come to the fore, and these young people

dared to act and dared to blaze a new path, adding much to the combat force of the leading group. Both the cadres and the commune members had, in particular, raised their understanding of class and two-line struggles through studying Chairman Mao's works in the revolutionary criticism and repudiation.

The Sandstone Hollow people began carrying out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in a more conscious way. When a suggestion was made to hire out the brigade's tractors and horse-carts for transport in order to make money for the brigade and commune members, the poor and lower-middle peasants felt at once that there was something wrong. Several people went to the brigade leadership and said, "Our tractors and horse-carts should be used to carry in earth and sand to build Tachai-type fields. That's what we ought to do in the slack season. Taking on hauling jobs for money would be taking the capitalist road." The brigade cadres agreed, and soon the brigade's seven horse-carts and a tractor were mobilized for the bringing in of earth and sand. The commune members' proposal speeded up the movement to learn from Tachai.

Guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, a new kind of people arose in the storm and stress of the Cultural Revolution in Sandstone Hollow, people who understood well class struggle and the struggle between the revolutionary and the revisionist lines, people who were devoted to socialism and the collective. An entirely new spirit was coming into being.

The wheat growing on the hill slope belonging to the Second Production Team was found one morning to have been watered when it was dry. The Fourth Production Team stockman found piles of cut straw beside the manger early one morning after they had run out of fodder. Commune mem-

bers would not take so much as a bite of windfalls in the apple orchards but picked them up one by one and turned them in to the brigade. During the harvest time, ears of corn or millet dropped on the road from horse-carts were all taken to the threshing grounds. People said: "To take the socialist road, to carry out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, one must start from scratch — from doing small things the right way."

This consciousness on the part of the commune members to carry out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line helped much to further revolutionize the cadres' thinking. To rectify any bad tendency in its style of work, the Party branch held regular meetings which commune members were encouraged to attend. They fought selfish ideas, repudiated revisionism and were on the look-out against arrogance and complacency. Several times, they organized cadres and commune members to visit two advanced brigades in order to learn their good experience, overcome their own weak points, and push the movement to learn from Tachai still further.

In 1969, responding to Chairman Mao's great call set forth in the Party's Ninth National Congress: **Unite to win still greater victories**, the cadres and commune members in Sandstone Hollow pitched into a fierce battle for agricultural production. In a winter and spring of hard work they built 100 *mu* of Tachai-type fields, brought 100 *mu* under irrigation and afforested another 100 *mu*, naming it "Forest of the Ninth Party Congress" to mark the great occasion. These and a dozen other major projects fully demonstrated the immense power the Cultural Revolution had generated.

With songs of victory of the Cultural Revolution riding the spring wind, a fresh battle to transform nature had started on Sandstone Hollow's hills, where red banners waved like a sea of flame. . . .

Hacking Out a Tunnel Opens Up New Horizons

MOTIVATED by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and guided by the line of unity for victory of the Party's Ninth National Congress, Sandstone Hollow reaped a bumper harvest again in 1970.

The bright red stacks of sorghum and shining heaps of golden corn on the threshing grounds looked especially rich in the autumn sunshine. While the commune members were shelling the ears of maize nearly a foot long, they recalled how, since the Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line had gone still deeper into the hearts of the people; how the mass movement to learn from Tachai in agriculture was surging forward wave upon wave — how greatly Sandstone Hollow had changed.

Not only have the Chinese people come in an endless stream to visit and learn from Sandstone Hollow, but thousands of foreign friends from all over the world have also visited the village. All of this has given great support and encouragement to the people of Sandstone Hollow.

As soon as the new crops were gathered in, the old poor peasants suggested to the brigade Party branch, "If we want to follow Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in our work, we shouldn't rest content with our achievements, with having

carried all those baskets of earth over such a great distance to make a one-*mu* field. We've gone far all right, but we're still far, far away from communism. The loads of earth were heavy but, in comparison with the tasks of the Chinese and the world revolution, they seem light. They are only a starting point in making revolution. We must continue and go on."

It was a fine suggestion, and the Party branch, in order to develop agriculture on a large scale, mobilized the masses to draw up production plans immediately. They decided to transform Long Neck Hill first. Before the Cultural Revolution no more than 50 *mu* of Tachai-type fields were built each year. But this winter and spring 150 *mu* were planned for the slopes of Long Neck Hill.

