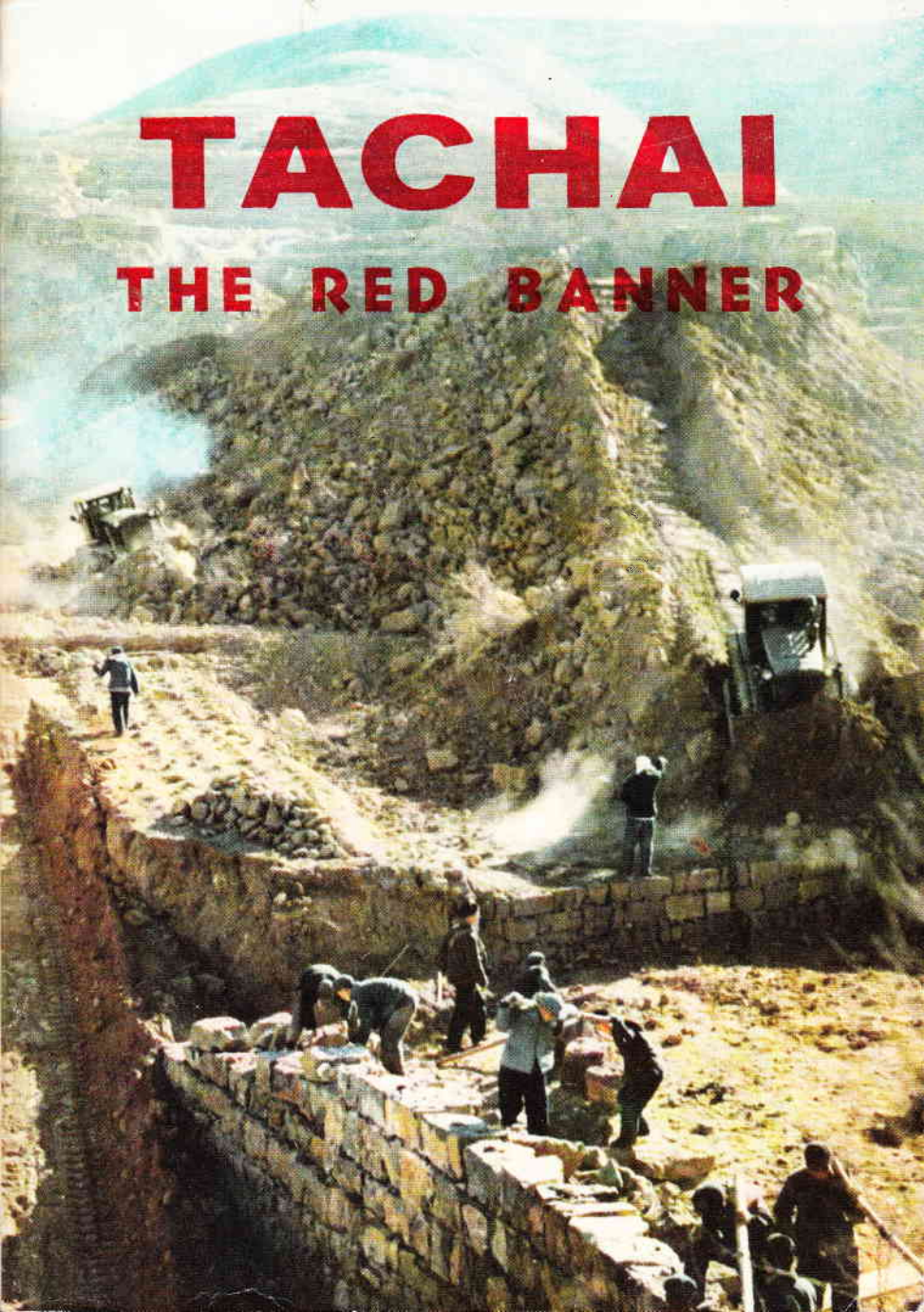


TACHAI

THE RED BANNER



TACHAI
THE RED BANNER

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
PEKING

First Edition 1977

Printed in the People's Republic of China

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Our great leader Chairman Mao receives Comrade Chen Yung-kuei, 1964.



Comrade Chou En-lai visits the Ta-chai Production Brigade, May 1965.



Members of the Tachai Party branch committee, a fighting bastion that resolutely carries out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.



Great is the difference between the old and new societies. The people have changed, so have the village, the land and the hill. Tachai today (above) and in the past (below).

The Tachai Party branch leads the masses in studying Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.



Tachai's people take class struggle as the key link. They criticize revisionism and capitalism on a mass scale.



Comrade Chen Yung-kuei teaches the youth never to forget the bitterness of the past.

Chia Chin-tsai, Tachai's first Party branch secretary and now chairman of the brigade's poor and lower-middle peasants' association, gives a lesson in class struggle to teachers and students of the village school under Tachai's big willow.





Former members of the Oldsters and Youngsters Team, photographed in 1964.



Members of the "Iron Girls" Team, taken in 1963.



When Tachai was hit by the disastrous flood of 1963, the Party branch led the peasants in restoring production and rebuilding their village.





Many cave-dwellings in Tachai collapsed in the big flood (below). Soon afterwards, the Tachai people built their new housing by self-reliant hard work (above).

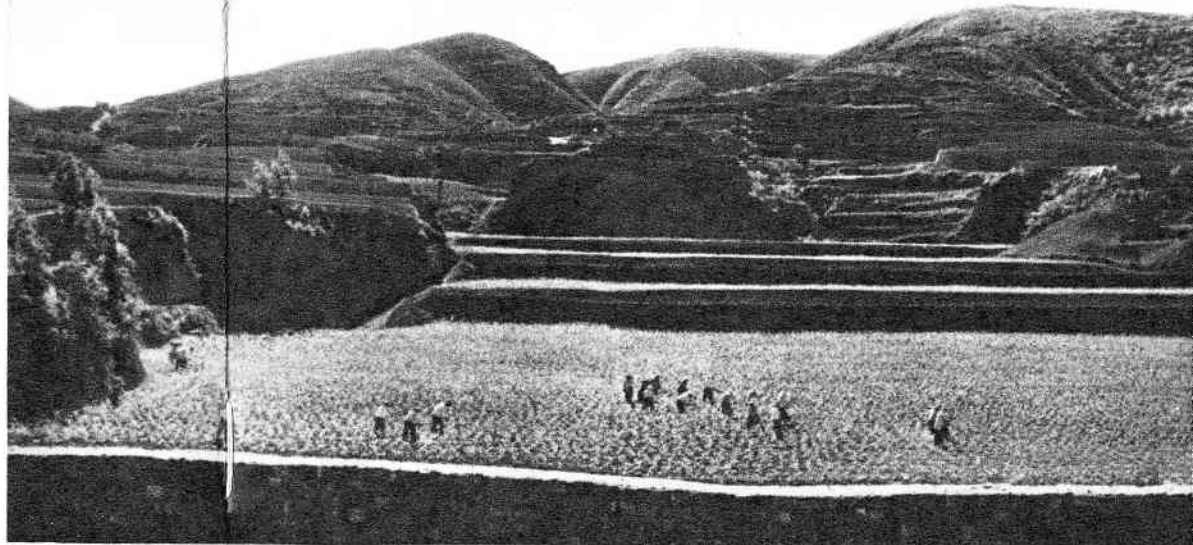


Planning further changes in Tachai.



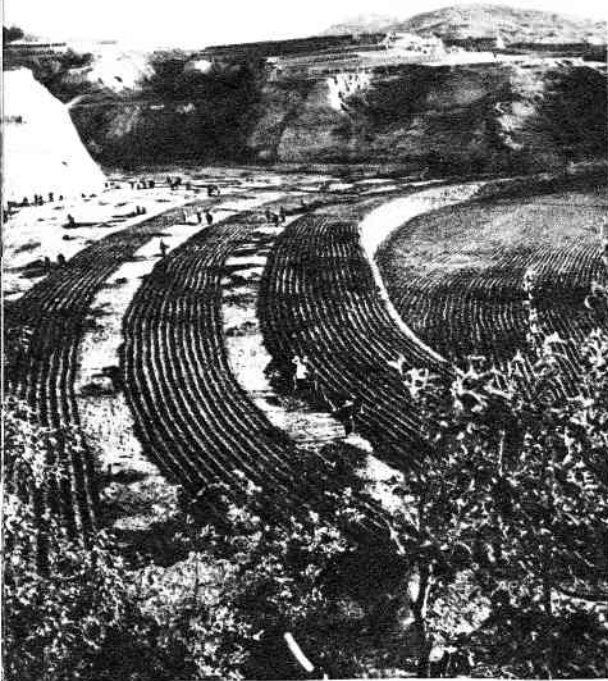
Building small man-made "plains" by removing hill-ocks to fill in gullies.

Braving cold winter in the battle
to transform Wolves' Den Gully.



The former Wolves' Den Gully (below) has
been transformed into small "plains."





The building of small "plains" in this mountainous area (above) is one of the fruits of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Sowing by dibbling during a drought: "A hundred loads of water, a thousand li on foot, for each mu of land" (below).



The "Support Agriculture" Storage Pond on Tiger Head Hill.

Spraying the fields with "artificial rain."





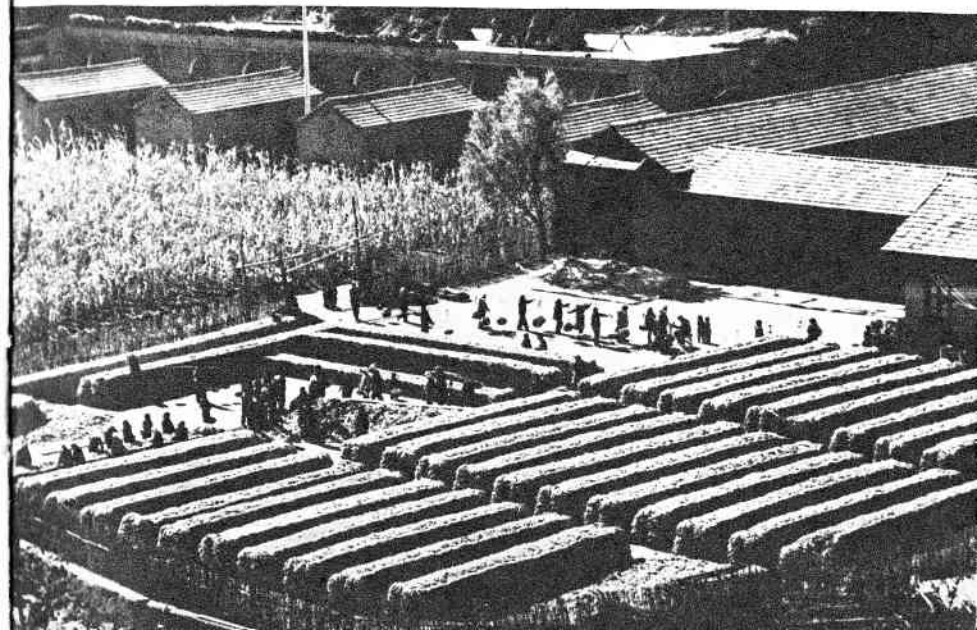
Unity Aqueduct, built in 1974.

Along the road of mechanization.



A scientific experiment group at work.

A bumper harvest.





Orchard on a once-barren hillside (above).

Grazing on its hill slope (below).



Every time he returns to Tachai, Comrade Chen Yung-kuei (now Member of the Party's Political Bureau and a Vice-Premier) works as usual with the commune members (above).

Comrade Kuo Feng-lien, secretary of Tachai Party branch, persists in taking part in collective productive labour (below).



Poor and lower-middle peasants often give lecture to pupils of the Tachai School.

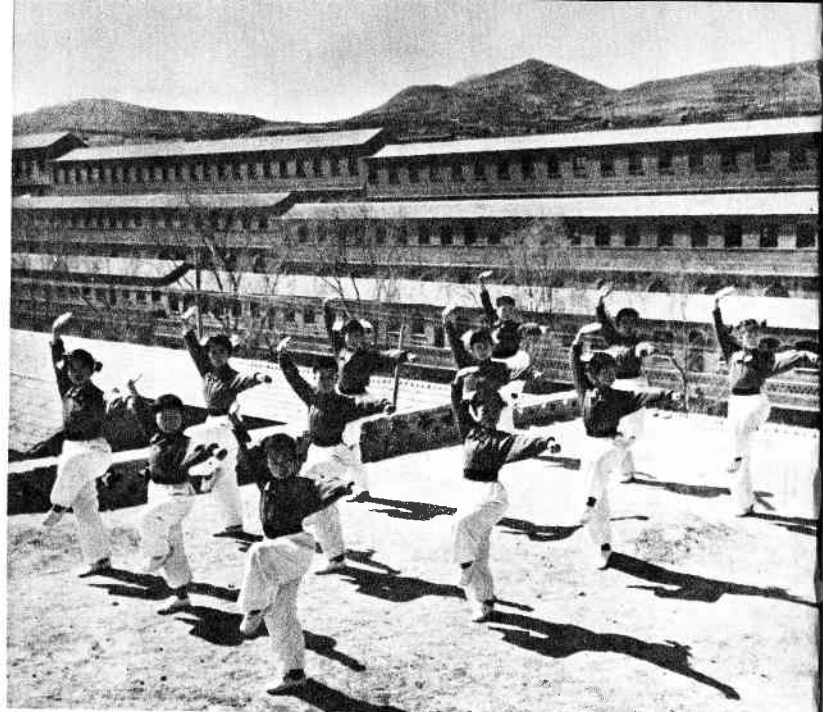
At the night school for political study.



At the brigade clinic.

Tachai's spare-time troupe rehearses a new performance.





Tachai children's Chinese boxing team at practice.

Tachai's Militia Company.



Foreword

Tachai, a production brigade of the people's commune of the same name in Hsiyang County, Shansi Province, stands over 1,000 metres above sea level in the Taihang Mountains. Guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, its people, for more than two decades, have firmly carried out the Chinese Communist Party's basic line for the entire historical period of socialism. Amid fierce struggles between the proletariat and bourgeoisie, between the socialist and capitalist roads and between the Marxist and revisionist lines, this brigade has opened an avenue for the development of socialist agriculture through self-reliance and arduous struggle and with greater, faster, better and more economical results. It has thus set a brilliant example in building China's socialist agriculture.

Chairman Mao Tsetung in 1964 issued a great call, **"In agriculture, learn from Tachai,"** indicating for China's hundreds of millions of peasants the orientation for the development of her socialist agriculture. Premier Chou En-lai said in his "Report on the Work of the Government" to the First Session of the Third National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China in December that same year, "The principle of putting politics in command and placing ideology in the lead, the spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle and the communist style of loving the country and the collective, in all of which the Tachai Brigade has

persevered, should be vigorously promoted." This is high praise for the Tachai spirit and scientifically sums up Tachai's experience.

In response to the call of Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee, and accelerated further by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a mass movement to learn from Tachai has been surging throughout the country. From regions south of the Yangtze to those north of the Great Wall, from the East China Sea to the Tibetan Plateau, songs of triumph resound and Tachai flowers bloom everywhere.

Tachai, this shining red standard of heroism, has attracted thousands upon thousands of foreign comrades and friends. Coming from afar to visit China they have seen here the face of China's new peasantry, learned what her peasants who have taken the socialist road are thinking and doing and witnessed the tremendous change and splendid prospects of her vast countryside.

Tremendous Changes

The magnificent Taihang Mountains were the site of one of China's best known revolutionary base areas in the War of Resistance Against Japan, and later in the War of Liberation. These areas nurtured tens of thousands of China's finest sons and daughters whose countless deeds of heroism are lauded by the people. Today, in the socialist revolution and socialist construction, the people, with their hard-working hands, are creating new and beautiful scenes amid these mountains and rivers, with socialist Tachai as the best.

Wonders on Tiger Head Hill

Tiger Head Hill, 1,100 metres above sea level, is situated southeast of Hsiyang county seat. Tachai lies at its foot. It comes into sight 5 kilometres up the highway from the county town.

First to strike the eye are the rows of "Tachai-type" buildings. They are unique structures, with a row of cave-style stone dwellings as the first floor, topped by more ordinary tile-roofed houses to form the second. They rest

neatly on the hillside. At night when their lights shine, the hill village resembles a galaxy of stars.

Between them is a wide asphalt road. It is flanked by willows which shield the houses from the glare of the sun and accentuate the beauty of the view, especially when they wave in the breeze. No one would imagine that this tree-shaded avenue was once a dry, rocky riverbed. In fact, all Tachai as it stands today was built after the particularly fierce flood of 1963, which rushed down this same channel.

Will the houses built in such a place be washed away by future mountain torrents? No, they are safe because a 290-metre-long masonry tunnel, built beneath them, will carry away flood waters without damage.

Past the village and ranging up Tiger Head Hill one sees rows of stone or earth embankments girdling the slope, protecting layer upon layer of level terraces. Visitors in the golden autumn are unfailingly impressed by the uncommonly large ears of maize standing out from the stalks like drumsticks, by the top-heavy millet rustling in the wind, and by the tall sorghum thrusting its plump, bunched purple heads into the sunny sky, like flaming torches in dense array. Everywhere on Tiger Head Hill – in Tachai's seven gullies and on its eight ridges – are level fields with thriving crops. A rich harvest to be sure! When the wheat is golden brown and ready for reaping, the entire hill glistens in the sun. When the wind blows, the wheat rolls ceaselessly like the ocean.

Many are the splendid sights here. On the hillside behind the village, a lone, round, brick building stands out conspicuously. "What is it?" the visitor asks. The neighing of horses and lowing of cattle soon give the

answer. It is the brigade's stock farm. In the early years after liberation, there were only seven donkeys, eight oxen and one pig in all Tachai. Now the brigade has over 400 livestock, including 80 draught animals – mules, horses and oxen – which average one per household, and over 200 pigs – more than two per household. Why are the animals kept on the hill? The stockmen answer that it keeps the village clean and means big savings in transporting fodder and moving manure to the fields. For the last job alone, the saving is 6,000-7,000 man-days each year.

Further up the hill runs a winding channel filled with clear water. Since there are no wells nor springs, where does the water come from? Piercing hills and bridging gullies, it is brought from the Kuochuang Reservoir by the seven-kilometre-long Army and People Canal, built in 1967 by the local people with the help of a People's Liberation Army unit.

Still higher, neat plots of emerald green come surprisingly into view. Paddy-fields! Who could have imagined, here on this formerly barren hillside, an experiment in rice-growing, with water shimmering and rippling?

Standing by the paddies, with the whole panorama of Tiger Head Hill spread out below, one can count the seven gullies. The last, Houti Gully, is nearest the village. It now consists of fairly sizable, level terraced fields which the commune members proudly dub "small man-made 'plains.'" Of old, Tachai's land was fragmented into small plots ranging from 1/10 to 1/5 of a mu* each in area. Some were so tiny it took 48 of them to make a mu. And the two

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

biggest were only about three mu each. But now the biggest of the new small man-made "plains" covers about 20 mu, permitting mechanized farming and irrigation. Such man-made "plains" were built up in four of Tachai's seven gullies from the winter of 1971 to the spring of 1974.

Here, the hiss of fast-moving cable hoppers strikes the ear. It comes from the electrically-operated transport system overhead that carries compost to wheat fields high up on the hill and brings down quarried stone for construction needs. It is one of the advances towards mechanized farming made by the Tachai people since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began. Five such aerial cable-ways were built from 1967 to 1971, saving approximately 10,000 man-days a year. Tachai's ploughing, harrowing, shelling, hay cutting, fodder crushing, rice shucking, flour milling, irrigation and field construction are now wholly or partly mechanized as well.

Afforestation, too, has advanced. The top of the hill is now clothed in green by 400 mu of young pines. And half way up, the hill is rainbow-hued by orchards – 37,000 trees and vines bearing apples, pears, peaches, dates, walnuts, wild pepper and grapes. In 1973 the brigade harvested some 25,000 kg. of fruit, nearly 300 kg. per household. Over half its total income is now provided by forestry, animal husbandry and side-occupations. This shows successful application of the policy of **"taking grain as the key link and ensuring an all-round development."**

In short, under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, tremendous changes have taken place everywhere on Tiger Head Hill, giving it a completely new aspect.

Every day, as school lets out, one can hear the ringing songs of Tachai's children. Here is a favourite one:

Standing on Tiger Head Hill,
Facing the rising sun I sing,
In praise of Chairman Mao our saving star,
In praise of the great Communist Party.

The Big Willow, Witness of the Past

At the east end of the Tachai Village stands a big willow more than a century old. It has witnessed the change from the old to the new Tachai.

Before liberation, the big willow was used by the landlord and rich peasants to hang up and flog the poor people, so it was called the "tree of suffering." Year after year, in the endless dark night of the old society, many poor people were cruelly beaten here for being unable to pay rent and debts. Times without number, the willow heard the heart-rending cries of the bereft poor families when parents were forced to sell their children, or stood mute witness to the burials of poor people done to death by the oppression of the landlord and rich peasants, the corpses wrapped only in tattered matting.

At that time, the whole village had some 800 mu of land scattered in 4,700 fragments over its seven gullies and eight ridges on one hillside. None were protected by embankments, and none were level, the inner part being higher than the outer. Their top-soil, less than three inches deep, was mixed with sand and stones. The hill resembled a patchwork coat. In dry weather, it was wreathed in dust. When rains were heavy, the fields were slashed by torrents. The villagers lived in dread of both drought and flood. But even in the absence of such calamities, crops could not grow well here. Young plants

would turn yellow after only three rainless days. A strong shower would wash them away, and the soil as well. Toiling the whole year, the people could hardly reap 50 kg. of grain per mu.

The village had 64 households. But one landlord and three rich peasant families owned 70 per cent of its land. Out of 48 poor and lower-middle peasant households, 30 or so worked for landlords as long-term or seasonal labourers or as shepherds. Another dozen had to beg all the year round. In the famine year of 1920, over 20 poverty-stricken peasant families were forced to sell off their children. And seven died out altogether, having nothing to eat after paying rent and usury. A local rhyme described the miserable life of the very poor in old Tachai:

Working as a hired hand, I can't afford to buy
bedding.

Selling my own children, I've become a beggar.

Even so, I can't pay up my debts to the rich.

Alas, no one will marry a daughter to a poor Tachai
man.

Chen Yung-kuei is a representative of Tachai's impoverished peasants. He was born in Shihshan Village, about 30 kilometres away. His grandfather was utterly destitute. His father, Chen Chih-ju, had four brothers all of whom died prematurely under the brutal oppression of the old society. One was carried off by the Japanese fascists and burned to death in an alum kiln. One worked as a farm hand for more than 20 years, only to be thrown out by the landlord and die of hunger. One went begging and finally starved to death on the banks of the Yellow River. The fourth was so ground down by the man-eating old order that he went mad and met a pitiful end. When

Chen Yung-kuei was six years old, his father, seeing no other way out, fled from Shihshan to settle with his family in Tachai. But just as all crows under the sun are black, so the rich everywhere in the world are the same. Though the Chens drudged all the year round, they could not make enough to feed themselves. In the severe drought of 1920, the father, fearing that the whole family would otherwise perish, had to sell Chen Yung-kuei's mother, sister and brother. Then, on a pitch dark night, seething with grief and fury, he went back to Shihshan and hanged himself on a tree by the graves of his ancestors. Chen Yung-kuei, left an orphan, went to work as a shepherd for a landlord at the age of eight, and became a long-term hired labourer when only 10. Unable to endure cruel exploitation and oppression, he left Tachai to wander elsewhere. First he worked as a miner, then as an apprentice in a noodle shop. But nowhere could he avoid the common fate — curses, beating and starvation. Finally he had to come back to Tachai as a hired hand again.

In the summer of 1942, a group of underground workers of the Communist Party came to the village. The poor people welcomed it with the utmost joy as though the sun had suddenly appeared in the dark night. The county town of Hsiyang, 5 km. away from Tachai, was still a stronghold of the Japanese aggressors. Often they raided Tachai, to burn, loot and kill. Chen Yung-kuei, giving no thought to his own safety, became active in revolutionary work. He hid the underground Party workers, kept watch for the guerrillas, carried information for them, raised funds, transported grain. . . .

All of Hsiyang County was liberated in August 1945. From then on the red sun shone over Tiger Head Hill, illuminating land and water with its brilliance. Under

the big willow, the joyous poor of Tachai assembled to celebrate their liberation. Here too, in 1947, they launched their land reform, struggled against the landlord and distributed the land. In the winter of 1953 they gathered under the willow again to proclaim the establishment of an agricultural producers' co-operative in the village and take the road of collective farming. And under the same tree, in the autumn of 1958, they greeted the Big Leap Forward and the founding of the people's commune of which they became part. After that, the "tree of suffering" was renamed the "tree of joy."

What a Table Reveals

A revealing table, hanging in the office of Tachai Brigade, shows the growth of production there. It gives key figures for representative years as follows:

Year	Number of households	Population	Total grain output (kg.)	Per-mu yield (kg.)	Public grain and surplus grain sold to the state (kg.)	Total income (yuan)	Annual addition to accumulation fund (yuan)
1953, year after co-op founded	74	295	101,640	125	22,500	17,672	
1958, year of the Big Leap Forward	80	318	208,520	271.5	95,000	39,539	3,847
1963, year of serious flood	83	367	210,000	372.5	120,000	65,402	8,588
1964, year when per-mu yield rose to over 400 kg.	83	364	295,445	404.8	150,000	73,270	11,919
1970, year when per-mu yield rose to over 500 kg.	83	434	374,950	535.5	120,000	125,206	28,377
1972, year of serious draught	83	444	331,450	473.5	200,000	168,630	38,732
1973, year of continued draught	83	446	385,000	513	150,000	182,421	47,457

This is not an ordinary statistical round-up. It records a glorious chapter of socialist development. Its com-

parisons are an iron-clad proof of the superiority of the socialist system.

Western bourgeois economists often babble about how it is impossible for production to grow as fast as population. This absurdity was thoroughly refuted in theory by Marxists long, long ago. It has now been completely refuted in practice by the brilliant achievements of new China's socialist revolution and construction. In Tachai during the two decades from 1953 to 1973, as this table shows, the population increased by 61 per cent, but total grain output rose by 278 per cent, and total income by 932 per cent. Here is proof that under the socialist system, so long as a Marxist-Leninist line is firmly adhered to and people work with might and main, production growth keeps ahead by big margins. Moreover, with family planning, there will never be any problem of "over-population." Neither will there be any possibility of a hopeless "agricultural crisis" such as the one now rampant in the super-power which boasts of having entered "the new era of all-round building of communism." Not long before the founding of the People's Republic of China, an imperialist pundit declared arrogantly, "The first problem which every Chinese Government has had to face is that of feeding this population. So far none has succeeded." He implied that China could survive only by begging from the imperialists. But history has proclaimed the bankruptcy of the imperialists' idealist conception of history. As Chairman Mao said long ago, **"revolution plus production can solve the problem of feeding the population."** As he also said, **"Not only can the Chinese people live without begging alms from the imperialists, they will live a better life than that in the imperialist countries."**

Tachai's economic growth table further tells us that

although the base figures for its production have been higher for each of the past 20 years, its annual rate of growth has never slowed down. In the five years from 1953 to 1958, the yield of grain per mu increased from 125 kg. to 271.5; in the six years from 1958 to 1964, it rose further from 271.5 kg. to 404.8; in the following six years from 1964 to 1970 it moved up from 404.8 kg. to 535.5. That is to say, Tachai's per-mu yield of grain has grown by more than 125 kg. every five or six years since the shift to co-operative agriculture.

Some people say: To achieve high farm yields is not easy, and to ensure a stable output at a high level is even harder, because agriculture is often affected by natural calamities. This is the outlook of the cowardly and the lazy. It, too, is powerfully refuted by Tachai statistics. There was a verse about old Tachai: It ran:

Hills are high, rocks can't be counted.
Once outdoors, you climb a slope.
A level field is a rare sight.
Disasters strike here every year.

But in the past 20 years, though Tachai continued to suffer from natural calamities in varying degrees every year, with the exception only of 1958, the people persistently carried out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and, with red hearts and strong hands, overcame the harm done by the elements. In the unconquerable spirit of "not bowing even under the weight of Mount Tai," they won every battle against nature and won good harvests in the teeth of all odds. They achieved a big output-rise in each year of good or not too bad weather, fair increases in years of "ordinary" bad weather, and stable yields without any decrease even in years of very serious disaster. They

also performed the great feat of reaping a bumper harvest in a year of huge calamity.

This happened in August 1963, when Tachai was hit by a ruinous flood. More than 700 mm. of rain, exceeding the local annual average, fell in seven days and nights. It washed away or ruined half of the crops, part of the fields and 90 per cent of the housing. But Tachai's people never lost heart. They withstood this acid test. Restoring the fields as the first priority and rebuilding their homes after work, they managed to win a good harvest of 372.5 kg. per mu, nearly the same as the previous year's and 37 per cent better than that in 1958, the year of the Big Leap Forward.

Then, in 1972, came the most serious drought in a century, with virtually no rain from the sowing to the harvest. The year's precipitation was some 100 mm., less than one fifth of normal. Yet, the greater the drought, the harder the Tachai's people fought back. They carried water on shoulder-poles to the fields, and, in the end, harvested 473.5 kg. of grain per mu. And though this crop was a bit less than that of the year before, Tachai's total combined income from farming, forestry, animal husbandry and side-occupations actually increased by 10 per cent.

The drought went on for 17 months. It let up only in June 1973. During the sowing in April, there was no moisture at all in the soil. In this unprecedented test, the heroic people of Tachai showed their revolutionary spirit by fetching water from afar to dabble in the entire 500 mu of maize. So another miracle was achieved in the autumn — an average per-mu yield of 513 kg. Though this per-unit yield was somewhat below that of the previous peak years, 1970 and 1971, the total grain output exceeded the past peak, with more cultivated land thanks to the

extensive building of man-made "plains."

For the past two decades, no natural calamity has been able to drive the Tachai people into consuming any market grain supplied by the government. Instead they have invariably overfulfilled their quota of grain sales to the state. This is iron-clad proof that large-scale socialist agriculture, when done in accordance with Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, can be relied upon to withstand any natural disaster.

The table deals only with Tachai and the tremendous changes there. Since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the obstacles in the way of the mass movement to learn from Tachai in agriculture have further been cleared away by the criticism and repudiation of the counter-revolutionary revisionist lines of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao. As a result Tachai's experience has been increasingly applied all over the country. An excellent situation has come about, with many localities emulating each other in this movement, and agriculture is flourishing throughout China.

This is a change far greater than that of Tachai itself. Take the case of Hsiyang County, where Tachai is located. In 1969, after three years of the Cultural Revolution, its total grain output had doubled as compared with 1966. By 1971 it had tripled. And in 1972 and 1973, though both were drought years, the county attained the highest annual output in its history.

Chairman Mao points out, "**The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is a powerful motive force for the development of the social productive forces in our country.**" The great achievements of the people of Tachai and of Hsiyang County since the Cultural Revolution prove fully and beyond all doubt that Chairman Mao's thesis is truth itself.



Progress Through Struggle

Having learned of the great changes in Tachai, people may ask: How did this poor and backward old village transform itself into the flourishing and prosperous socialist new Tachai?

To this question, its cadres and poor and lower-middle peasants have given the reply: All change comes through struggle. The new Tachai has been forged in repeated battles against nature, against class enemies, against wrong lines and wrong thinking. But at the core lies the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and between the Marxist and the revisionist lines. It is always waged around the principal contradiction: whether to persist along the socialist road or restore capitalism. The course of this struggle determines which way agriculture goes, and how fast.

Who Laughed Last?

Tachai began organizing its agricultural co-operative in the winter of 1952, completing the process in the winter of 1953. For a clear idea of the class struggle and two-line struggle there after it took the road of collectivization,

one must go back a few years and recall the struggles during the mutual-aid team period.

After the proletariat seized political power in China, two alternatives faced her countryside. One was the socialist road. This answered to the fundamental interests of the peasantry. It called for organizing the individual peasants, step by step, into mutual-aid teams and producers' co-operatives. The other was the capitalist road. This would meet the desires of rural capitalist forces by preserving individual farming. It would give the green light to a rich-peasant economy. Which alternative to choose? Intense struggle between the two classes, the two roads and the two lines would decide. In Tachai it started as early as 1946 in the rivalry between the Oldsters and Youngsters Team and the Stout Fellows Team.

In 1946, a year after Hsiyang County was liberated, the livelihood of Tachai's poor and lower-middle peasants was improved to a certain extent by the reduction of rent and interest. But though politically emancipated, the peasants still faced many difficulties. The quality of their land was poor. They were short of draught animals, farm tools and funds. Moreover, the village was left virtually without labour power by the atrocities perpetrated by the Japanese aggressors in pursuit of their notorious "burn all, kill all and loot all" policy towards the anti-Japanese base areas. In 1942 alone, 42 young and middle-aged men from the 60-odd households in Tachai were slaughtered. Afterwards, seething with class and national hatred against the enemy, 26 other young men from poor peasant and farm labourer families went to join the people's army. Only a dozen or so able-bodied men were left to till the soil. Among the poor and lower-middle

peasants, most were either too old or too young for heavy work, and the women greatly outnumbered the men. They were eager to get organized.

Such were the conditions in which a mutual-aid team, comprising a dozen or so households, was set up in Tachai at the beginning of 1946. It consisted of several poor and lower-middle peasant families and also some well-to-do middle peasant ones. The poor and lower-middle peasants warmly welcomed co-operation, looking forward to the inspiration and happiness of working together in the coming spring sowing. Celebrating the Feast of Lanterns on the 15th of the first lunar month that year, Chen Yung-kuei, deputy head of the village, led the people in a joyful "yangko" dance. Then he went to take part in the festivities of other villages. But on his return, he was greeted by a shower of cold water. Tachai's lone mutual-aid team had been dissolved!

What had happened? Chen Yung-kuei found that some well-to-do middle peasants, obsessed with building a rich-peasant economy, had joined the mutual-aid team with the ulterior motive of profiteering. They were annoyed because most of the team members proved to be from needy households short of labour power. Indeed, they would have quit then and there to escape being "taken advantage of" by such poor fellow-members, if not for their fear of public opinion. Finally they hit on the dodge of setting up a separate team. So, 10 middle peasant households (nine of them well-to-do) with relatively better land, more labour power, draught animals and farming tools, banded together in the so-called Stout Fellows Team.

They had even attempted to entice several strong workers from among the poor and lower-middle peasants into their team. Their first choice was Chen Yung-kuei.

They conspired to bestow on him the sugary title of "team leader" so that he would run things on their behalf and serve their interest.

But they barred and dropped from the team all the poor and lower-middle peasant families which were short of labour. A real outrage! Liang Pien-liang, then a lad of 16, tried repeatedly to persuade them not to set up a separate team. But they would not listen. Chen Yung-kuei was very upset. He thought: All the old people and children they had excluded were his class brothers, "bitter gourds from the same vine." If the poor didn't help the poor, who would? Without a moment's hesitation he sharply rejected the flattery of the "stout fellows," and began rallying the poor peasants to set up a mutual-aid team of their own. Its nine founding-member households included five grandfathers in their sixties or seventies and seven children below teen-age. Hence it became known as the Oldsters and Youngsters Team.