The deputy Party secretary who had at first opposed building Tachai-type fields had been convinced of its correctness by the fact of substantial increases in grain yields in the fields. But he still could not sum up this lesson in the light of the political line and world outlook. He tended to direct collective production with the ideas of individual peasants and shied away from doing things in a big way. Now, he considered this plan too "ambitious." "How can three years' work be done in one?" was his comment.

The poor and lower-middle peasants argued with him: "The Party calls on us to develop agriculture on a large scale, but you're always shaking your head and saying, 'This won't do!' and 'That's impossible!' How can you play a leading role in learning from Tachai like that?" And they went ahead with preparations to do battle on the three-*li*-long stretch of slope at Long Neck Hill.

The Party branch committee members led the militiamen up Long Neck Hill, followed by quite a few of the older commune members. Most of the latter had been around 50 when

they built the "Old Folks Embankment"; now they were all in their 60s. Mid-way of the hill they looked down proudly at their "Old Folks Embankment" at the bottom of the gully. Then they looked up at the luxuriant green groves of pine and cypress at the summit, the giant stairsteps of terraced fields and large orchards on the surrounding hills. They were very moved and stirred to think back to the days of their building. How different Sandstone Hollow was from 13 years ago! What brilliant prospects there were for its future! Their courage undiminished by age, they volunteered to join again in the hard work of building the terrace embankments.

Their spirit of continuing to make revolution and carve fields out of hills inspired the youngsters with revolutionary enthusiasm. Vigorous, daring in thought and action and eager to learn, they were determined to temper and to prepare themselves to be good successors to the revolution, and they always asked for assignment to the hardest jobs.

Braving wind and snow, the cadres and commune members worked throughout the winter and spring. Altogether they moved 75,000 cubic metres of earth and stone, built 300 stone embankments and created 200 *mu* of level fields of the Tachai type. They had overfulfilled their plan by 50 *mu*!

The problem that rose to first importance as the field area was increased over the years was how to deepen the layer of top soil.

Sandstone Hollow's hills lacked earth, so soil had to be brought in from the wilderness beyond. And there was only the one South Hill Pass in and out of the village, a difficult route for bringing in earth!

In the spring of 1971, the Party branch, in response to the wishes of the masses, proposed driving a tunnel through North Hill to create another passage. The bringing in of earth would be speeded up and with it agricultural development. The

hill was surveyed and found to be several hundred metres high and as many thick. Again a few people shook their heads. "Is it possible to tunnel through such a big hill with only a few chisels?" they questioned. But the poor and lower-middle peasants firmly supported the proposal of the Party branch. "As the Eight-Point Charter for Agriculture* says, soil is basic," they said. "A tunnel through North Hill to speed up the transport of soil will help radically to change the features of Sandstone Hollow. We want to build a thousand *mu* of irrigated land that will yield a thousand *jin* per *mu*!"

When the Engineering Corps of a People's Liberation Army unit heard that Sandstone Hollow was going to hew a road through a hill, they sent men to help the brigade plan the construction work. The commune members were overjoyed at this, and their determination and enthusiasm grew.

But the conservative deputy Party secretary brought up the question of expense. "North Hill is just one big mass of rock, hard as jade," he said. "How much would the project cost?"

"That depends. If we're careful, possibly less than twenty thousand yuan."

The deputy secretary's jaw dropped. "That finishes it. It would eat up our brigade members' income for two years!"

Again this person's objection was over-ruled, and the task of cutting the tunnel was entrusted to the deputy Party secretary and militia company commander, Li Feng-yuan, and 27 militia members.

When Kuei-shun and Feng-yuan reported to the commune Party committee how they had planned to tunnel through North Hill, the latter praised them for their revolutionary

* Referring to the eight important measures for increasing agricultural production: deep ploughing and soil improvement, fertilizer, water conservancy, seed selection, close planting, plant protection, field management, and reform of tools.

initiative and gave them their support. When Wang Kuo-fan, the county Party secretary, heard about the plan, he was very pleased and said to Kuei-shun, "Go ahead with it, Comrade Kuei-shun! The county Party committee supports you and will help you to solve any difficulties."

Under the leadership of the higher Party committees and supported by the People's Liberation Army unit, the digging of a tunnel through the hill began.

In the heat of the battle, Windbag from Talaoyu, who had said that their well-digging was "a waste of time," heard what the Sandstone Hollow people were attempting and arrived one day to look around. At first sight of what was going on, he paled with fright. "How can you be so rash?" he asked the militia workers. "You've dislodged the water-controlling Dragon King and now you're hammering at the Mountain Fairy. When will you ever finish it?"