The new team at once became the talk of the village. Some people voiced support and sympathy; others laughed and jeered.

"I can't understand what's on Yung-kuei's mind. So young and strong, and so good at farm work, he has everything to lose and nothing to gain by getting mixed up with these old timers and kids."

"Ha! Ha! What a team! Just a bunch of old crocks and kids. They'll end up as a laughing stock!"

There were misgivings among the new team's own members as well. They felt that, in the same mutual-aid team with Chen Yung-kuei, the "aid" would be all one way and not "mutual." Chen Yung-kuei warmly reassured them, "Without Chairman Mao and the Communist Party,

none of us could hold up his head, and my life would never get better either, however strong I might be. Chairman Mao calls on us to 'get organized!' and tells us, 'This is the only road to liberation for the people, the only road from poverty to prosperity.' I'm going to follow Chairman Mao by making revolution together with my poor brothers to change things for us all. What's all this talk of personal loss or gain?"

"People are saying that with our tiny labour power, we'll never get anywhere," some members worried.

"I don't think that's right," Chen Yung-kuei encouraged them. "Look, our old folk have a lot of experience, and the young ones will soon grow up. We can't go wrong so long as we follow the Party!"

Like a good fire on a winter night, Chen's words warmed every heart. "All right!" the comrades said. "We may be poor, but we have high aims. From now on, nothing will separate us, not even if the heavens fall."

From then on, human relations of the new type grew in their team. The old people looked after the young as if they were their own sons and daughters, and the young respected the old as though they were their own parents. Whatever the youngsters did not know, Chen Yung-kuei and the old peasants spared no effort to teach them. When watching over sheep on the hillside at night, a young boy fell asleep. Chen, who was in charge, took off his own coat to cover him, himself bearing the cold.

In the depth of winter, while the members of the Stout Fellows Team were huddling around the fires in their homes, Chen and his team were busy levelling fields and building embankments in the bitterest weather.

In early February while the "stout fellows" still sat around with folded arms warming themselves, the Oldsters

and Youngsters Team had already begun carrying manure to the fields.

Then spring sowing began. Having no oxen, Chen's team drew the plough with the strength of their own bodies and got the sowing done in time.

In the busy summer weeding and autumn harvesting, the "stout fellows" fought each other for priority in the allocation of labour to their separate fields, making it impossible for their team to operate in a planned way. Each of them would work like a demon on his own field, but loaf away the day on those of the others. So their mutual-aid team was one only in name. In fact, each member worked only for himself. The team showed up in the spring, slacked off in summer and disappeared in autumn. But in the Oldsters and Youngsters Team things were quite different. Its people were united as one man. They proved that, as the saying goes, the fire burns higher when everybody adds twigs to it. Working to a unified plan, they allotted and concentrated their efforts rationally as required. All did their best no matter whose field was being worked on.

After the autumn harvest, the Oldsters and Youngsters Team, with its one advantage (in political consciousness) and four disadvantages (in land, labour power, draught animals and tools), nevertheless, reaped an average of 75 kg. of grain per mu. But the Stout Fellows Team, with its four advantages (more land, labour power, draught animals and tools) and one disadvantage (in political consciousness), got only 60 kg. per mu. The result of the competition was that they, not the oldsters and youngsters, ended up as a laughing stock.

Firmly on the Socialist Road

The consolidation and development of the Oldsters and Youngsters Team laid the ideological and organizational foundation for an agricultural producers' co-operative. The time grew ripe for setting one up.

Tachai's poor and lower-middle peasants were now aware that though the land reform had given them land, the fact that it was still privately owned stood in the way of their freeing themselves from poverty for good and all, and indeed was engendering capitalism daily and hourly, creating a polarization among the peasants. Hence, most of them were still in danger of renewed suffering from exploitation and oppression. Their experience in exchanging labour and in mutual aid had given them a first taste of the advantages of organizing. But in the team the land and other means of production were not yet pooled, so the further growth of production was greatly hampered. This led to a strong demand for changing the relations of production based on private ownership and embarking upon the bright road of socialism.

Moreover, in its daily struggles and work the Oldsters and Youngsters Team had developed a group of able leading cadres who could manage a co-operative. These included Chen Yung-kuei, Chia Chin-tsai, Liang Pien-liang, Chia Cheng-jang, Sung Li-ying, Chao Ta-ho and the recently demobilized PLA veteran Chia Lai-heng. Firm in political stand, fair-minded and competent, these cadres won the wholehearted support and trust of the masses.

In the spring of 1952, the nation-wide movement for agricultural co-operation commenced. Immediately, the Party branch and the poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai dispatched Chen Yung-kuei to the county govern-

ment to seek permission to set up an agricultural producers' co-operative. But the comrades there told him that the higher authorities had set such strict standards for the formation of a co-operative that there was no hope of approval for Tachai.

"Chairman Mao calls on us to set up co-operatives. Why are some people stopping us?" The cadres and the poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai did not yet know the answer – that the renegade, traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi was rabidly interfering with Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and undermining agricultural co-operation. Just the same, they were firmly convinced that they were following Chairman Mao's teachings and doing the right thing.

Through persistent struggle, in the winter of 1952 they finally got permission for Tachai to set up a co-op, but only if it was a small one, with no more than 30 households. The members of the mutual-aid team were furious. There were already 49 households in their team. Why could the co-op have only 30? Wasn't this a clear case of going backward?

After a lively discussion, all the members of the Party branch committee came to a common conviction: "Chairman Mao has instructed us to form co-operatives. With his backing and the support of the poor and lower-middle peasants, we must stand up and struggle against wrong leadership." The agricultural producers' co-operative they set up in Tachai consisted of 30 households in name, but 49 in fact.

Chairman Mao is always of one heart and mind with the mass of poor and lower-middle peasants. In the summer of 1953, he launched timely criticism against Liu Shao-chi's bourgeois reactionary programme of "con-

solidation of the new-democratic order." He then proposed the Party's general line for the transitional period, pointing out with deep wisdom, **"In agriculture, the socialist road is the only road for our country."** This at once eased the hearts of the Party members and the poor and lower-middle peasants in Tachai. It also resulted in support for their revolutionary action by the Party committees of the province, prefecture and county.

The poor and lower-middle peasants rejoiced at the establishment of the co-op. But the class enemies gnashed their teeth and, in dark corners, plotted to undermine it. One piece of evil nonsense they spread ran: "Grain grown in a mutual-aid team belongs to individuals, so members are willing to work hard. Now the grain grown by the co-op will belong to the collective. So members are bound to be slack in work, and output can't go up."

Refuting them, the co-op brought in a big harvest, unprecedented in Tachai's history, in its very first year. The average yield was 125 kg. per mu, 30 kg. above that obtained by the mutual-aid teams and a lot more above that of families still farming individually.

After the autumn harvest, the Party branch called a celebration meeting to publicize the superiority of the collective economy and push preparations to enlarge the co-op. Also it intended to announce, before the meeting ended, the Party Central Committee's instruction that planned purchase and marketing of grain by the state would be instituted that same year to make agriculture give better service to the socialist revolution and socialist construction.

During the meeting, while those present were cheerfully discussing the co-op's bumper harvest, a person who had a counter-revolutionary past but was not yet under

public surveillance suddenly got up and said provocatively, "Enough boasting about your co-op's advantages! Why make a fuss about 125 kilos per mu? I got in 150 kilos per mu working by myself!"

Chen Yung-kuei knew this was a lie. To refute and punish the provocation, the Party branch committee decided to announce the planned purchase and marketing of grain by the state earlier than originally intended. Chen Yung-kuei took the floor. "Tachai's co-operative, mutual-aid teams and individual peasants have all got in excellent harvests," he said. "That's fine! The Party branch is sure our village will overfulfil the assigned quota for grain purchases by the state. Now, let everyone sell his surplus grain to the state on the basis of the grain yield he himself has reported!"

The counter-revolutionary was on the hook! Squatting in one corner, he repeatedly slapped his own face on both sides, crying, "This mouth of mine's nothing but an arse-hole. I was just farting. What I said wasn't worth a damn. I didn't get 150 kilos a mu, not even counting all the straw and stalks!"

The people were both angered and amused by this despicable exhibition. "You yourself declared your output," they retorted. "Who can know it better than you? We must set your quota by your own crop report."

The counter-revolutionary begged again and again to be let off. When asked to come clean on why he had lied, he finally managed to stammer out, "The truth is . . . ah . . . I don't want to join the co-op myself and don't want others to, either. I . . . I'm afraid of being all alone outside and with no seasonal labourers to hire . . . if everyone joins. So . . . I purposely stirred up trouble. . . ."

"We Communists always respect truth and oppose lies," Chen Yung-kuei said. "The masses know perfectly well how much grain you harvested in. If you want to correct your own crop report, there's just one way. Call on the villagers from door to door, admit your mistake and let them discuss what to do about you."

Thus this counter-revolutionary served as a teacher by negative example for the masses. The incident speeded the village-wide drive to join the co-op.

A well-to-do middle peasant who had sponsored the Stout Fellows Team was among those applying to join the co-op. How did his change of heart come about? Here is how. He lived opposite the co-op's threshing ground, and whenever it weighed and distributed grain, would stand by the window to look and listen. Every time the co-op bookkeeper announced a weight, and who it would be distributed to, he would jot down the amount indoors. After all had been weighed and distributed, he added up the figures. They showed that Chia Cheng-yuan, another well-to-do middle peasant of about the same economic status as himself, but already a co-op member, had received 1,000 kg. more grain than he had got working by himself. Putting down his pen, the "secret bookkeeper" conceded, "Guess I'd better join too!"

When all the villagers entered the co-op, some people thought that the problem of which road to take was settled. But later developments in the class struggle proved otherwise. Agricultural collectivization turned out to be the beginning of a new struggle which would stretch far into the future.

In the summer of 1957, instigated and shielded by Liu Shao-chi and his bunch, a handful of bourgeois Rightists took advantage of the Party's rectification campaign

to brazenly attack the Party and socialism. Capitalist forces in Tachai also went into action, aiming one poison-arrow after another at its collective economy and at Chen Yung-kuei, its standard-bearer along the socialist road.

"A man can't do what he wants any more after joining the co-op, like an ox led by the nose!" one such character spat out.

"Other people have elbows that bend inward," another added. "But Chen Yung-kuei's bend outward. He's learned nothing except selling surplus grain!"

"Chen Yung-kuei sells more surplus grain because he wants to be named a labour model and get praise," said still another.

Suddenly, dark clouds gathered and ill winds blew over Tachai. Its collective economy faced a severe test.

The fierce attack by class enemies aroused the proletarian ire of the Party members and the poor and lower-middle peasants. Sung Li-ying, Liang Pien-liang, Chao Ta-ho and others said furiously to Chen Yung-kuei, "You heard them? What a lot of dirty nonsense? Let's fight it out with them."

"Only when ghosts and monsters are allowed to come out into the open can they be wiped out; only when poisonous weeds are allowed to come out of the ground can they be uprooted." This is a strategic directive by Chairman Mao and the Central Committee. The Party branch of Tachai acted accordingly. It led the masses in a well-organized counter-attack against the capitalist forces which had revealed themselves. A village-wide debate to present the facts and reason things out unfolded in Tachai. The speeches made by the Party members and the poor and lower-middle peasants at the meetings struck at the heart of the enemy like bullets out of a gun.

"No freedom in the co-op? Which class' freedom do you want? Before liberation, the landlords and rich peasants had the freedom to exploit and oppress the poor. As for the poor they also had 'freedoms' – to be kicked around, beg in the streets, sell their own children and hang themselves to escape their misery. Since liberation, we have become our own masters and live well and happily. What joy! Only you, who want to restore capitalism, aren't free. Well, it's a fine thing that you aren't! . . ."

"Is selling surplus grain to the state right or wrong? Of course it's right! To sell more surplus grain to support socialist revolution and socialist construction is to serve the basic interests of the proletariat and all other labouring people. In the old days the poor and lower-middle peasants had to eat chaff and wild plants. How could they have any surplus grain? Now after the collectivization of agriculture, we not only have enough grain to eat but some to store up – we have the superior socialist system to thank for that! Anyone who is against selling surplus grain to the state is opposed to our taking the socialist road and to the worker-peasant alliance."

"Chen Yung-kuei puts his whole heart into leading us along the socialist road. But some people accuse him of being out for his own fame and gain. That's a damn lie! When we organized the mutual-aid team, Yung-kuei was at the peak of his strength and a first-rate farmer. Yet he absolutely refused to become the leader of the Stout Fellows Team. Instead he joined with us, his poor brothers and sisters, and formed the Oldsters and Youngsters Team. In 1953, when the state began planned purchase and marketing of grain, the surplus grain sold to it by the whole village was 22,500 kilos. Chen Yung-kuei and his family alone, economizing on food and other expenses, sold 2,750

kilos to set a good example. Later, when land pooled by members as shares in the elementary co-op was being evaluated, some well-to-do middle peasants tried everything to get theirs assessed at a higher rate. But when the committee assessed Chen Yung-kuei's land at 37 shares, he himself cut the figure to 28 – in the interests of all the poor and lower-middle peasants. Those are the hard facts. They show that, far from being out for himself, Chen Yung-kuei is a firm leader of the masses along the socialist road. We support this good leader with all our hearts."

"A wick burns brightly only when trimmed; the truth comes clear only through debate." This debate made clear the line between the enemy and the people, and between right and wrong. In its course, the capitalist forces were hit hard, the socialist enthusiasm of the cadres and co-op members rose high, and the socialist collective economy was consolidated. The poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai emerged full of confidence. "Let the wind blow and the waves pound," they said. "We'll follow the socialist road and never swerve!"

Confronting Wrong Tendencies

In May 1958, under Chairman Mao's personal direction, the Party's General Line of **"going all out, aiming high and achieving greater, faster, better and more economical results in building socialism"** was laid down by the Second Session of the Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China. The People's Commune, a totally new socialist phenomenon, appeared in China's countryside under the guidance of this general line, and

so did the stirring and vigorous Big Leap Forward on all fronts of her industry and agriculture.

In the midst of this fine situation Liu Shao-chi and company, who were scared out of their wits by the revolutionary torrent, jumped out to oppose Chairman Mao's correct thesis that the rural people's commune is a form of socialist collective ownership. Their trick was to deliberately confuse the distinction between communism and socialism and between socialist collective ownership and ownership by the whole people. Frantically fanning up a "wind of communization" and a "wind of wilful exaggeration," they tried to sabotage the socialist collective economy and the worker-peasant alliance by expropriating the peasants. Their criminal aim was to subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat and restore capitalism.

In the face of these evil currents, the heroic people of Tachai held, firm as a rock, to their socialist stand.

The people's commune of which Tachai was a part was influenced by the perverse wind of "communization" promoted by Liu Shao-chi and company. It decided to set up a so-called "10,000 pig farm" by arbitrarily requisitioning both pigs and man-power from its constituent brigades. The cadres of the commune expected the Tachai Brigade, well-known for its communist spirit and pace-setting initiative, to take the lead in this scheme as well. But to their surprise Tachai resolutely rejected the commune's order. "It's not because we are unwilling to give away a few pigs," Chen Yung-kuei said to them earnestly, "but because we're against this whole way of acting. Before making a move, we must think: Does it conform to Party policy? Does it enhance the socialist enthusiasm of the peasants? Does it increase or lessen socialist wealth? By requisitioning without compensation, it's not

just those few pigs the commune will take away. It will take away the socialist enthusiasm of the masses! And the pigs will just be moved from one place to another, they won't grow in number. After so many are brought together they may even die off if not well cared for. Why on earth do such a thing?"

Despite all this, the commune-run farm was set up. Then the commune tried to procure pig-feed from the brigades without compensation. Tachai's cadres strongly opposed this wrong step, too. Some commune cadres became very annoyed. But long afterwards, when they had gained a better understanding of the two-line struggle, they came to a deep realization that the Tachai cadres' opposition had been intended to help them.

In 1958, guided by the beacon of the Party's general line for building socialism, the poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai, high in morale and fighting will, brought about a new upsurge in the brigade's socialist construction. They increased their per-mu grain yield to 271.5 kg. as compared with 160 kg. in 1957. It was an amazing achievement.

In the winter of the same year Chen Yung-kuei, representing Tachai's poor and lower-middle peasants, attended the conference of agricultural model workers of Shansi Province. The villagers rejoiced, "This time our Tachai will certainly be on the honour roll." But, the conference, influenced by Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line, was dominated by the tendency of exaggerating yields. Tachai's name was not listed, because its crop report was strictly truthful. One leading cadre, drifting with the tide, hinted to Chen Yung-kuei that he had better raise his report of Tachai's yield to 1,000 kg. per mu. He said he was doing Tachai a favour, out of consideration for

its status as an old advanced unit. His words made Chen Yung-kuei's blood boil.

That night Chen Yung-kuei tossed in his bed, unable to sleep. "Landlords, capitalists and their agents within our Party tell lies," he thought. "To maintain the interests of the exploiting classes, they have to resort to all kinds of dirty tricks — they are politically hollow and can't survive without lying. But we Communists fight all our lives for communism, without ulterior motives, without self-interest, but only with the interest of the proletarian revolutionary cause and of the masses in mind. So why should we lie?" Then and there, he made up his mind. No matter what happened, he would persist in the proletarian Party spirit, adhere to the Party's principle of sticking to the truth and to the facts and resist all corrosion by bourgeois ideas and ways.