"In a year!" replied the militia platoon leader and Youth Leaguer, Chang Fu-lai. Scratching his bald head, Windbag said, "You're boasting! Your whiskers will turn white and you'll lose all your teeth before you get a tunnel through that hill!"

"If our generation doesn't see it," said Chang Fu-lai, there are more youngsters coming along."

In order to defray the expenses of the project and also support national construction, the commune members decided to break up the rock hewn out of the tunnel and sell the gravel to the state.

The boom of explosions shook the North Hill work-site. The clatter of hammers rang through the village streets. The commune members not only crushed rock in the brigade, but also did it at home in their off hours as a household side line. Everyone was busy.

In deep winter the militia workers perspired profusely while pounding and prying in the tunnel, their sweat freezing when they emerged into the bitter wind. But no one complained.

Twenty-year-old Chang Fu-lai was not much of a talker and usually wore an ingenuous, honest smile on his face. When there was a tough task to be done, he would liven up and go about it very conscientiously and carefully.

When Fu-lai returned from a production team meeting the night before the work on the tunnel started, his father called him to his room and said, "Fu-lai, how old are you now?"

Puzzled, Fu-lai said with a smile, "Dad! I'm already twenty. Have you forgotten?"

"How could I forget?" came his father's reply. "The year you were born Kuei-shun was organizing a mutual-aid team. You were born in the new society and have grown up under the Red Flag. When I was your age, I was still working as a hired hand for a landlord. If not for the Communist Party and Chairman Mao saving us poor people, we wouldn't be living the good life we are living today. You young people must never on any account forget the road Sandstone Hollow has travelled!"

On the work-site, whenever Fu-lai thought of Chairman Mao's high hopes for the younger generation, and of what his elders said, he felt strengthened. One day when Fu-lai was dislodging dangerous loose rocks with a crowbar, a large piece of rock suddenly came crashing down on him. He dodged but still it skinned his leg. When urged to have it bandaged, he only said, "Never mind!" and went on clearing the danger spot till the job was done. Then he sighed with relief and smiled.

And that was not the only time. When there was a rock-fall from the tunnel and someone needed to be sent in to

dislodge loose overhanging rocks, Chang Fu-lai was the first to step forward. "I'll clear it," he said firmly.

"I'll go!"

"Me too!"

Every one of the 27 militiamen wanted to go in, so Fu-lai said, "So many couldn't move about freely inside and would only make an easy target for falling rocks. By myself I can dodge them better. If I should lose my life, other comrades can go on."

But the militia deputy company commander Wang Yi-chun said, "Two should go. If there's an accident to one, the other can go to his rescue. Come on, the two of us will go in."

So Fu-lai and Yi-chun took off their padded coats and charged into the tunnel, armed with crowbars and dynamite. More rocks came hurtling down at the same site. The two pressed their bodies against the rock wall and were prying down hazardous rocks when suddenly they heard a cracking sound overhead. Yi-chun pulled Fu-lai to safety just as a large piece of rock crashed down near him. The dust was suffocating, and they could scarcely open their eyes or even breathe. Still they continued the fight. One large piece of rock hung loose but could not be dislodged with their crowbars, so they fastened a package of dynamite to a bar, thrust it into a small crevice in the rock and lighted the fuse. Then, quickly, they moved to safety as the rock came crashing down. . . .

One hour, two hours . . . four hours passed. Fellow fighters transporting rock out of the tunnel were getting more and more anxious about Fu-lai and Yi-chun and called in to them several times, asking to change places with them. But the answer was always the same: "No need. We've almost finished!"

It took the two men six hours to clear the danger area, and it was late in the night when Fu-lai and Yi-chun finally came out of the tunnel and into the cold wind, dripping with sweat. The comrades at once grasped their hands and praised them for their spirit of fearing neither hardship nor death.

And so, time after time, difficulties and dangers were encountered and overcome by the militia — worthy successors to the cause of revolution.

Kuei-shun and other members of the Party branch committee fought neck to neck with the militia day and night.

On one especially cold day when the temperature dropped sharply and a gale drove snow before it into the tunnel, some comrades going on the day shift suggested stopping the work until the wind went down. Kuei-shun's answer to this was: "Let's ask the Foolish Old Man." Then he and the others studied again their guide article from Chairman Mao's works and recalled the difficult course of Sandstone Hollow from the time they got organized to tame Wolf Lair to their building of the one-*mu* field on nothing but rock. At the same time they recalled the events in the struggle between the revolutionary and the revisionist lines in Sandstone Hollow. "After all," said Kuei-shun, "is this really such a bad snowstorm? That winter we conquered Wolf Lair there was a far worse blizzard than today's, but not one person on the whole work-site asked to stop work then. At that time we ate the cold lunches we brought with us and quenched our thirst with handfuls of snow, but we fought on in the teeth of the blizzard. Why do you think we did that?"

"For today's good life; for the building of socialism!" came an answer.

"Right! We work hard not only for today's good life but also for the realization of the great ideal of communism.

Our conditions are much better now than when we were battling Wolf Lair. Can we bear to be called cowards?"

To this the militia responded with a quotation from Chairman Mao: **Be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory.** And again, in the icy wind and snow, the sturdy militia youth, in high spirits now, threw themselves together with their leaders into the hard battle for the tunnel.

In mid-spring 1972, when the tunnel was nearing completion, an unforeseen problem arose and sparked off another struggle within the Party branch.

Digging had been going on simultaneously from both ends of the tunnel. Somehow the two ends had gone a little off the mark. The deputy Party secretary who was diffident about the project insisted that the work should stop. He said, "Both ends are off line. The tunnel can never go through. Each day of work is just one more day's labour wasted. The sooner we stop the better!"

But Kuei-shun wouldn't hear of it. "As Chairman Mao pointed out long ago," he said, "**Conclusions invariably come after investigation, and not before.** We haven't even found out yet what the real situation is, why should we stop work?" He took a few sorghum stalks, marked them into feet and inches, and asked a primary-school teacher, Chou, and a few others to help him with the measuring.

After doing some surveying by local methods, Chou did the calculating and said that the two openings were only two and a half metres off. Another three or four metres of corrective tunnelling would put them in alignment. Only then did Kuei-shun feel easy.

He reported the results of the surveying at the Party branch committee meeting, which irritated the deputy Party secretary no end. "Your measurements aren't accurate," he pro-

tested huffily. "I've already had the measurements taken. The north opening is three and a half metres off, the south opening eight metres. The deviation is more than ten metres. The tunnel is hopeless. Work absolutely has to stop!"

This dispute, which appeared to be simply a matter of being "a few metres off" or "more than 10 metres off," was actually a manifestation of the differences between two ways of thinking and two political lines. The Party branch committee meeting expressed firm support for Kuei-shun's idea to go on and complete the tunnel.

It was not many days later that this was done and, like celebrating an important, happy event, men and women, old and young, laughed and sang as they hastened to North Hill.

Old commune members came, including those who had climbed over North Hill for scores of years carrying water on their shoulders. Old women came with the help of their canes. Crowds of people milled around the tunnel opening. Old Li Shu-shan patted the walls of the tunnel fondly, his eyes shining with tears of happiness. Pushing aside the crowds, he went into the tunnel, walked to the north opening and came ambling back again. Emerging from the south opening, he asked aloud, "I'm not dreaming, am I?"

"Shu-shan, it's real! It's not a dream."

Li Shu-shan turned to look at the tunnel again and, gazing at it, shouted: "It's real! It's real! Chairman Mao's leadership is brilliant! The road to socialism is fine!"

"Long live the Communist Party of China!"

"Long live Chairman Mao!"

This past year Sandstone Hollow sold the rock dug out during the tunnelling to support national construction. Collectively they crushed 4,500 cubic metres of it, and as a family side line the commune members crushed over 1,000 cubic metres. After deducting the expenses incurred in digging the

tunnel from the income obtained from selling the gravel, the brigade still had more than 10,000 yuan left.

That year they also built five other projects, including a pipeline 800 metres long to lead water uphill, a 600-metre-long channel winding over the hillside and four new storage ponds. Altogether they removed 55,000 cubic metres of earth and stone, doing in one year as much as they had done in the past three.

That year the cadres and commune members of Sandstone Hollow, tempered in the Cultural Revolution and relying on the correct line of the Party, on the strength of the collective and on the superiority of the socialist system, overcame disasters caused by wind and drought and still obtained the good harvest of 650 *jin* of grain per *mu*.

An even greater harvest was that the bitter struggle had tempered the people's revolutionary will, and hewing the tunnel through the hill had opened up new horizons for them. From then on people began to have a broader outlook and see farther ahead; they thought more and worked with greater zeal.