So the next day Tachai's crop report was still the same — 271.5 kg. per mu. The leading cadre who had advised a change was perturbed. But Chen Yung-kuei told him, "What I say mustn't differ from what I do. If I say we got 1,000 kilos per mu, while in fact we didn't, how can I look Chairman Mao in the face? Or face the poor and lower-middle peasants of our own village? And how can the state make plans according to our figures? And another thing. The landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries and bad elements in our village know very well how much grain we harvested. If I tell this lie the class enemies will seize upon it to make trouble. I'll never supply the enemy with bullets to shoot at us!" His firm spirit of truth and responsibility to the Party and the people impressed and inspired the conference.

Chairman Mao discovered the schemes of Liu Shao-chi and company in good time. He sternly criticized the

reactionary absurdities of their "communization" and exaggeration of output figures. Thus he protected the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses. At the same time he initiated concrete measures to guide the mass movement onto the correct road. Thenceforth, the people of Tachai saw more clearly that there were two diametrically opposed lines within the Party. They resisted the erroneous line with growing awareness.

The ringleaders of opportunist lines, attempting to restore capitalism and roll back the wheel of history, always resort to counter-revolutionary dual tactics — to two alternate ways of trouble-making and wrecking. In the years 1959-62, temporary difficulties beset China's national economy as a result of three successive years of serious natural calamities and of sabotage by Soviet revisionist renegade clique. Liu Shao-chi and company picked this time to spring out again. They viciously attacked the Three Red Banners, that is, the Party's General Line for Socialist Construction, the Big Leap Forward and the People's Communes. They also openly set forth and pushed their counter-revolutionary revisionist line in both internal and external affairs — the line of San Zi Yi Bao (the extension of plots for private use, the extension of free markets, the increase of small enterprises with sole responsibility for their own profits or losses, and the fixing of output quotas based on the individual households) and San He Yi Shao (the liquidation of struggle in relations with imperialism, revisionism and reaction, and reduction of assistance and support to the world revolution). Now these swindlers no longer wanted high crop reports. Instead, in order to fake a "factual basis" for their attack on the Three Red Banners and for their revisionist line of San Zi Yi Bao, they instigated grass-roots units to drastically understate output.

Affected by this line, certain members of the former Party committee of Chinchung Prefecture sent emissaries to Tachai to "check up." They said to Chen Yung-kuei, "Other places have all cut their output figures. What about Tachai?" Smelling a rat, Chen Yung-kuei replied firmly, "We reported what we actually harvested. What's there to cut down? We got our increased output because we were guided by the Three Red Banners. Our members won it with their sweat and blood. To try to make us understate our output is to demand that we wilfully smear socialism. We'll never do that!" Thus, by its firm adherence to the truth, the Tachai Party branch again beat back an attack by Liu Shao-chi's counter-revolutionary revisionist line.

Spread by Liu Shao-chi's evil wind of San Zi Yi Bao, capitalist tendencies emerged in Hsiyang County as well. Some people went up into the hills to grub for a wild grass root used for fodder and sold it at an exorbitant price. Others went to town to speculate on the black market. Still others threw their energy into their private plots. Even in Tachai, there were a few who murmured, "Our brigade has stored up more grain and hay than any other. If we sell them at a high price we'll strike it rich." The Party branch was immediately alerted to such thinking. It started a discussion among the members. The subject: Should we sell at high prices?

Some argued, "One wants to sell, another to buy. Both do it of their own free will. What's wrong?"

But the poor and lower-middle peasants who had gone through hell in the old society, saw things differently. They contrasted their miserable life in the past with the tremendous improvement since liberation. In the old society, they said with deep feeling, the landlords grew rich in famine years by selling grain dear and buying houses

and land cheap. It was the poor who suffered. Now, they worked as a collective. But if they sold dear in a disaster year, wouldn't they be just like those landlords?

"If others can sell dear, why can't we?" The few objectors persisted.

The poor and lower-middle peasants gave an answer: It was wrong to follow others blindly. It was essential to see which way one was going and the road ahead. The bright road of socialism was pointed out by Chairman Mao himself. One should push forward along this road even it meant giving up one's life. Capitalism was the wrong path. It had to be blocked by all means. If it wasn't, not a single forward step in socialism could be taken. Selling at a high price was clearly bad. It damaged the collective economy and undermined the foundations of socialism. Poor and lower-middle peasants must never do such a thing.

Thus the criminal scheme of Liu Shao-chi and his gang to lead the collective economy into wrong paths was exposed in Tachai. No matter how fiercely these misleaders blustered, the cadres and members of the Tachai Brigade put their whole hearts into the collective. Not a single one went off to trade on the black market. Nor did any cut off small plots for their personal gain.

One day a man from a neighbouring brigade came to Tachai to buy hay. Before Chen Yung-kuei could get a word in, he offered the high price of 40 cents (or 0.40 yuan) a kilo. Chen Yung-kuei knit his brows, shook his head and answered, "Tachai has plenty of hay. But we won't sell at 40 cents a kilo!" The man, thinking that Chen considered the price too low, went away at once. Chen on his part was sorry he had not expressed himself clearly.

Two days later, the man returned and asked Chen Yung-kuei, "Tell me frankly how much you want for your hay?"

"Six cents a kilo."

"What? You've made a slip of the tongue. You mean 60 cents?"

Smiling, Chen answered, "No, comrade. I really mean six cents. And we'll only sell to a collective, not to individuals. You knocked at the wrong door with your high price. Just think, if Tachai sells its produce at exorbitant prices, will it still be building socialism?"

Many cart-loads of hay did indeed go from Tachai to neighbouring units. With the hay they carried something much more valuable – the socialist spirit of Tachai's poor and lower-middle peasants.

During the short period when the vile winds raged, Tachai sold 25,000 kg. of hay and the same amount of bran to other brigades. It charged the price set by the state, and no more. It also lent out over 35,000 kg. of grain from its reserves. Borrowers were to pay back in kind, if possible, or in money at the state purchasing price. Tachai's example in defending the socialist cause deeply moved the Party members and poor and lower-middle peasants throughout Hsiyang County. It inspired them to join in resolute struggle against the evil capitalist wind.

Chairman Mao sensed the danger of Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line very early. At the work conference of the Party Central Committee held in January 1962, he explicitly warned against the emergence of revisionism. Then, in September of the same year, at the Tenth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee, Chairman Mao issued a great call to the whole Party, the whole army and people: "**Never forget classes and class struggle.**" He

summed up the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat both in China and elsewhere and laid down comprehensively our Party's basic line for the entire historical period of socialism. This was a sharp check to the evil wind stirred up by Liu Shao-chi and his gang in their attempt to restore capitalism. After this, guided by the Party's basic line, the people of Tachai attacked the bourgeoisie with ever-greater awareness and resolution.

Defending Tachai, Red Banner of China's Agriculture

The Tachai Brigade's two struggles against the revisionist line since 1958 had won warm praise from the people throughout Hsiyang County. They admired it as a model of perseverance in the socialist orientation and in defence of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. But capitalist forces hated it as a giant stumbling block in their way. In 1964, the year Chairman Mao issued the call, "**In agriculture, learn from Tachai,**" a smear campaign was started against it.

"How could such a miserable mountain region yield all that grain? A tall story!" So ran the sceptical theory.

But since truth cannot be turned into falsehood, this talk soon fizzled out, giving way to the "theory of outside aid." Now the tune was, "Tachai's achievement can only be due to vast state aid. We believe its high yield must have come from extra supplies of chemical fertilizer."

In fact, however, the Tachai Brigade had never accepted preferential treatment from the state. It enriched its fields mainly with farmyard manure. It used about as

much chemical fertilizer as the average brigade in the commune.

Finally there was the "it-doesn't-pay" theory! It jeered at Tachai's experience. "Simply a carrying-pole forever on the shoulder and sweet-potato chips for every meal. Whoever learns from Tachai merely victimizes himself!"

All these tunes showed that Tachai's revolutionary spirit of self-reliance and hard struggle was not to the liking of those wanting to go the capitalist road and "earn more money with less effort." This dislike had been sharply demonstrated in 1963, when Hsiyang County suffered a serious flood. Cherishers of the capitalist road tried to make the calamity a pretext for selling less surplus grain to the state and applying for big government relief funds. But Tachai, the county's worst hit brigade, gave effect to its watchwords—the "three nots" (not asking for relief funds, grain and other materials) and the "three no lesses" (selling no less grain to the state, setting aside no less grain for public accumulation and distributing no less grain to its members for their own consumption). This shattered the dream of the capitalist elements. They hated Tachai all the more as a thorn in their side.

Class struggle in society inevitably reflects itself within the Party. Agents of the bourgeoisie inside the Party always say and do what the capitalist forces outside it would like to say and do. So, too, in Hsiyang. A follower of the revisionist line had just been transferred to its county Party committee. Completely disregarding the opposition of other members, he took a team to Tachai to "check up" on its acreage, yields and grain sales to the state. He wanted at all costs to find fault with Tachai and disgrace it. Though he failed, his hostility to Tachai did not abate.

"Strong winds forebode storm." This "check-up" foreshadowed a coming struggle—between the defenders and the smearers of Tachai, the red banner on China's agricultural front.

Just at that time, on a national scale, Liu Shao-chi saw his opportunity in the current "four clean-ups" movement, a socialist education movement in the grass-roots units to clean up their politics, ideology, organization and economy. He sent his wife Wang Kuang-mei to the Taoyuan Brigade of Funing County, Hopei Province for a sham campaign, ostensibly to carry out the movement, but in fact to promote capitalist restoration. They cooked up their so-called "Taoyuan experience," which they asserted would "surpass Tachai politically." A work team was also sent to Tachai itself to lead the campaign. Instigated and influenced by Liu Shao-chi's bourgeois headquarters, this team lost all socialist orientation and carried out Liu's bourgeois reactionary line which was "Left" in form but Right in essence. It became a pliant tool of those wantonly attempting to topple Tachai, the red banner for agriculture.

The team was guided by the absurd formula of the "Taoyuan experience"—"The more a unit is reputed to be advanced, the more serious its problems, and the more strongly should it be suspected." So the team members decided among themselves, soon after their arrival, that Tachai was a brigade of the "third category"—one with serious problems—and that its cadres were all "unclean in the four respects" and should therefore be targets for attack. Moreover, they put forward the wrong slogan, "Rely on whoever has anything against the cadres," and went out to seek such "props" by the so-called method of "gathering a few trustworthy people through secret con-

facts." They even went to rich peasants for "materials" against the cadres.

One day, at a meeting called by the work team, passages from the "Taoyuan experience" were put up on a blackboard. But Kuo Feng-lien and her mates in Tachai's "Iron Girls" Team rubbed them out. Instead, they chalked up Chairman Mao's words: **"The force at the core leading our cause forward is the Chinese Communist Party. The theoretical basis guiding our thinking is Marxism-Leninism."** At another such meeting, when a work-team member was holding forth on the "Taoyuan experience," Chia Cheng-lu, an old poor peasant, walked out in anger, followed by others. The speaker threatened them, "Anyone who resists the Taoyuan experience is counter-revolutionary." Without even looking back, Chia Cheng-lu retorted, "Calling a revolutionary a counter-revolutionary doesn't make him one!" The meeting broke up in disorder.

Then the work team hit on another dodge. Some brigades in Hsiyang, lacking public storage space, had a practice of distributing food grain to members before it was thoroughly dried. To make up, a certain extra weight was allowed for moisture. But Tachai, which always sunned its harvested grain before distribution, made no such allowance. The work team, ignoring this difference completely, decided it had found a "big issue," and sent a member to a poor peasant to "investigate." He asked the poor peasant, "How many members are there in your family?" The peasant said, "Five." He asked, "How much grain has been distributed to each?" The reply was, 280 kilos. "With how much extra allowed for moisture?" demanded the man. The poor peasant laughed. "Why, it was all sunned and dry, so there's no need." But the team member didn't let that stop him. He started to calcu-

late on a piece of paper and came up with a total of 115 kg. after subtracting for the imagined moisture. "Look here!" he incited the peasant. "You think each of you got 280 kilos. But subtracting the moisture, it was only 115. You paid for 280, but got only 115. Aren't they crooks, these cadres?" The peasant was thoroughly disgusted. "What rubbish!" he replied. "The grain was bone-dry. It weighed exactly 280 kilos. How can you turn it into 115?"

In these days, Tachai's cadres were severely tested. No matter how wrong the work team was, they followed Chairman Mao's teachings unswervingly and made strict demands on themselves. In earnest self-criticisms before the brigade members, they did not slur over the slightest real shortcoming. And, as usual, they led the members in hard work in the fields. "If a man walks straight," as the saying goes, "he doesn't worry if his shadow slants." Tachai's cadres were people of iron will.

Before the work team came, an upsurge in the study of Chairman Mao's works had begun in Tachai. But the team allowed only the study of the "Taoyuan experience." Disregarding this, the Tachai cadres kept on studying Chairman Mao's works with the commune members. Since the usual place, the brigade office, had been taken over by the work team, they gathered by the lime-kiln outside the village and read by the light of its flames.

At first, the cadres still had charge of the farm work. Later that, too, was taken from them. But, even when without formal authority, they led the members by their example of hard work in collective production.

The impact of Tachai's struggle was felt throughout Hsiyang County. All its revolutionary cadres and poor and lower-middle peasants rose in defence of Tachai and joined the relentless fight against the wrong line.

Tiger Head Hill has close ties to Peking; Tachai's people look towards Chairman Mao. At the crux of the struggle, Chairman Mao received Comrade Chen Yung-kuei, then attending the First Session of the Third National People's Congress in Peking. And Premier Chou En-lai, in his "Report on the Work of the Government" delivered at the Congress, called on the whole country to learn from the spirit of Tachai. This warm concern and support from Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee gave the Tachai people inexhaustible strength. "Long live Chairman Mao!" they cheered again and again, their eyes brimming with tears.

In January 1965, the document, "Some Current Problems Raised in the Socialist Education Movement in the Rural Areas" (commonly known as the "23-Point Document"), was drawn up under Chairman Mao's direct guidance. Denouncing Liu Shao-chi's bourgeois reactionary line which was "Left" in form but Right in essence, it stated specifically: **"The main target of the present movement is those Party persons in power taking the capitalist road."** This conclusion was drawn by Chairman Mao from the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat both in China and elsewhere. It set right the course of the socialist education movement throughout the country. The "four clean-ups" work team in Tachai was promptly reorganized under the eye of the Party Central Committee. Thenceforward the socialist education movement in Tachai developed wholesomely, in conformity to the "23-Point Document," and went on to great triumphs. The Tachai people's consciousness in class struggle and the struggle between the two lines was greatly enhanced and they have become more discerning and determined in the fight against capitalist restoration.

Holding high the great red banner of Mao Tsetung Thought, they strode forward along the socialist road.

Forever Continuing the Revolution

In 1966, the spring thunder of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a struggle initiated and led by Chairman Mao, a struggle unprecedented in Chinese history, reverberated throughout China. Tachai's Party members and poor and lower-middle peasants, led by Chen Yung-kuei, took an active part, obeying Chairman Mao's teaching, **"It is right to rebel against reactionaries."** The young people, led by Kuo Feng-lien, organized themselves as Red Guards and moved to the fore of the battle.

Since this movement is **"in essence a great political revolution carried out under the conditions of socialism by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes,"** it inevitably evokes violent resistance from foes of every kind. And it was natural that Tachai, cited as a national model by Chairman Mao and having great influence throughout the country, should have become a vital position contested between ourselves and the enemy. So the struggle there was sharp indeed.

At the initial stage of the Cultural Revolution, when the Communists, poor and lower-middle peasants and Red Guards in Tachai were denouncing the revisionist line together with Red Guards from all over the country, an evil wind of "suspect all and overthrow everyone" was fanned up by the political mountebanks Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao. Persons with ulterior motives rushed in. "Tachai is a fake red banner, it's no model!" they raved. "And

this Chen Yung-kuei is a capitalist roader, not a model worker!"

One day when these characters were raising a row in the village, Kuo Feng-lien and the other Tachai Red Guards returned from working in the fields and at once saw what they were up to. The trick of "suspect all and overthrow everyone" was aimed at all revolutionary cadres; it was designed to create confusion and lead the Cultural Revolution astray. Kuo Feng-lien and the Red Guards demanded straight out, "Why do you call Tachai a fake red banner, when we Tachai people are following the socialist road and working for socialism?" "How can Chen Yung-kuei, who has led us to do so all these years, be a capitalist roader?" Hotly the young people debated with the intruders, from the brigade office to the square outside, and then under the big willow tree. Soon all Tachai's people joined in. Pointing to the old willow, they talked of the struggles they had gone through and how Tachai had been transformed. The more they argued, the higher their morale and determination. The iron-clad facts opened the eyes of all who had been hoodwinked. Faced with the upright and forthright poor and lower-middle peasants, the trouble-makers were soon left tongue-tied and gaping and hurriedly made themselves scarce.

The Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao directed timely criticism at the reactionary practice of "hitting hard at many in order to protect a handful," and met the malicious interference by the political mountebanks Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao head-on. This assured the first victory won by the Tachai people in the repeated contest of strength between the two classes and the two roads in the Cultural Revolution.

Reactionary forces never leave the stage of history of their own accord. When the "suspect all and overthrow everyone" trend was repulsed, Liu Shao-chi, Lin Piao and other political quacks and class enemies in Chinese society tried to thwart the Cultural Revolution by inflaming bourgeois factionalism. They threw new vicious slanders at Tachai to create counter-revolutionary public opinion, and hoodwinked some people into provoking fist-fights there. They ranted that "the Cultural Revolution in Tachai is like a pool of stagnant water, dull and lifeless."