We Must Continue to Fight Hard

IN 1972 the Sandstone Hollow cadres and commune members, brimming over with enthusiasm and inspired by lofty ideals, welcomed the 20th anniversary of their responding to Chairman Mao's call: **Get organized!** With a view to implementing Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line better and to persisting in making revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the brigade Party branch acted in accordance with Chairman Mao's directive: **A line or a viewpoint must be explained constantly and repeatedly.** It decided on this happy day to start the movement to criticize Lin Piao and rectify the style of work in a thoroughgoing way. It called on the masses to study seriously the Party's basic line and the three fundamental principles put forward by Chairman Mao: **Practise Marxism, and not revisionism; unite, and don't split; be open and aboveboard, and don't intrigue and conspire.** It also called on them to review the historical experience that Sandstone Hollow had undergone in the past 20 years in waging the struggle between the proletarian and the bourgeois classes, between the socialist and the capitalist roads and between the revolutionary and the revisionist lines. The purpose of all this was to give Party members, cadres and commune members a good education in ideological and political line.

In the movement to criticize Lin Piao and rectify the style of work, the Party branch criticized and repudiated the counter-revolutionary crimes and the revisionist line of the bourgeois careerist, conspirator, double-dealer, renegade and traitor Lin Piao. It organized the cadres and commune members to read and study seriously, using repudiation as a means to promote study, and then applying what they had learned to deepen the repudiation. Thus they came to understand more clearly the distinction between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism, and the correct political line from the wrong one.

Tempered and tested in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the poor and lower-middle peasants of Sandstone Hollow lashed out with deep hatred at Lin Piao and his anti-Party clique. Street corners, alleyways, the open fields, threshing grounds and peasant homes and courtyards all became battlegrounds for the mass revolutionary criticism and repudiation.

Through this criticism and repudiation, the people understood better the ultra-Rightist nature of Lin Piao's revisionist line. In their "Outline of Project '571,'" a plan for an armed counter-revolutionary coup d'état, Lin Piao and his clique openly vilified the socialist system under the dictatorship of the proletariat and rabidly opposed the Cultural Revolution. This aroused the proletarian feelings and extreme indignation of the poor and lower-middle peasants. When they related the local class enemies' criminal sabotaging of the Cultural Revolution in the village with what Lin Piao did, they said in anger: "The Lin Piao anti-Party clique wanted to take up the cudgels for a handful of ghosts and monsters, clamouring that they should be 'liberated' politically and economically. This, in essence, was meant to reinstate the landlords and capitalists overthrown by the people, so that they

could launch a vindictive counter-attack against the working people, restore capitalism and set up a feudal-comprador-fascist dictatorship to hurl the people back into misery. Their sinister aim was to usurp the supreme power of the Party and the state, thoroughly betray the line as formulated by the Party's Ninth National Congress, radically change the Party's basic line and policies throughout the period of socialism, subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat and restore capitalism.

The revolutionary mass criticism of Lin Piao and other political swindlers opened the people's eyes to the fact of struggle inside the Party being a reflection within the Party ranks of class struggle in society at large. With the collapse of the Liu Shao-chi renegade clique, the Lin Piao anti-Party clique came out into the open in a trial of strength with the proletariat — a plain indication of the intense class struggle going on at home and abroad. The cadres and people were thus able to see still more clearly the laws governing the struggle between the two classes, the two roads and the two lines in the period of socialism, and the primary importance of adhering to the socialist position in the countryside. In short, it was a vivid and profound lesson in Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought for the people, as well as a solid and practical lesson in socialist education.

On the basis of the revolutionary repudiation campaign the Party branch, acting on Chairman Mao's teaching: **It is necessary to sum up experience conscientiously**, further encouraged the cadres and commune members to sum up the historical experience of Sandstone Hollow in carrying on the struggle between the two classes, the two roads and the two lines in the light of the Party's basic line.

During the appraisal, the people especially emphasized the political line and class struggle. They combined study with

exchanging views, and seriously recalled the road of struggle they had taken during the past 20 years.

From 1952 to 1957 the Party branch relied closely on the poor and lower-middle peasants, united with the middle peasants and responded actively to Chairman Mao's great call to get organized by taking the road of agricultural co-operation as he pointed out. They had organized first the elementary and later the advanced agricultural producers' co-operative. Because they had stood against the evil wind stirred up by the arch renegade Liu Shao-chi, who wanted to slash back the co-operatives, and because they hit hard at the sabotage of class enemies and criticized the well-to-do middle peasants' spontaneous tendency towards capitalism, the co-operative gathered strength as time went on. In the short space of five years Sandstone Hollow became self-sufficient in grain.