Was the Cultural Revolution in the Tachai Brigade dull and lifeless? Its members, responding to Chairman Mao's call, "**You should concern yourselves with affairs of state and carry through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution to the end!**", were exposing and denouncing Liu Shao-chi's manoeuvres for the restoration of capitalism and the evil consequences of the revisionist line. They were using the four new weapons, "speaking out freely, airing views fully, holding great debates and writing big-character posters." If "briskness and vigour" meant resorting to factional squabbles and fist-fights harmful to revolution and production, then the Tachai people would have nothing to do with it. They would never be duped by the enemy into deviating from Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

The people in Shansi and all over the country praised the revolutionary steadfastness of the people of Tachai. Every day, hundreds of visitors from all over China came to learn, and to exchange experience. Encouraged by their support, the Tachai people plunged into an even more courageous battle to transform nature, while continuing to criticize revisionism. Tiger Head Hill became a bustling scene of revolution and production — rocks were

blasted asunder, people worked busily in the fields, plough-horses neighed spiritedly.

In April 1969, the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of China was convened. Chairman Mao called on the whole country, **"Unite to win still greater victories!"** The reactionaries' plot to sow dissension, instigate fights and pull down Tachai failed ignominiously. This was a second victory for Tachai's people in the repeated struggles between the two classes and the two roads during the Cultural Revolution.

After this they went steadily forward, guided by the line of unity for victory laid down by the Ninth Party Congress. But soon they encountered another frenzied assault by the bourgeoisie. Motivated by Lin Piao's revisionist line, the reactionary forces plotted a deathblow against Tachai both politically and organizationally. As a necessary preliminary, they decided to get rid of Tachai's pace-setters and leaders — Chen Yung-kuei, Liang Pien-liang and Kuo Feng-lien — who belonged respectively to three generations, old, middle-aged and the young.

Their method was the fabrication of a pack of political lies against all three. Though they knew the frame-up would not stick, they assumed that with so many "questions" to be cleared up, Chen Yung-kuei would be suspended from his leading post. Then, deprived of its backbone, Tachai could be toppled.

However, their clumsy and perverse dodges could not deceive the great, glorious and correct Chinese Communist Party. Nor could they fool the revolutionary people. The members of the Tachai Brigade gathered before a dilapidated cave-dwelling near the village and vehemently denounced the counter-attack by the revisionist line. The old poor peasants told the audience: This cave could be

a witness in regard to Chen Yung-kuei. Right here he had lived through his miserable childhood and youth, and grown into his militant middle age. Chen Yung-kuei had put his all into the building of socialism. Now some people were trying character assassination on him. Could anything be more vicious and hateful than such scoundrels?

In another argument, in Tachai's meeting room, people asked Liang Pien-liang, who had lived in bitterness in the old society, to show his hands and shoulders. They were calloused and bruised by self-sacrificing labour to build a socialist countryside. "Which class is exercising the dictatorship if Pien-liang is branded as an enemy?" the people asked wrathfully. "All of us know he has given his every effort to socialism through all the 20 years since he first joined the Oldsters and Youngsters Team."

The young people rallied round Kuo Feng-lien, still in her early twenties, warmly encouraging this successor to the revolutionary cause. It was her glory, they said, to be marked as a target of attack by the erroneous line. They, on their part, would learn from her daring to rebel against the revisionist line, daring to make a radical break with traditional ideas, daring to steel herself amid the greatest difficulties to be a fine daughter of the poor and lower-middle peasants.

True gold fears no fire. The Tachai people stood up to all tests. Defying the adverse current, they continued in daytime to transform their gullies into terraced fields, and in the evenings to criticize revisionism. Study and criticism heightened their ability to distinguish Marxism from revisionism and socialism from capitalism. And in struggle against the elements, they improved their knowledge of nature and ability to transform it. They raised Tachai's red banner higher than ever.

In August 1970, the State Council convened the Agricultural Conference of the Northern Regions. There Tachai's direction and road were once again confirmed by the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao. The Tachai people had won their third victory in the repeated struggle against revisionism and capitalism.

Chairman Mao teaches, **"The issue of who will win in the revolution can only be settled over a long historical period."** Even before the conclusion of the conference, the class struggle over the question of learning from Tachai was resumed. Now it was Chen Po-ta, a protagonist of the Lin Piao anti-Party clique, who came forward to challenge the revolutionary people. He made drastic changes in the text of the "Decision of the Shansi Provincial Revolutionary Committee on the Furtherance of the Mass Movement of Learning from Tachai in Agriculture," which had been ratified by the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao and circulated by the conference throughout the country. Vainly, Chen Po-ta thought that his black ink could drown Tachai's red banner. But soon the Second Plenary Session of the Ninth Party Central Committee completely exposed his sinister features — those of a counter-revolutionary opposed to the Communist Party and the people. Chen Po-ta, too, was thrown into the garbage bin of history.

A year later, the revisionist chieftain Lin Piao, that bourgeois careerist, conspirator, double-dealer, renegade and traitor, blew himself to bits in the "September 13th Incident." The stirring movement to criticize Lin Piao and rectify style of work unfolded throughout the country, under the leadership of the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao.

Full of righteous indignation at Lin Piao's crimes, the Communists and poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai earnestly studied Marxism-Leninism and Chairman Mao's works in order to arm themselves to repudiate Lin Piao's reactionary programme for a coup d'etat — the so-called "Outline of Project '571.'" This evil plot, they declared, reeked of Lin Piao's inveterate hatred of the proletarian revolution and the proletarian dictatorship and unmasked his ugly face as a bourgeois careerist, conspirator, double-dealer, renegade and traitor. They pledged never to relax their vigilance against anyone who, like Lin Piao and his clique, might again try to change the Party's basic line and policy at the root in order to subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat and restore capitalism.

In August 1973, the Tenth Party Congress proclaimed the utter bankruptcy of Lin Piao's ultra-Rightist line for the restoration of capitalism. The Tachai people rejoiced in their fourth victory in the repeated trial of strength between the two classes and roads during the Cultural Revolution.

The surging mass movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, initiated and led by Chairman Mao, lent further momentum to Tachai. It struck hard at the counter-revolutionary political programme of "restraining oneself and returning to the rites" concocted by Confucius more than 2,000 years ago and faithfully followed by Lin Piao, and at all the ideologies of the reactionary and decadent classes.

Activity in this movement helped the Tachai people see how imperative it was, for the purpose of eradicating Lin Piao's counter-revolutionary revisionist line, to track down his ideological roots as well as expose and denounce

his heinous crimes of treason to the Party and country. And his ideological roots – his ideological weapon and theoretical basis – were none other than the reactionary, decadent doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. In criticizing Lin Piao, therefore, it was important to criticize Confucius. Tachai's Communists and poor and lower-middle peasants reached the conclusion: Confucius wanted to return to the rites. Lin Piao wanted to restore capitalism. They were twin poison-gourds from the same vine. The series of struggles against capitalist restoration and retrogression in Tachai were not only a fight against the bourgeoisie and the revisionist lines. They were, in fact, also a fight against the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, the ideology of China's reactionary and decadent classes. Though Confucius had long turned to dust and Lin Piao had burned himself to ashes, there were still scoundrels who hoped or worked for a capitalist comeback. And the rancid doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, doctrines of restoration, still had some influence. To criticize these doctrines was essential to eradicating the social and ideological basis of the frantic attempts made by domestic and foreign reactionaries to restore capitalism in China.

Revolution promotes production. It has made Tachai's Tiger Head Hill and its big willow bloom with new life.



Educating People

Tachai's Party branch often sums up the transformations there in these words: "People's thinking has changed, the land has changed, farm techniques and output have changed. The change in thinking is the key to all else."

And Tachai's people have a saying: "Many things are important. But persisting in the Party's basic line is the most important. Many jobs need doing. But educating people with Mao Tsetung Thought comes first." Such education means using Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to train a generation of socialist peasants of a new type – peasants who persist in Marxism and oppose revisionism, who persist in socialism and oppose capitalism, who dare to struggle against class enemies and natural calamities and dare to win victory, who are able to use the stand, viewpoint and method of dialectical materialism and historical materialism both to know and to transform the objective world. In short, peasants who are imbued with the communist ideal and style. The training of such peasants is key to Tachai's experience, and is also the essential reason why the old Tachai has changed into the new.

Educating People with the Party's Basic Line

How to educate people with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought? The fundamental experience of the Tachai Party branch is that it is essential to adhere to the Party's basic line and that both cadres and commune members must be helped to understand its content. The Party's basic line is: **"Socialist society covers a considerably long historical period. In the historical period of socialism, there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle, there is the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road, and there is the danger of capitalist restoration. We must recognize the protracted and complex nature of this struggle. We must heighten our vigilance. We must conduct socialist education. We must correctly understand and handle class contradictions and class struggle, distinguish the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy from those among the people and handle them correctly. Otherwise a socialist country like ours will turn into its opposite and degenerate, and a capitalist restoration will take place. From now on we must remind ourselves of this every year, every month and every day so that we can retain a rather sober understanding of this problem and have a Marxist-Leninist line."**

In educating people in this basic line, the Tachai Party branch considers that the key thing is to help cadres and members to grasp the laws and characteristics of the class struggle in the period of the socialist revolution, so that they can apply this awareness to observe, analyse and handle actual situations and trends and discern the road forward, even in the most complex circumstances.

Both cadres and rank-and-file in Tachai had a strong sense of class struggle during the period of the mutual-aid team and the elementary agricultural producers' co-operative. But afterwards, under the influence of the theory of "the dying out of class struggle" touted by Liu Shao-chi, an evil wind blew in. It bore such ideas as: "The landlords no longer own land, rich peasants aren't rich any more, and everyone lives by his or her own labour – so there are no classes any more." They implied that class struggle no longer existed and there was no further need for a class line. All that was necessary was that everyone work hard at farming and live happily.

Was production really the only thing that mattered now? After repeated class education the people of Tachai realized that production is essential in a socialist collective economy, but it must not be the only concern. It won't do to think only of grain, cotton and oil-bearing crops and forget to distinguish between friends and enemies, and pay no attention to the class struggle and the struggle between the two lines. To take such an attitude is impermissible because in class society, production is linked closely with class struggle, and good farming is not merely a matter of relations between man and nature, but is first of all a matter of grasping class struggle and resolving the problems of orientation, of which road to follow.

Why then did certain people trumpet the fallacy of no more class struggle? The poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai gave the answer: This idea is a smokescreen used by landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries and bad elements, and their agents inside the Party. Their evil purpose is to use the absurd notion of the "dying out of class struggle" and the reactionary theory of productive forces to cover up their own frenzied

attack on the proletariat, their opposition to the continued revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and their scheme to restore capitalism.

In the third year following the changeover to cooperative farming, one class enemy in Tachai became so madly obsessed with restoring the old order that he took out a secret list of his former property, put it inside his clothes, grabbed a big knife and went to Chen Yung-kuei's home where he sharpened the knife on a stone by the door. While doing so, he kept muttering the names of persons to whom his house and land had been distributed and swearing he would kill Chen Yung-kuei. Chao Ta-ho, a Party member, secretly hid outside Chen's door at night to protect him. When Chen Yung-kuei discovered what Chao was doing, he was greatly moved by Chao's profound feeling of class brotherhood. He grasped Chao's hands and said with deep emotion, "Ta-ho, don't worry about me! I haven't been fast asleep these days either."

After this scoundrel's case had been dealt with, and the reactionary arrogance of the class enemy was crushed, the incident was used as living material for class education, helping to open the eyes of the masses in Tachai. The poor and lower-middle peasants declared, "The landlords and rich peasants keep their accounts for restoration. So we should never forget our own account of blood and tears." It was then that Tachai set up its Class Education Exhibition. In it, the class enemy's books for restoration and murder weapon were put on display, and, side by side with them, the begging-baskets and tattered clothes formerly used by the poor and lower-middle peasants. Moreover, in the course of building the new Tachai, the Party branch decided to preserve unchanged samples of the old Tachai — a plot of unimproved land, a section of an

old gully, an old tree, a dilapidated cave-dwelling. It used these to educate the young people, so they would never forget the oppression and exploitation suffered by poor and lower-middle peasants in the old society.

Faced with the mighty dictatorship of the proletariat and the revolutionary people's vigilance, the class enemies knew that operating without a disguise would only be asking for trouble. So they changed their tactics to a pretended submissiveness. When they walked, they kept their heads low. Meeting anyone, they smiled ingratiatingly. If called upon to do anything, they showed up promptly. At work, they appeared diligent. But in fact these wolves in sheep's clothing were furtively sniffing out the direction of the wind, so as better to pursue their evil ends. Misled by false appearances, some people again began to spread illusions about the dying out of class struggle. Some said, "The class enemies have been made to stink so badly now, they daren't make any more trouble. Even if they did, it would be a storm in a tea cup."

Round about that time, on a spring morning in 1963, Chen Yung-kuei appeared at the gathering place under the big willow with a felt bed-mat under his arm. The felt mat had to do with an incident he had come to tell about and submit to public discussion.

What had happened?

One evening, when Chen Yung-kuei's wife Li Hu-ni was sewing under lamp light, a rich peasant had dropped in surreptitiously. Hu-ni asked this unexpected visitor what he wanted. "I've come to see Yung-kuei," he answered with a false smile. "Yung-kuei's been working so hard for our village these years, my heart aches to think of it. He is so often away from home for meetings and sleeps where it's too cold or too damp. What if he should

fall ill? So I've made this felt mat especially for him. It's convenient to travel with. It'll keep him warm and dry. . . ." Saying this, he put the felt mat on the bed. Hu-ni frowned and said loudly, "We don't accept things from others! Take it back right away!" But the man had already slunk off without the mat.

When Chen Yung-kuei came home and heard this he was furious. He grabbed the mat and rushed to look for the rich peasant. But just outside the door he stopped short – another idea had struck him. Next day, he brought the incident up at the Party branch committee meeting. It turned out that the man had tried the same trick with other cadres. Those at the meeting got very angry and wanted to send the "gift" mat back to him. But Chen Yung-kuei said, "No, we'll accept this one and whatever follows until he quits." The committee members were amazed – had Chen Yung-kuei gone out of his mind? But he laughingly explained, "Don't you see? This is good teaching material delivered to our doorstep? Why should we reject it! We'll show it to the masses so they can see what tricks the class enemy is up to."

"A fine idea!" all of them quickly concurred. "The class enemy was trying to do damage in a thousand and one ways, so why not fight him with his own fire."

At the public gathering place, Chen Yung-kuei told the story of the felt mat, and another from the faraway past. "Before liberation, I happened to have worked for this same rich peasant," he said. "He paid me 7 kilos of black beans, 20 of wheat bran and 40 of millet chaff for a whole year's labour. That was all my wife and I had to live on for a year. Once, when we had no food left, I tried to borrow some millet chaff from this scoundrel. He said to me, cold as ice, 'There isn't enough to feed my

chickens with. If I lend it to you, what will they eat?' That's just what he said." After a pause, Chen Yung-kuei went on, "Now this same rich peasant is so glib about his concern for me. From the past, you can see how much he really cares. Now, all of you give your opinion. What's he up to?"

The audience exploded in anger. "Let him tell us himself!"

In fact, this rich peasant who had owned a felt bed-mat workshop for 20 years before liberation had never reconciled himself to a life of reform through farm labour in the co-op. He was always trying to get out of the village, looking for some way to get rich by speculative trading and disrupt the socialist market. He dreamed of getting back to his old parasitic life. For this, he needed a "protective umbrella." To secure it, he had tried to flatter and corrupt the cadres.

With that, the Class Education Exhibition got a new exhibit – the soft felt bed-mat. Such concrete evidence is convincing. People see from it that, besides real bullets, the class enemy uses sugar-coated bullets to fight us, and both are deadly. Such an incident is not "a mere storm in a tea cup." It is a major trap used to bring about "peaceful transformation" to capitalism. To carry the socialist revolution through to the end, every variety of rabid attack by the enemy must be smashed.

In the "four clean-ups" movement, Tachai's cadres and members fought to defend the red banner for China's agriculture against those who wanted to pull it down. From then on, a question remained in their minds: "We've held firmly to the socialist road pointed out by Chairman Mao. Every year we've secured higher yields, sold more

grain to the state and contributed more to socialist revolution and socialist construction. In all this we've hurt and offended no one. Then why are some people, even in leading bodies, so set on finding fault with Tachai?" To solve this "riddle," after the Cultural Revolution began the Party branch repeatedly led the masses in study of the Party's basic line. And they found the answer. The forces of capitalism had been hurt and the revisionists offended by the very fact that Tachai people had firmly carried out and defended Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, persisted in the revolution and fought against restoration, and persisted in marching forward and struggle against retrogression. So it was inevitable that class enemies should oppose Tachai. As pointed out in the "Report to the Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China": "Enemies at home and abroad all understand that the easiest way to capture a fortress is from within. It is much more convenient to have the capitalist-roaders in power who have sneaked into the Party to do the job of subverting the dictatorship of the proletariat than for the landlords and capitalists to come to the fore themselves. This is especially true when the landlords and capitalists are already in bad odour in society." In socialist society there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle. There are agents of landlords and bourgeoisie, like Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao, within the Party. They do their utmost to push the counter-revolutionary revisionist line. No wonder some of the higher-ups have opposed Tachai. This is not a matter of personal grudges, but an inevitable outcome of the laws and special features of class struggle during the period of socialism.

Through repeated education in the struggle between the two classes and the two lines, the cadres and poor and lower-middle peasants constantly deepened their understanding of the Party's basic line, of the characteristics and laws of the class struggle during the socialist period and of how to continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus they took hold of the key link to all work. **"The line is the key link; once it is grasped, everything falls into place."** Tachai's experience, especially in political and ideological work, took shape because they grasped this master key well.

A Great Aim in Their Hearts

In conducting socialist education, education in the Party's basic line, the Party branch of Tachai followed Chairman Mao's teaching, **"spread communist ideas more widely."** It taught its members not only to love their brigade, the small collective, but to concern themselves with the interests of all China and the world-wide struggle, and to be inspired with the sublime ideal of liberating all humanity. In a word, to solve the fundamental question of what one should live for.

From ancient times to the present, from Confucius to Lin Piao, all reactionaries bent on safeguarding and restoring the old order have given the same answer to this question: "Every man for himself, or Heaven and Earth will destroy him." Utterly selfish in fact, the reactionaries shamelessly present themselves as "benefactors" and "sages." And at the same time they slander the labouring people, the real makers of history, as "inferior beings" incapable of caring for anything besides "luck and wealth"

and "food, wife and children." The people of Tachai made an effective criticism of these reactionary idealist concepts of history actuated by hostility to the labouring masses. They did so not only in words but by their own actions.

The maturing of the Communist Chao Hsiao-ho is an outstanding example. It shows how an industrious and courageous labouring man, once he is nurtured by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, once he makes a clear break with the old ideology instilled by the exploiting classes and is inspired by the proletarian world outlook of devotion to the liberation of mankind, can become noble-minded and pure, a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interests, a man who is of value to the people.

This poor peasant lost his father when only nine, and his mother when he was 10. At 12, he went to work as a shepherd for a landlord who later sold him, together with some sheep, to another exploiter in the neighbouring Pingting County. After liberation Chao Hsiao-ho came back to Tachai. Until he was educated by the Party his class consciousness was not high. The co-operative entrusted him with the tending of its sheep. But when the sheep were grazing on the hillside, he paid little attention to them, concentrating instead on weaving twig baskets to sell privately in the market. Once he was sent to purchase sheep and bought 15 diseased ones which he passed off as healthy. As a result, not only did the new flock die off, but the old, larger flock was also infected and perished.

The Party branch was much concerned about Chao's backwardness. Chen Yung-kuei had a heart-to-heart talk with him.

"Hsiao-ho," Chen asked, "are you hard up? Do you have enough money to spend?"

"I'm all right," Hsiao-ho answered.

"Then why do you do such things?"

"Everyone wants to get more money to spend," was Chao Hsiao-ho's casual answer.

These words were like a stab at Chen Yung-kuei's heart. "You've brought shame on us labouring people!" he said with sorrow to Chao. "You talk exactly like the landlords and rich peasants. They were always out for more money. To get it, they were willing to suck the marrow from our bones. Didn't you have enough of the misery of the old society?"

What Chen said made Chao Hsiao-ho think of past bitterness. He stood up abruptly and said, "Who wants to live the life of the old society! Everyone in Tachai knows what things were like for me then."

Seeing that Chao Hsiao-ho was touched to the quick, Chen Yung-kuei struck while the iron was hot. "Very good. You say you don't want the old life back. Then think, why do you treat the collective as you do. If everyone acted like you, could our collective economy prosper? If it should collapse, where would we poor and lower-middle peasants be? Think, who is made happy by the kind of things you've done?"

Tears of shame and remorse poured down Chao's cheeks. From then on, he became a different man. Whatever work was assigned him he did well, sometimes exerting himself beyond the call of duty. The collective became his first concern.

But in spite of these great changes in Hsiao-ho, he had not yet solved the question of what a man should live for. So again he did two dishonourable things.

Sent by the brigade to Hoshun County to buy oxen, Chao bought four, but came back home with five. Where

had the extra one come from? Half way home, passing Chailing Hill, Chao had seen it grazing untended and brought it along. When the Party branch criticized him, Chao said, "It came by itself. I didn't steal it. What's the harm in getting a free ox for the brigade?" But more education made him understand that a real collectivist loves not just his own small collective but all the others as well. Socialism cannot be built with a single successful Tachai. Every village must prosper to make socialism succeed. Labouring people can't act like landlords and rich peasants, enriching themselves at others' expense. Recognizing his mistake, Chao sought out the owner of the ox and returned it with a self-criticism made on his own initiative.

Another time, while transporting rolled steel for the state, Chao took a section to make farm tools for the brigade. Naturally, he was criticized again. At first he couldn't understand it. With all the steel the state had, how could just one piece matter so much? The Party branch cleared his mind on the relation between the state and the collective. It helped him see that any interest of the individual, or of the part, must be subordinated to those of the class, of the whole. To be concerned for and love the small collective, Tachai, was good. But more important still was love for our whole socialist country. To be concerned solely with the small collective is merely an expanded selfishness. When he realized this, Chao made another self-criticism and gave the steel back.

From the example of Chao Hsiao-ho the Party branch learned a lesson for its own work: In the socialist revolution, it is not enough to educate the members of a collective to love their own small unit. They must also be imbued with proletarian ideology to make their vision much

broader. Only then can they understand that **"the proletariat must emancipate not only itself but all mankind. Without emancipating all mankind the proletariat cannot achieve its own final emancipation."**

The Tachai Party branch, through its own actions in daily life, set an example in expressing and applying this spirit. Here are some examples.

One year, an ox belonging to the brigade damaged its spine. It looked fat and strong, but it could no longer work. So Chen Yung-kuei drove it to the state food products company to sell for meat. On the way, he passed a rural market where many people from the neighbouring brigades asked to buy the sturdy-looking ox. One offered 50 yuan and another 60. Soon the bid was up to 80. Chen said straight out that the animal was disabled, and he did not want to cheat them. But this made the buyers even more eager — they thought he was just making excuses so as to get a higher price elsewhere. Then the food products company agent came up. Chen Yung-kuei, telling him the condition of the ox, sold it on the spot for only 27 yuan. This set the whole market astir. Many people praised the Tachai Brigade for its fine behaviour. But one man disapproved. He said Chen was a fool.

Was Chen Yung-kuei's action really foolish? Around this question, the Party branch organized a village-wide discussion. It helped all the members see that in the socialist collective economy, mutual support, not taking advantage of each other, must be the unvarying motive.

On another occasion, someone phoned Tachai from the county seat, saying that a cart with two mules and two horses was being sold cheaply at the supply and marketing co-operative of the Pachou People's Commune. Chen Yung-kuei went there for a look. The cart and animals

were indeed good and the price low. But Chen thought first of the need of the neighbouring Chinshipo Brigade, which had wanted to buy such a cart for years but never been able to afford it. Home again, he consulted with the brigade members about giving the priority to these neighbours. The majority agreed but a few did not. One man said, "Elbows don't bend outward. Why let others in on such a bargain?"

Who should be let in on a bargain? The Party branch used this opportunity to do more education. At a discussion meeting, the poor and lower-middle peasants took the correct stand – that all people in the revolutionary ranks should care for each other, love and help each other. To be as concerned for the needs of other brigades as for one's own, they said, was not "bending the elbow outward" at all – it was communist behaviour. In building socialism, this was the style to follow.

One member, however, pointed out that even if the buy was conceded to the Chinshipo Brigade, it didn't have enough money. To untie this "knot" the Tachai Party branch consulted with the masses and decided to lend the needed cash to Chinshipo, to be repaid in instalments as its production grew.

So Chinshipo got the cart and the animals. But there was no road to that village over which to drive them there. The people of Tachai worked a whole day and night to help build it. That's the way Tachai helps its brother brigades – all the way and thoroughly.

In relations with other units, Tachai always displays the communist style of more concern for others than for oneself. Moreover, it always puts the interests of the entire state above those of the collective or the individual. In 1953, when the state began its planned purchase and

supply of grain, Tachai's sales quota was set at 22,500 kg. But for each year from 1958 to 1971 Tachai actually sold at least 120,000 kg. to the state. And in 1972, though hit by the biggest drought in a century, it sold a record amount – 200,000 kg.

Tachai's Party branch is deeply aware that the broader the vision, the higher the thinking, the more vigorous the work for the revolution. Constant socialist education has transformed many peasants from mere "good family men" into lovers of the collective who put its interests ahead of their own, and more than that, have the great ideal of communism in their hearts. The poor peasant Chia Ken-yuan has such nobility of spirit. Though over 70, he never goes out without his basket for picking up manure on the roads for the collective. Once a foreign visitor saw him and said, "Tachai now harvests enough grain each year for three years' use. So why work so hard in your old age?" Old Chia answered, "We're not just working for ourselves, or for Tachai alone!" The foreign friend persisted, "If you have enough to eat and wear, aren't you allowed to stop working?" Old Chia smiled and said, "Stop working? Never thought of that!" To this old man, living merely to feed and clothe himself seems too petty-minded; only dedicated effort for the communist cause makes life meaningful.

It is the great ideal of communism that spurs the people of Tachai forward, that generates their thorough revolutionary spirit of "fearing neither hardship nor death." The poor peasant Chao Hsiao-ho, whose early development we have already sketched, was a good example. Once he really understood that a Communist strives for the liberation of all humanity through the world-wide triumph of communism, he measured himself by the

standards required of the vanguard of the proletariat. He studied earnestly and worked hard. He grew, in the course of struggle, into a selfless fearless vanguard fighter of the proletariat, turning his life into a paean of revolutionary heroism.

He strikingly showed this quality in the autumn of 1957. While carting maize from the hill fields to the village, his horse suddenly missed its footing on the edge of a cliff. One of its hind legs dangled in the air, and it was about to fall into the gully. Chao, with no thought for his own safety, rushed over and propped up the horse with his shoulder. He pushed hard until the horse was on firm ground. The animal was saved, but the great weight fractured Chao's right leg and he lost consciousness. His first words when he came to were, "How is the horse?" Told it was safe, he smiled in relief.

The fracture did not join well and left him lame. "Can you reset it?" he asked a doctor. The doctor shook his head. "The broken bone has already knit. It'd hardly do to pull it apart to set it again."

Chen Yung-kuei saw how disappointed Chao was and comforted him, "Hsiao-ho, since you've lamed yourself for the collective, you will always be well taken care of."

But Chao said in great agitation, "How can I be at peace? The Party and all the comrades have done so much for me - I'd rather be working than have all the special care in the world."

So as soon as the doctor left he called several of the young men together and begged them, with tears in his eyes, to pull his leg apart. When the doctor came again he was amazed. "I've never seen a man as steel-willed as you," he said with deep emotion.

The result was that the once crippled revolutionary fighter Chao Hsiao-ho returned as an able-bodied worker to the front of the three great revolutionary movements - class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment. Joyfully he pledged, "As long as I live I'll put all my strength and drive into making revolution. If I slow down, how can I face the Party and Chairman Mao!" In 1964, in the rebuilding of Tachai after the big flood, Chao Hsiao-ho's job was carting quarried stone. He made eight or nine round-trips a day when others made only five or six. In the end, when his horses bolted down a slope, he gave his life in a heroic effort to save them. Before this, he had applied to join the Party. With the approval of the higher Party authorities, he was posthumously accepted as a member of the Communist Party of China.

Chao Hsiao-ho was Tachai's outstanding instance of the revolutionization of peasant thinking. His name, his heroic image, his words and joyful face will live forever in the hearts of its people.

Peasants Take Up the "Telescope" and "Microscope" of Marxism

Reading and study of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought became a habit among the Tachai people after 1963 when Chairman Mao issued his great call: "**Learn from Comrade Lei Feng.**" In the early post-liberation days, 90 per cent of the villagers had not even been able to read their own names. But after hearing the stirring story of the splendid soldier Lei Feng, the Party branch and the brigade members realized that the fundamental reason why he was able to become Chairman Mao's good fighter

was because he took Chairman Mao's works as his "food, weapon and compass." "Can we do what Lei Feng did?" they asked themselves. Thereafter, the Party branch placed on its agenda the task of systematically guiding the peasants to master Mao Tsetung Thought from the original writings.

By that time, Kuo Feng-lien and about a dozen other young people in Tachai had finished middle school. They were Tachai's first group of educated peasants. Then a People's Liberation Army unit came to Tachai in the course of a training march and shared its experience of study of Chairman Mao's works with the villagers. This was followed by an upsurge of study in Tachai.

Kuo Feng-lien and others would read out the brilliant articles "Serve the People," "In Memory of Norman Bethune" and "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains" to groups of villagers whenever there was time. Whoever had worries or difficulties would turn to the sharp weapon of Mao Tsetung Thought for help. The poor and lower-middle peasants said, "Chairman Mao and the Communist Party saved us from the abyss. We'll do what Chairman Mao says and take his books as our guide to action."

Heightened awareness of the need for reading created stubborn resolve in study. Tachai Brigade members are constantly busy in the fields. Their day begins at dawn and ends at dusk, even in wind or snow. And the cadres are even busier than the rank-and-file. Yet all persist in study. Members of the Party branch committee start off their meetings every evening with study.

Sung Li-ying, deputy secretary of the Party branch, is a mother of four. With many family chores on top of field labour and social work, it was hard to find time for study.

What's more, she had had no schooling at all. But her heart burned red for the revolution, so no difficulties could deter her. She has an agreement with a school teacher to coach her when she comes back from the fields at the noon break. Sometimes she studies while cooking.

Chia Tsun-so, young deputy secretary of the Party branch, is known as the "book lover." Following Lei Feng's example, she always has books and newspapers with her and reads whenever possible. Sometimes she studies till cockcrow, and only then turns off the light to catch a few winks of sleep before the day begins. Then she goes off to the fields, with her books as usual.

In recent years, some of Tachai's cadres have read all four volumes of Chairman Mao's "Selected Works," along with the "Manifesto of the Communist Party," "The State and Revolution," "Critique of the Gotha Programme" and other Marxist classics.

Chen Yung-kuei is a model in study. He was illiterate till the age of 43. When he started in on the books, he chose Chairman Mao's writings as his text and found there were an awful lot of words he didn't know. So he would drop around at other people's houses for help. He did this until 1961 when Kuo Feng-lien finished her schooling and began tutoring him. He squeezed in every possible minute to study, going to bed later and rising earlier than others and using mealtimes as well. While learning to read, he also tried to grasp the full meaning of the book or document before him. Often he would spend 10 or 20 days on a single article. When comrades urged him to rest he would say, "When fighting the enemy we must contest every inch of land; when farming we must till every inch of soil; when studying political theory, we must seize every minute." And he would explain, "If we don't read

revolutionary books, we won't be able to understand revolutionary theory. And without revolutionary theory to direct us, we will lose our bearings like a blind man riding a blind horse. I can't sleep well if I haven't done my day's study."

Some people felt that for country folk like themselves, reading up on theory was harder than carrying big rocks. Chen Yung-kuei and the other Party branch committee members encouraged and spurred them on, "Reading revolutionary books isn't just a question of literacy. What counts is attitude and class feeling. The works of Marx, Lenin and Chairman Mao are the scientific summing up of the experience of the people's revolutionary struggle. They were written for the proletariat and labouring people. Every word, every sentence in them reflects what is in the working people's hearts and minds. If we study these books hard enough, we're sure to understand them."

Tachai now has a number of youngsters who have finished middle school and come back to work in the brigade. In order to guide them to become "**both red and expert**" and enlist them in helping the older people to study, the Party branch has, since 1965, organized groups composed of both young and old. The latter are rich in experience and clear about the contrast between the old and new societies, which to love and which to hate. Even when illiterate themselves, they understand the essence of what the young people read to them. Some of the young people, though they have a bit of book knowledge, aren't as good in combining theory with practice. Therefore, when old and young study together, they make up for each other's lacks and raise each other's level. Since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, these study groups have evolved into criticism groups.

When they meet, the young people read aloud from books, documents, articles or newspapers, and the old people bring out their link with practice, grasping the real essence. Then they discuss and criticize together, and the young people write up the results in articles. In the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, many such articles were produced by the groups. In the course of criticism of revisionism, the bourgeoisie, and the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, large numbers of activists in theoretical study have sprung up among the poor and lower-middle peasants. They are at home both with a hoe and with a book. This new emerging force on the theoretical front, this mass army of poor and lower-middle peasant theoreticians, is growing vigorously.

A basic trait of the Tachai people's study is their persistent emphasis on the revolutionary style of integrating theory with practice as taught by Chairman Mao. Their judgement of how well or badly a person studies is not based on the number of books read, quotations recited, or notes taken. The bad habit of loud lip service is very unpopular here. What counts is whether one has grasped the essence of the theory studied, and is able to use the Marxist stand, viewpoint and method to solve even a few problems met in class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment, using theory as a guide to action.

Once several young people ran a "study contest." But instead of looking into who was better at integrating theory with practice, they competed only in learning texts by heart. Chen Yung-kuei happened to come in. A youngster asked him to join in the contest, and as a sample recited "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains" in one breath, expecting Chen Yung-kuei to com-

pliment him. To his surprise, Chen remarked that it was no great feat to memorize these few hundred words, and asked him to explain the essence of this article and say how he himself was putting its spirit into action in the three great revolutionary movements. Disconcerted, the young man could find few words in answer. Chen said he could recommend the man in Tachai who had studied the article best of all. "Who is he?" the youngster asked. "Chia Chin-tsai," replied Chen. "He can't reel off the article like you. But he has learned a lot from the 'Foolish Old Man' and in fact become one himself. Over many years, he has persisted in splitting rocks for socialism. No matter how much class enemies mocked and wrong political lines interfered, he never swerved. Nothing could shake him. Every time he hits a rock with his hammer, it's a smashing blow at the conservatism and retrogression advocated by the 'Wise Old Man' in the story. Don't you see how well Chia Chin-tsai has studied 'The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains'?"