In 1958, under the guidance of the Party's General Line for Socialist Construction, a people's commune was set up and the Sandstone Hollow Brigade had its Great Leap Forward in agricultural production.

While fighting the serious natural calamities, the evil wind of *san zi yi bao* and the "four freedoms," whipped up by Liu Shao-chi, and the capitalist tendencies both inside the Party and in society at large, Sandstone Hollow reaped bumper harvests in the three years 1960-62.

In 1964, led by the Party branch, Sandstone Hollow's commune members resolutely responded to Chairman Mao's great call for learning from Tachai. Consequently, they overcame two years of extremely serious natural calamities and in fact reaped good harvests.

Since the Cultural Revolution, and especially since the movement to repudiate Lin Piao and rectify the style of work, under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, the mass movement to learn from Tachai has been carried on

in a thoroughgoing way. With the Party's basic line as the key link, the Sandstone Hollow people have persisted in the spirit of the Foolish Old Man who removed the mountains, perseveringly adhered to the socialist road, and criticized Right conservative ideas within the Party. All this has helped to bring about a tremendous change in the outlook of the entire brigade.

The cadres and commune members came to see clearly that they had been able to follow a correct orientation and road during the two decades since they responded to Chairman Mao's call for organization, because the Party branch had stuck to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. The tremendous changes that had taken place in Sandstone Hollow were due to the following factors: Firstly, the persistent implementation of the Party's basic line to grasp class struggle without wavering; secondly, the development of the mass movement to learn from Tachai in agriculture, which strengthened the masses' resolve to take the Tachai road and gave full play to their socialist initiative; and thirdly, the strict adherence to the policy of self-reliance and hard struggle in giving full expression to the spirit of the Foolish Old Man. Their experience showed the resolute implementation of a correct political line plus revolutionary drive to be the main factor for the upsurge of socialist agriculture.

The movement to criticize Lin Piao and rectify the style of work meant not only a profound education in ideological and political line for the Sandstone Hollow Party branch, but also a clarifying of the Party members' thinking. The summing-up brought home to them the fact that the strengthening of Party unity is essential in ensuring victory in revolution and construction. The Party branch is the core in leading the masses to carry on the three great revolutionary movements—class struggle, the struggle for production and

scientific experiment. Without unity in the Party branch committee, it is impossible to lead the masses to wage struggle and seize victory.

However, Party unity is by no means a spontaneous thing; it comes, rather, out of struggle. It is only through continually exposing contradictions and carrying on a vigorous ideological struggle to resolve them that people can distinguish right from wrong, reach a common understanding and strengthen unity based on Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

During the summing-up, Party secretary Chang Kuei-shun was very modest in listening to and accepting criticisms of him made by the poor and lower-middle peasants. He was strict in "dissecting" himself and conscientious in remoulding his world outlook. He said it was necessary to continually remove the hills, to bear in mind class struggle and the struggle between the two lines every single day, and to pay constant attention to ideological remoulding. He added that he was ready to work for the revolution, learn and continue remoulding himself so long as he lived.

The Party members, cadres and commune members of Sandstone Hollow were deeply moved at Kuei-shun's making such strict demands on himself. The deputy Party secretary who had opposed the building of Tachai-type fields and the hewing of a tunnel through North Hill was especially in the throes of a great mental struggle. In the light of Chairman Mao's policy: **Learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones and cure the sickness to save the patient**, the Party branch committee members, Party members and the poor and lower-middle peasants warmly helped him to see where he erred on major questions involving orientation and political line and how he should correct them. And so they arrived at a new unity in the common work on the basis of making a

clear distinction between right and wrong and achieving identical views in the light of the political line.

Guided by the line of unity for victory of the Party's Ninth National Congress and through the movement to criticize Lin Biao and rectify the style of work, the Sandstone Hollow Party branch became stronger politically, more united ideologically, more consolidated organizationally and more concerted in action. The Party members, cadres and commune members understood better the need to carry out class struggle and the struggle between the two lines and to continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. They had become even more conscientious in implementing Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and in taking the socialist road. People began to take a broader view of things, became more discerning and worked with more zest. While celebrating the 20th anniversary of collectivization they resolved to make the day the starting point for renewed emulation of the Foolish Old Man who removed the mountains and the first step in a long march.

In an Editor's Note to the *Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside*, Chairman Mao remarked that, in the persistent fight against Right opportunism, **many more battles still lie ahead**, and it was essential to **continue to fight hard**. With this in mind, the brigade Party branch resolved to arm itself even more strongly with the Party's basic line, continue to carry out the General Line for Socialist Construction and carry on in a thoroughgoing way the mass movement to learn from Tachai. They determined to remake nature in Sandstone Hollow and to do it in a big way. After thorough mass discussions and exchange of views, a new 10-year development plan was drawn up.

The success of a 10-year plan depends on what is achieved in the first five years. The first three will be crucial and, to

succeed in the first three years, close attention must be paid to the work in the first year. Sandstone Hollow's targets for the first year were: First, to transform the rocky hill slopes, sow wheat over a wide area, grow two crops a year instead of one and strive to exceed the grain yield target provided in the National Programme for Agricultural Development (1956-67). Secondly, to continue sinking wells on the foothills and piping water up the slopes. Thirdly, to level East Hill and fill in the gully below with the rock and earth so as to create a man-made plain with stable, high-yield fields.

Planting 200 *mu* on the rocky slopes to wheat was something people did not even dare to dream of in the old days. When an old man heard about it, he shook his head and said: "Our Sandstone Hollow is short of water and hasn't got enough soil either. We've planted only one crop a year for generations and we're fated to eat coarse cereals. Why dream of eating wheat?"

It was true. As far back as people in Sandstone Hollow could remember, they had never grown wheat. But since soil had been added to the layer in their Tachai-type fields and water had been pumped up from the wells in the gully below South Hill, in 1972, for the first time, the brigade trialed about 60 *mu* of wheat and harvested over 20,000 *jin*.

The brigade leaders used this fact to educate the old man who doubted that wheat would grow in Sandstone Hollow. They said to him, "Suppose we drill two more pump wells and lead the water up the hill slopes, we'll have enough then, won't we? Why, we can plant 200 *mu* of wheat!"

The old man was at last convinced and said with a nod, "Of course we can. No doubt about it!"

The projects of sinking wells and building channels began simultaneously with the sowing of wheat.

In order to build up the layer of soil in the fields and improve it, the village pressed all seven of its rubber-tyred carts and a tractor to the work of bringing in sand night and day from over the hills to the fields set aside for wheat growing. Then, to ensure successful planting, the commune members removed the stones from deep down in the soil with picks, and these often amounted to a cartload from less than a *mu* of land. To some people who still doubted whether wheat could grow well in such poor soil, Kuei-shun answered: "Things invariably change when the conditions change. This piece of land was certainly poor before the cartload of stones were removed. But after we dug deep and removed them, it's good land with a layer of soft, spongy soil, isn't it? A saying runs, 'Fertile soil is to wheat what a fertile womb is to an embryo.' With soft, spongy topsoil, adequate base fertilizer and timely watering, wheat can certainly grow well in our poor hills. This is what we mean by giving full play to man's initiative."

These words set people thinking, and when they knew how true they were, they worked with greater enthusiasm, digging unremittingly deep into the terraced fields on East Hill and some other hills, and the fields in the orchard at Wolf Lair. After removing several hundred cartloads of stones they spread sand over the pits they had dug, applied enough base fertilizer and planted 160 *mu* to winter wheat. At the beginning of spring they planted another 40 *mu* to spring wheat.

During the winter wheat sowing, when some people wondered whether there would be water enough to irrigate such a large area, much of it planted also to water-consuming orchard trees, a special water conservancy team was organized to cope with the problem. They enlisted the help of a geological team and began work on the sinking of two pump wells. Party secretary Kuei-shun, now serving part-time as a local

engineer, would work together with two deputy secretaries in using indigenous methods to determine where the pipes should be laid to carry the water up the hills. They also charted a channel to wind down the hill slopes and deliver the water to the wheat fields at Wolf Lair. The special water conservancy team set to work at once.

Drills buzzed in the valleys and dynamite blasts boomed from the hill tops. The cadres and commune members were bubbling with excitement and joy, and with tremendous revolutionary drive. By the time the winter wheat was springing up, the two pump wells were completed and five lines of pipes, over 2,000 metres long, lay on East, South and North hills like mammoth dragons. The 2,500-metre-long stone-lined channel meandered along the hill slopes, bringing water into the wheat fields in the orchards of Wolf Lair and East Hill. When crystal-clear water from the wells flowed through the pipes and channel into the rich green wheat fields, old people became very excited. "If not for the movement to criticize Lin Piao and rectify the style of work, which freed our thinking, who would ever have dared to dream of anything like this!"