Under the correct guidance of the Party branch, the young people have come clearly to understand that the aim of reading and political study is not self-ornamentation, but to help make the revolution; not to arm the tongue, but to arm the mind; not to become bookworms divorced from the three revolutionary movements, but to firmly carry out and safeguard Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and become reliable successors in the proletarian revolutionary cause.

United as One

When an agricultural producers' co-operative was first organized in Tachai, class enemies attacked it, saying, "The co-op won't last long. It has too many people, and they can't all agree." Among the members there were misgivings. "Even in a family," some thought, "brothers or in-laws may quarrel. Can a co-operative with hundreds of people be run well?"

In fact, in the 20 and more years since Tachai's collectivization, its economy has grown fast. Having a common goal, its people have united more tightly than a family and gone all out to build socialism. How has Tachai done this? Its experience consists in resolutely carrying out Party policies and applying them to unite the people into a solid force for socialism. The Party's basic line says in part, **"We must correctly understand and handle class contradictions and class struggle, distinguish the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy from those among the people and handle them correctly."** This general policy, with the specific policies for the rural areas that flow from it, provides the criteria and principles for handling contradictions of all kinds in the collective economy.

The Question of First Importance for the Revolution

Policies include those concerned with people and those concerning economic matters. Of the two, the former are the most important. They boil down to one question: whom to rely on, whom to unite with and whom to oppose. **"Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of the first importance for the revolution."** It is also the main question in running the collective economy well and building socialist agriculture.

How could all the brigade members be united for a common aim? From Chairman Mao's teaching, **"Without the poor peasants there would be no revolution,"** the cadres understood why it was essential to carry out the Party's class line in the rural areas and rely firmly on the poor and lower-middle peasants to unite and lead the entire membership forward. In the land reform and in setting up mutual-aid teams and elementary co-operatives, the poor and lower-middle peasants had always stood in the van. Now, to run the socialist economy successfully, it was again essential to rely on them. Given their support and help, the cadres could see clearly and work effectively. Separated from them, the cadres would become "commanders without troops," and then nothing could be achieved.

Tachai has consistently adhered to the democratic principle in running its economy. It makes a point of bringing the poor and lower-middle peasants, and all the members, into the running of the collective. The Party branch always consults with the poor and lower-middle peasants before taking a big decision on production, finance or distribution. Many old poor and lower-middle

peasants have become "staff officers" of the collective.

In conducting ideological education among the masses, Tachai makes it a rule to rely on the poor and lower-middle peasants. They are the "living files" and "barometers." They know everybody's history. They understand the hidden meaning of any person's remarks and conduct. Whatever is in the air, they are immediately aware of it. The Party branch relies on them to promptly discern new trends in the class struggle and in the thinking of brigade members. It relies on them, too, to lead the masses in building up revolutionary public opinion to discredit capitalism and sweep away every bad trend.

The Party branch attaches great importance to developing administrators from among the poor and lower-middle peasants. This puts the power to manage the collective economy firmly in the hands of those who persist in the socialist direction. Over the years, Tachai has organized temporary teams for field work, making different people their leaders and members at different times. Not only does this flexible form of organization make it possible to put the right people in the right jobs, concentrate manpower to finish urgent tasks and heighten labour efficiency. It also gives activists among the poor and lower-middle peasants a turn at being "short-term cadres" — leaders of these temporary teams — and learning to lead collective production. As a result, the Party branch says, "We have both long-term and short-term cadres, and new cadres are trained every day." Through repeated spells as "short-term cadres," the former impoverished "stupid kids" of the Oldsters and Youngsters Team who "could not even talk distinctly" have been transformed into core elements of various col-

lective undertakings. They are diligent and resourceful, both "soldiers" and "commanders." They have handled many important, responsible jobs in both production and management over the past 20 years.

Because the Party branch has for so long placed its reliance on the poor and lower-middle peasants, people of this kind who were most looked down upon in the old society have become highly respected. Though most of them are not cadres, they concern themselves with every aspect of the collective. They go wherever the Party directs. Middle peasants and other members look up to them, listen to their words and follow them in action. They are a force of non-cadre administrators.

Today the poor and lower-middle peasants of the older generation who were seasoned in revolutionary struggle are already turning grey. Even the former ragged urchins of the Oldsters and Youngsters Team are on the threshold of middle age. Will those who come after them be people on whom the cause of socialism can rely? This question draws more and more attention in the Tachai Party branch. Under its leadership the older poor and lower-middle peasants have voluntarily taken on the task of educating the youth and bringing up successors to carry the revolution forward. This task has raised their sense of responsibility and honour. Their attitude is: "We, who were treated as trash in the old society but are treasured today, should set a good example for the youth."

"It is essential to unite with the middle peasants, and wrong not to do so." Following Chairman Mao's teaching, the Tachai Party branch pays close attention to uniting with them.

The majority of Tachai's cadres are poor and lower-middle peasants, but some are middle peasants whose political consciousness is high. Chia Cheng-jen is one. He has been Tachai's storehouse keeper since the co-operative was first organized. Over the years, he has remained wholly dedicated to the revolution, diligent, frugal and wholehearted in serving the collective. Not a single kilogramme of seed and reserve grain of the millions that have come under his care has ever been stolen or allowed to rot. His accounts are always flawless. The peasants call him, "the storehouse keeper about whom no one need worry."

Chia Cheng-jen represents the advanced section of the middle peasants. But in this social stratum, and especially among the well-to-do middle peasants, some people do have a serious spontaneous tendency towards capitalism. Unless they overcome it, they are bound to follow wrong trends that may spring up. Hence the Tachai Party branch knows that to bring the middle peasants into unity it is necessary first of all to struggle against their spontaneous capitalist tendency. This, however, is a different kind of struggle than that against the enemy. Proceeding from a desire for unity, it calls for resolving contradictions through criticism and self-criticism and arriving at a new unity on a new basis. It does not permit either discrimination or exclusion in dealing with middle peasants.

One well-to-do middle peasant in Tachai showed a serious tendency towards capitalism. He had been prominent in the Stout Fellows Team and was long at odds with the Oldsters and Youngsters Team, and later with the co-op. After joining the latter, he was depressed and worked sloppily, because he thought his fond dream of

wealth had been blasted. When the elementary co-operative switched over to an advanced one, he opposed the pooling of draught animals as shares and sold his own donkey on the market.

Could unity include such a middle peasant? Firmly carrying out the Party's policy, the Party branch was determined to win him over to the socialist road and assigned Chen Yung-kuei to help him. This man was skilled in farming. So Chen Yung-kuei gave him a free hand in technical matters where he could give his ability full play. Moreover, he was invited to meetings on farm techniques. Gradually he began to concern himself with the affairs of the collective and open his heart to Chen Yung-kuei. In one of their talks, Chen said to him, "All you think of is that in the past you could have hired farmhands, bought houses and land and become rich. But does it ever occur to you that even in the old society only a very few of the well-to-do middle peasants actually got rich, while the majority were ruined when they met with natural disasters or great misfortune? How can those precarious days compare with our secure life today as we go forward along the socialist road! Socialism is the only way out for the poor and lower-middle peasants, and for all working people, including yourself."

In the spring of 1963, this well-to-do middle peasant worked very hard at sowing and was praised at a meeting of the brigade. One day he suddenly raised a "strange" question. "We've all become rich now," he said. "My own income has doubled since joining the co-operative. I've been classified as a well-to-do middle peasant. Now I'm even more well-to-do. What kind of a peasant am I today? I say, since we're so well off, there's no more point in calling anyone this or that kind of peasant."

Chen Yung-kuei took the chance to help him understand things better. "'Rich' means different things at different times and in different contexts," he said. "When we call someone a 'rich peasant,' it means he exploited other people in the old society. And 'well-to-do middle peasant' means that he used to engage in exploitation to a minor degree. Thanks to the superiority of the collective economy, we've all become fairly 'rich' now. But we get all our income from our own labour, so it can't be mentioned in the same breath as getting rich by exploitation in the old society. Why, then, do we still have to differentiate? Just think it over. Do the landlords and rich peasants think like the labouring people? Do people of different classes have the same attitude to socialism? You ask your question because you feel that 'well-to-do middle peasant' doesn't sound as good as 'poor and lower-middle peasants.' But actually it's what you do that counts. If you put your heart into the collective and work like you did in this sowing, everyone will praise you." The well-to-do middle peasant felt that Chen Yung-kuei was talking good sense. "I see the point now," he nodded. "I thought people were looking sideways at me. I never thought that I was looking sideways at the collective. Believe me, I'll never be of two minds with it any more."

There is another important question in carrying out the Party's policy of relying on and uniting with the majority. It is how to deal correctly with those working people who have erred. During the "four clean-ups" movement, Liu Shao-chi frantically peddled the "Taoyuan experience" and pushed a bourgeois reactionary line that was "Left" in form but Right in essence. Duped by the work team which was carrying out this wrong line in Ta-

ch'ai, a few brigade members made false statements and did other wrong things. Some others jeered at them for this, saying they had forgotten their own bitter past. Those who had done wrong were so ashamed that they began to avoid people. In relation to these people, the Party branch committee followed Chairman Mao's teaching that revolutionaries should be good at uniting **"even with those who formerly opposed them and have since been proved wrong in practice."** Its members educated the other Party members, cadres and poor and lower-middle peasants by saying to them, "We've suffered a great deal from the wrong line. We can't inflict the same suffering on our class brothers who were misled into error by this same wrong line. We should all hate that line, instead of nursing grudges against our own comrades." They also said, "Those who have erred are our own class brothers and are essentially good. They love Chairman Mao and the Communist Party. They will overcome their failings. If we turn away from people because of some shortcomings or past mistakes, how can our revolutionary ranks grow?" So whenever they found that brigade members who had erred lacked the courage to have a heart-to-heart talk with the cadres, the Party branch committee asked the cadres to take the initiative and make the first approach. Those so treated were very moved, and regained their revolutionary vigour. Their having been deceived by the wrong line was a lesson not only to them, but to everybody in the brigade. From then on, the cadres and rank-and-file became more united than ever.

In the countryside there are also some sons and daughters of exploiting-class elements. Should they be included in the unity? The Tachai Party branch is guided by Chairman Mao's consistent teaching, **"Unite with all**

people that can be united." It considers that it is always better to have one more person in the ranks of the revolution than one less, that the more people are united in it and the greater its strength, the better. Though these "sons and daughters who can be educated" are few in number, they are the first people the class enemies try to win away from us. We, on our part, should never push them over to the enemy side. Holding this view, the Tachai Party branch over the years has applied the Party's policy of taking account of a person's class origin, yet not judging by this alone, but mainly by how that person acts politically. The Party organization is warmly encouraging towards such young people. "You can't choose your class origin, but you can choose what road to take," it often enjoins them. And it shows much concern and solicitude for them both in political study and in farm work. In 1972, a girl from an exploiting-class family was injured in Tachai's great battle to level the land, Chen Yung-kuei rushed to rescue her at the risk of his own life. After she was hospitalized, he went to see her with other members of the Party branch committee. The girl, moved to tears, pledged that she would work harder to remould herself and to build socialism. Under the care of the Party branch, most of these young people have done very well. Two have been admitted into the Communist Youth League.

Not only does the Party branch of Tachai Brigade follow the Party's policy of drawing a strict line of demarcation between the children of landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries and bad elements and those elements themselves. Even towards the latter, it carries out the policy of differentiating between cases, splitting them up and **"giving [them] a way out."** Those who dare be unruly in word or act are instantly subjected

to mass criticism and struggle. Those who behave properly and accept reform through labour are given encouragement. Those who turn over a new leaf after a long period of reform under supervision have their class status changed and obtain the opportunity to become new people.

The Party's policy is a sure guarantee for mobilizing a huge force for the building of socialism. By conscientiously implementing the Party's proletarian policies towards the various classes and strata in the rural areas, the Party branch of Tachai Brigade gives effect to Chairman Mao's teaching of **"bringing all positive factors into play, of uniting with everyone that can be united with, and of doing everything possible to turn negative factors into positive ones so as to serve the great cause of building a socialist society."** This has turned the brigade into a really united, militant, revolutionary collective.

Management Itself Is a Matter of Socialist Education

Good commune management in respect of planning, allocation of labour and funds is necessary for regularity of production and the development of socialist agriculture. It is itself an embodiment of socialist relations of production. At the brigade level, as Tachai's long experience has shown, financial management and planning are comparatively simple. More complicated is the management of labour, particularly the evaluation of work and calculation of work-points, a daily task that involves everyone directly. It is, indeed, a task which determines whether the socialist principle "from each according to his ability,

to each according to his work" is being observed, whether the collective economy is serving the interests of the labouring people, and whether the socialist orientation is being adhered to.

How, then, does Tachai do its labour evaluation and work-point accounting?

In the period of the elementary co-operative, it applied the system of "basic work-points and flexible evaluation." "Basic work-points" meant that each member was assigned a set number of points as a daily rate, depending on strength and skill. And "flexible evaluation" meant that the actual points he or she was credited with each day, while based on this figure, depended on the amount and quality of work done. But what happened in practice was that the "basic work-points" were automatically recorded, and "flexible evaluation" was neglected. At that time, nonetheless, this system essentially accorded with the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work." This was because in the elementary co-op, organized on the basis of the Oldsters and Youngsters Team, the members always worked their best, so their actual performance did not vary much from their basic work-point rating. Hence, everyone was then satisfied with this method.

But after the whole village was brought into the co-op, the membership became more varied in class background and work attitudes. In the new circumstances, to continue to count the basic work-points alone would dampen the spirit of the harder workers and pander to the lackadaisical. So the evaluation in the fields at the end of each day began to be done in earnest. The members would come together to settle their work-points just before sunset. The process took much time and energy and, even then,

they were reluctant to speak out about each other's performance for fear of giving offence, so in the end the cadres generally had to decide the work-points for the record-keeper to put down. Afterthoughts and complaints were many.

When the advanced co-op was set up, it wanted to do away with this daily evaluation. So it switched over to a "norm system." The norm was the amount of work that could be done in a day by a person with average labour power. If it was fulfilled, a specified number of work-points was paid out. Jobs were assigned to the teams, and after completion and checking, work-points were apportioned to the members according to the norms set. This was an improvement on the old system, and the members no longer grumbled. Their working enthusiasm grew.

At this time, however, Liu Shao-chi and his followers were trumpeting their fallacy of material incentives, which, in the co-op, actually meant "work-points above everything." They were trying to use the self-seeking ideas of the bourgeoisie to poison the labouring people and put the management of collective economy on the wrong road.

In Tachai a few members were infected. In one family the husband paid attention to quality of work and made great efforts, but earned fewer work-points than his wife, who chased quantity at the expense of quality. She urged her husband to follow her example. He wouldn't listen and went on working as conscientiously as before. This caused frequent quarrels between them.

The Party branch had long detected the stench of "work-points above everything." In 1960 it started a great debate on the question.

Party members took the lead in speaking up. Their opinion was: Our production and management are both socialist, so we should never lose our socialist orientation in solving concrete problems. We should never forget the lofty goal of communism and Chairman Mao's teachings: **"Politics is the commander, the soul in everything"** and **"political work is the life-blood of all economic work."** Always and everywhere, we must persist in using the world outlook of the proletariat to educate the peasants and promote the communist attitude of complete devotion to the public interest.

The views of the poor and lower-middle peasants were: The collective is the rock on which we commune members depend. And we commune members are the masters of the collective. If all the stress is on rules and methods, and on work-points as the stimulus, then the relation between the collective and its membership will become one of employer and employees. People will think, "I work for you, and you pay me work-points." Why do some people start bargaining every time they take on a job, and do their work sloppily? Here is the reason.

The cadres considered: In the scramble for work-points the physically stronger members come out ahead, and they often refuse to team up with the weaker ones. The skilled avoid teaming up with the unskilled for fear they'll be taken advantage of in the sharing of work-points. As a result, when the abacus clicks away in the year-end accounting, the strong and the skilled get a lot, and the weak and unskilled hardly enough to live on. But the needy families have to live, too. That's why there are families who are overdrawn on the collective, or in debt. If there are such families, there are bound to be others

who cannot receive the full income due them because funds fall short. Then the stronger ones aren't happy, either. One problem leads to a host of others.

It is the political line that determines how management is carried on. Through discussion and criticism, a line of demarcation was drawn between the two lines in management. Once the idea that politics must take command of management was clearly grasped, ways of solving problems emerged. The members earnestly summed up their experience in managing their own labour since collectivization. All agreed that, in view of the actual conditions in the brigade, a new system, at once simple and fair, should take the place of the old. It was called "self-assessment and collective evaluation based on the standard-bearer's norm." Its paramount feature was that the number of work-points due to members was settled for a set period instead of every day as in both of the old systems. To begin with, a worker good in ideology, labour, skill and concern for quality was chosen as the standard-bearer, and the number of work-points he should earn was considered and decided upon. Then, all the others measured themselves by this standard and made a self-assessment of how many work-points each individual should get. The meeting discussed these figures, then passed the assessments it agreed upon to an enlarged Party branch committee meeting, which examined them and made adjustments before the formal announcement.

The gist of the new method was that evaluation after discussion, not simple calculation, was the decisive factor. Therefore, every such meeting was a time of review, comparison and mutual assessment. It clearly showed how

Tachai promoted the communist spirit of farming for the revolution while implementing the socialist principle of "to each according to his work" and "more pay for more work."