In early November 1972, after the autumn harvesting and winter wheat sowing, people enlisted for the new battle to level peaks and make gullies into plains. Again the roar of blasting resounded through Sandstone Hollow's hills.

In order to make a plain out of the gully below East Hill, a 200-metre-long culvert had to be built. Six peaks had also to be brought down and the 10,000 to 20,000 cubic metres of rock used to fill up the gully. The work had to be done all by hand. Could the project be completed by early spring of 1973? The people hammered and chiselled away at the rock, then before long some suggested that the brigade buy 20 small rubber-tyred carts to transport it.

Thinking of the 3,000 to 4,000 yuan the carts would cost, the old poor peasants said, "It's true, our brigade is no longer so poor. But in days of plenty we must still economize so as to build for the future. When we made our Tachai-type fields, we carried earth on shoulder-poles. Why can't we carry rocks the same way to make our man-made plain?" The Party branch, thinking it a very good idea in conformity with the spirit of self-reliance and hard work as repeatedly taught by Chairman Mao, soon adopted this proposal and bought 200 baskets at a cost of only a little over 100 yuan. The Party branch committee members and cadres took the lead in carrying the rocks, while Party members, Youth Leaguers and militiamen vied with one another to carry the heaviest ones.

In spite of the fast-falling snow, the bitter cold and slippery paths, not a single person put down his shoulder-pole. Nor did any utter a word of complaint when their shoulders became swollen under the heavy loads and their feet blistered. In this way they battled away for 50 days. Spring Festival was only 10 days off, yet in order to fill in the gully before the holiday and cover the rock with earth before the spring thaw so as not to hold up the spring sowing, they took no rest until they had filled in East Gully. It was the Spring Festival day.

That night, the whole village was brightly lit. People were laughing and singing joyously. While firecrackers popped, the men, women and children of the village got together happily to recall the brigade's new victory in creating a man-made plain. They were especially aware that their achievement was made under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and the impetus of the movement to criticize Lin Biao and rectify the style of work. In two months they had levelled five hill tops, carried away 20,000 cubic metres of

earth and rock and built a 272-metre-long culvert which they covered over with earth. The terraced fields east and west of East Gully were now linked up. Furthermore, they had made another 32 *mu* of Tachai-type fields. Floodwater now ran off through the culvert, while crops grew on the man-made plain above.

It was early summer of 1973. The lush green, thickly-laden branches of the fruit trees swayed in the south wind. Under the trees the wheat rippled like a sea of gold. Water from underground streams pumped out of the wells flowed into the newly-made plain in East Gully or was pumped on up the hill slopes through pipes to irrigate the tier upon tier of terraced fields at Wolf Lair, Big Black Mound, Black Sand Mound, North Hill and East Hill. The channelled water also flowed over East Hill and then through the tunnel in North Hill, affording irrigation for two brigades on the other side of the hills.

Gazing at the wheat growing in the terraced fields or under the orchard trees and contemplating the bumper harvest in sight, visitors to Sandstone Hollow that summer were filled with admiration and very moved by the spirit the people there displayed in learning from the Foolish Old Man. The cadres and commune members, however, showed no sign of conceit or complacency when they were praised. On the other hand they were soberly aware of their still more arduous and glorious tasks ahead and that they must **continue to fight hard.**

From North to South Hill, from dawn till dusk, the droning of drills and the blasts of dynamite echoed and re-echoed in the valleys of Sandstone Hollow. On the work-sites people sang proudly:

Sandstone Hollow—an unending chain of hills.
The Foolish Old Men of today are blazing new trails.

To make a one-*mu* field
We carried 2,000 baskets of earth for 10,000 *li*,
Just to wrest good crops from hard rocks.
With the morning sun warming our hearts,
We learn from Tachai
To reshape the features of our nine hills.
The hills bow their heads before the heroes' will,
With our bare hands we make water run uphill.

Sandstone Hollow — an unending chain of hills.
The Foolish Old Men of today are blazing new trails.
Heroes nurtured in Mao Tsetung Thought
Go ever forward on the revolutionary road.
Clear and sparkling water runs through the hills,
Emerald green are the tier upon tier of terraced fields.
Not rain, but sweat, helps bring in bumper yields.
Listen! Our militant songs ring o'er the fields.