As the new method was simple and easy, the work of the cadres was greatly lightened, and they themselves could participate regularly in the collective's productive labour. This helped them to do more ideological education right in the fields, working alongside the rank-and-file. And they did a lot – commending outstanding people, publicizing exemplary deeds, and opposing wrong tendencies. Thus they promoted the struggle between the two opposed ideas of farming for the revolution and farming for work-points and encouraged all members to emulate the pace-setters. In short, they brought political and ideological work into the whole process of production and management. Moreover, through such work, done every day, they gradually cultivated a core force of Party and Youth League members, poor and lower-middle peasants and demobilized PLA men. In production this core was relied on to set the lead in high quality, efficiency and attendance. They were models in learning from each other, mutual help and mutual supervision. At work-point meetings, they were the first to come out with truthful evaluations of their own performance, propose the corresponding remuneration, and lead the way in criticism and self-criticism on such matters. This helped ensure that each member would receive a fair reward for work done.

Such work-point meetings were conducted very earnestly. Yet the spirit of solidarity and comradeship always prevailed. The general attitude of physically weaker

members to the stronger ones was: By doing the hardest work and yielding the easier jobs to us, you've contributed more – so you should get more work-points. And that of the stronger members towards the weaker was: You shouldn't get less just because you're physically weaker. You've worked with all your strength and done a lot. What could we few stronger members accomplish if we were all by ourselves?

With this spirit prevailing, commune members varying in labour power were nonetheless all happy with the way in which work-points were set. They thought mainly of whether they had made as much effort as others, not about whether the work-points might be unfairly set. This major debate on the work-point system in 1960, with the resulting revolutionary changes from old ideas and practices to new ones, altered people's work attitudes very greatly. Since then, members have turned out promptly in the fields each morning with no need for bugle-calls or bells. Men and women, old and young, do what they can, whatever the job assigned. And jobs which have not been assigned or the cadres haven't thought of get done as well. Indeed, the Tachai people are more united than kith and kin.

Tachai recognizes the existence of bourgeois right in distribution under conditions of socialism. It also takes steps to restrict it. In the brigade, all members work to the full extent of their ability and work-points are fairly set. There are differences in income, but they are not very big. Everyone able to work, much or little, can live on his or her earnings. No longer do any families have to overdraw on the collective or go into debt to it. Nor are there families which cannot receive their share in the

year-end distribution in full because of funds being tied up in such loans or debts. Everyone now gets his due share of the annual income of the collective. This strikingly demonstrates the superiority of the socialist system.

What a world of difference between the two different systems of setting work-points and between their results! One puts politics in command, the other puts work-points in command. Here is a clear example of how the relations of production react back on the productive forces.

When Tachai first began introducing the system of "self-assessment and collective evaluation based on the standard-bearer's norm," meetings to set work-points were called every ten days or fortnight. Later, as the members' political consciousness grew, they were more widely spaced – once a month, then once a season. After eight years of application, they were held only once each year. Because political consciousness had risen further and more members came up to the standards of the pace-setters, it was no longer necessary to take any one individual's work as the yardstick. As a result, the system has now evolved further into "self-assessment and collective evaluation based on a unified work-point standard." After the autumn harvest each year, this standard (i.e., the highest number of work-points to be credited to a member for a day's work) is established according to the weather situation, the total labour performed and the yields. Then each member measures himself against the standard and against the performance of the others to propose his own rate. This is then discussed. The question of work-points, which formerly involved daily wrangles, has been settled in a few evenings in each of the past six years.

Cherishing the Socialist Enthusiasm of the Masses

Chairman Mao says, **"We should treasure every spark of socialist enthusiasm shown by the peasants and cadres, and not thwart such enthusiasm."** The Tachai Party branch acts on this teaching. It lays stress on correct observance of the Party's policies in all that concerns the collective economy, and takes care to run things in such a way that the socialist enthusiasm of the masses is treasured and enhanced.

The idea of farming for the revolution has firmly established itself in the Tachai Brigade. Members work their best and vie with each other for the heaviest tasks. To nourish and perpetuate this mass enthusiasm, the Party branch not only conscientiously adheres to the principle of "to each according to his work." It also pays great attention to labour protection and resolutely observes the policy of "both work and rest and striking a balance between the two." The Party branch often emphasizes: The higher the morale of the members and the less thought they give to remuneration, the more the leadership should take care of them and protect and perpetuate their enthusiasm.

During the early period of collectivization, it happened that a young woman wanted to match young men in shouldering 60-kilogramme loads. Her enthusiasm was commendable, but Comrade Chen Yung-kuei tried to persuade her not to overtax her strength. The young woman refused to listen. Then Chen told her seriously, "If you go on violating our labour discipline, we'll call a meeting to criticize you tonight."

A general meeting of commune members was indeed called. At it the Party branch proposed a new rule: Women members are not allowed to carry more than 40 kg. at a time. Other measures to ensure labour protection and a proper balance between work and rest were put before the meeting.

The discussion was lively and moving. It was a vivid education in the contrast between the new society and the old. Many elderly peasants who had suffered bitterly as child labourers in the old society shed tears at the solicitude shown by the Party branch. In the old society, they recalled, they had been forced to work like beasts of burden, and no one had cared. The vicious landlords thought only of squeezing them to the last drop. Chia Chin-tsai, when only 11, had been hired out to a landlord who made him look after five donkeys. Liang Pien-liang, when not yet 12, had to drive donkeys carrying manure to the fields. Not strong enough to unload the panniers from their backs, he had to stand on a rock and push with his head to dump the manure, so his forehead was always swollen. How many children of the poor were devoured by the evil old society! Today, as masters of their own fate, the old poor peasants pledged, they would treat the young people with loving care. They praised the great thoughtfulness the Party branch showed in its proposals.

In Tachai, no one may violate the principle of "to each according to his work." Over the years, even when a few kilogrammes of fruit or vegetable have been shared out among the members, they have been charged on account and their value deducted at the end of the year. Income distribution is not equalitarian. But within the limits of Party policy at this stage, there are already some communist elements in it. For example, if a commune member dies

in a work accident, the brigade helps support the family till the children come of age. In on-the-job injuries, it pays all medical expenses while continuing the remuneration the person would normally receive for work. Nursing mothers may go home half an hour before other members without any deduction of work-points. Free day-care and kindergarten service is provided for small children.

Why should such elements of communism accompany the principle of "to each according to his work"? The Party branch considers that this principle embodies socialist relations of production, blocks acquisition without work and raises the socialist enthusiasm of the peasants. And at the same time, when certain communist elements are introduced in distribution, the peasants are moved to even deeper love for the new society, greater efforts in collective production and stronger determination to defend socialism. The introduction of these elements does not run counter to the principle of "to each according to his work." On the contrary it complements and supports it.

In order to bring the socialist enthusiasm of the peasants into play, the Tachai Party branch, acting on Chairman Mao's teaching, "**Be concerned with the well-being of the masses,**" gives great attention to their material and cultural life. It considers that now the peasants have become members of the collective and entrusted to it their whole life, the collective has the duty to attend to all aspects of their lives. Otherwise, capitalism is bound to sneak into any loophole. The slightest neglect of the reasonable everyday needs of commune members, for instance, makes it possible for such evil trends as speculative trade to crop up and corrupt the masses. Therefore, the question of concern for the life of the masses also involves a bitter fight for positions between the proletariat and the

bourgeoisie. Looking at things from this height, the Tachai Brigade, as a socialist collective, concerns itself not only with the political thinking, work and income of the members, but also with a wide range of their problems of daily life. These include housing, clothing, food and transport; marriage, child-birth, medical care and the burial of the dead; education, culture, recreation, holidays, and so on.

The members of the Tachai Brigade are intensely but happily busy the year round. But they have two big holidays on and around the Spring Festival and the Army Day (August 1st), when several days of joyful cultural and recreational activities are arranged. At these times, members engaged in animal husbandry, whose work allows for no interruption, are replaced by brigade cadres so they, too, can spend the holidays at home.

With the transformation in the ownership of the means of production, human relations have undergone a radical change. However, some new problems have also emerged. Take, for instance, the relations between older and younger members of families. Before collectivization, old people were the heads of their households. Since then, the remnants of the feudal patriarchal system have gradually fallen away. The young people have broken free from the traditional family subordinations and work with might and main for the revolution. What a fine thing! But, on the other hand, some young people, especially daughters-in-law, may be unwilling to support the old people. This contradiction, if not properly solved, could blunt the latter's enthusiasm for the socialist system. Hence the Party branch has carried out repeated education in "respect for the old and love for the young." In practice, the brigade not only provides for old poor and lower-middle peasants without families to depend on. It also

requires that young couples who do not have their dependent parents living with them must set aside part of their income after each autumn's distribution for the support of these parents wherever they are and ensure that they can live at a standard somewhat higher than that of the young people themselves. This guarantees a happy old age for all.

Chairman Mao points out, **"In order to build a great socialist society, it is of the utmost importance to arouse the broad masses of women to join in productive activity."** Another momentous change in human relations following collectivization is the altered social status of women, who comprise half the population. Shaking off the feudal shackles of male supremacy, they have joined actively in the three great revolutionary movements and now truly "hold up half the sky." Immediately following the collectivization, the Party branch encouraged two women Party members, Sung Li-ying and Kuo Ai-lien, to take part in the collective's productive labour as an example for other women to follow. In doing so, it strictly adhered to the policy of equal pay for equal work for both sexes in order to arouse the women's enthusiasm for socialism and to encourage them to persist in struggle against the conventional ideas of the exploiting classes. One man in the brigade was still so influenced by ideas of male supremacy that he could not get the reasons for the policy of "equal pay for equal work" for men and women through his head. He argued that "three women can't do the work of one man" and was afraid their work-points would be paid at the men's expense. He insisted that women should do whatever the men did and join him in moving heavy rocks. His attitude made the women fume. But soon afterwards they had an answer for him. In thinning out millet

seedlings, work which requires quickness of eye and deftness of hand, they reached the other end of a field before this man was even half-way. With this proof in hand, the women assembled, with Sung Li-ying and Kuo Ai-lien at their head, and assailed him with arguments, leaving him speechless with anger. He complained to the Party branch, saying that the women had ganged up on him. But the Party branch sided firmly with the women. Chen Yung-kuei said, "Our Party branch stands behind their action. They did the right thing. In our new society, women are just as much masters of the collective as the men are. You're still bewitched by the idea that men are better than women, and make difficulties for them on purpose. So you needed this bit of education from them." Having thus "won their suit," the women were overjoyed. The support of the Party branch made them all the stronger and more confident in fighting traditional ideas.

Formerly a good many men, after they got home from the fields, would sit down for a leisurely smoke as soon as they put away their tools. It never occurred to them to help in household chores. The women had to fill their ricebowls and put them right into their hands. But after the women began to go out regularly to do farm work, the men sometimes did not find their meals ready on time. This has caused quarrels. The Tachai Party branch applied the Party's line and policies to help straighten these out. If in any family a woman runs up against obstacles to full emancipation, the Party branch committee members go to do ideological work on the spot. For instance, Kuo Ai-lien once went to the commune headquarters for a meeting after work, leaving her husband to mind their child at home. The child started to cry and scream and the father, at his wits' end as to how to pacify him, got

into a raging temper himself. Ai-lien got home to find her husband and mother-in-law not only without a meal ready for her, but yelling and scolding. Chen Yung-kuei and Sung Li-ying quickly came over. Chen said to Ai-lien's husband, "However long we men stay out on a job, no one says a word. Why do you raise hell just because a woman comrade's a bit late getting home? Do you really want the old society back again, with the women pinned down in their homes nursing babies and doing housework all day? Just think! If we were to return to the old ways our Tachai would lose half its force for revolution and production. What then?" Sung Li-ying also had a heart-to-heart talk with the mother-in-law. "In the old society," she said to her, "we women weren't treated like human beings. But now, Chairman Mao and the Communist Party have emancipated us and told us to step out of our homes and do big things. Aunty, you should support Ai-lien!" Through patient ideological work, both the husband and mother-in-law were at last persuaded that household jobs must be shared.

Many visitors to Tachai are puzzled how such a small village can get so much done year after year? The reasons are plain. Firstly, the high revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses makes for highly efficient work. Secondly, all the women without exception take part in work in the fields. Some, who had never before left their homes, joined in the three great revolutionary movements with amazing will and energy once their socialist enthusiasm was aroused.

Lu Hsi-ying, a poor peasant woman, had been bed-ridden with back and leg ailments from the early years of the collectivization. But so eager was she not to fall behind her class sisters in work for socialism that she had a small stone mill set up in her house so she could strengthen

herself by exercise. Despite excruciating pain, she kept pushing the millstone, walking round and round. At the beginning, one round was enough to exhaust her. But she persisted and went on — first from a few rounds a day to 10, then gradually to 20, 100 and 200 . . . until she won back her health. Over the past decade, she has put in more than 300 days of work each year. She is now one of Tachai's foremost women workers and a committee member of the brigade women's congress.

With the development of a diversified economy in the last few years, many men have been transferred from the fields to other jobs, so it is mainly through the women's work that Tachai's bumper harvests are secured. Truly, the women "hold up half the sky."

To sum up, in the big family of the collective economy, various contradictions within the ranks of the people exist. If any of these contradictions are mishandled, the repercussion may be wide, setting back the revolution and harming the unity and socialist enthusiasm of the masses. On the contrary, if there is constant mass education in the Party's political line, and the Party's policies are carried out on all matters, then unity and ease of mind are ensured for more than 95 per cent of both the cadres and rank-and-file, welding them into a mighty force in consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat.

V

Great Beginning

A correct line makes production leap forward. The Party branch in Tachai has persistently carried out the Party's basic line, educated the peasants in Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and applied Party policy to unite them. As a result, awareness of the class struggle and the struggle between the two lines has constantly risen among the cadres and rank-and-file, and their socialist initiative has gained broad scope. Hence they can display to the full their revolutionary spirit—the Tachai spirit of self-reliance and hard work—in the struggle to transform Tachai's land.

In 1972, at the Shansi provincial conference for exchanging experience in learning from Tachai in agriculture, Comrade Chen Yung-kuei said, "To reshape the hills and rivers calls for hard work. This is a truth. No one can learn from Tachai on a soft bed or change a backward situation with a turn of the wrist. You want to build socialism? Then you must be ready to bear hardships. It takes tireless work, a lot of sweat. Rice-gruel can't be cooked without rice. Nothing can be gained on the cheap." The new Tachai is the outcome of hard, bitter struggle, guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

Work as Hard as the "Foolish Old Man"

Chairman Mao teaches, "The establishment of our socialist system has opened the road leading to the ideal society of the future, but to translate this ideal into reality needs hard work." No sooner had the sound of gongs and drums celebrating the birth of the co-op died down than Tachai embarked on its first ideological struggle. The issue was whether or not to change the village out of its poverty and backwardness at a fast pace and through hard work.

The view taken by the poor and lower-middle peasants was: "Crops grow in fields. Fields need to be tilled and improved. If the people work hard, the land won't remain idle either. Water it with sweat, and it will yield bigger harvests. Now we're all in a co-op, we should use its strength, go all out to improve the land and radically change our conditions for farming."

But a small number of well-to-do middle peasants took a different view. Now the village had gone co-operative, they thought, more people could be freed from farm work to do some trade. "Trade is the way to make money with the least effort," they said.

Against this view, the poor and lower-middle peasants argued, "You can't compare income from profiteering with income from improving the land. The more we work at land reclamation, the more grain we get, and the more wealth we contribute to society. But getting rich by speculation, on the other hand, means taking money out of other people's pockets. However much you make that way, you can't add any wealth to society, or change the face of Tachai. We working people are dead against any such capitalist crookery."

The two views reflected two different roads for agriculture. Which road to take? The Party branch stood firmly on the side of the poor and lower-middle peasants. It gave active leadership in this ideological struggle and determined to mobilize the masses for a great effort to level and terrace the fields.

The villagers, educated by the sharp confrontation of ideas and facts, began to see eye to eye. Then these work-roughened tillers of the soil put their heads together to make a 10-year plan for land improvement and reclamation.

The plan was: 1. To turn all the barren gullies into fertile land; 2. reconstruct all the sloping plots into level terraces; and 3. change the "three run-off fields" into "three retention fields." With this three-point plan, a good harvest could be ensured every year despite drought or flood. The key link was the third point. In those days, all Tachai's land consisted of sloping strips with no proper embankments to protect them. In a rain, the soil, water and manure would run off, with the result that the fields constantly shrank in size, the top-soil got thinner and output kept dropping. The face of Tachai could not be completely changed unless the fields were rebuilt to retain soil, water and manure.

When the Party branch put this plan before the masses for discussion, the poor and lower-middle peasants were enthusiastic and eager to start work. But some other people, who were used to doing things in a small way, shook their heads. "Tiger Head Hill is so big and its gullies are so deep," they said. "High-sounding words about transforming them are easy. But to do it is as hard as climbing to heaven on a ladder."

Chen Yung-kuei and the poor and lower-middle peasants ringingly replied, "Sure, Tiger Head is big and the gullies are deep. But they are dead things. And we people are alive. Every time we transform one height or gully, that's one height or gully less. Why can't we succeed? Sure the job is big. But the bigger it is, the earlier we should start. Only hard work can bring a change. If we don't dare move but just sit and wait, we'll still have the same old Tachai generations from now."

"But when will we ever finish with tools that are so poor — picks, shovels, shoulder-poles and baskets?" asked the sceptics.

Chen Yung-kuei and the poor and lower-middle peasants were iron-firm: "If we can't finish in 3 years, then let's take 5, 10, or 20. If our generation can't finish, our sons and grandsons can. Just go on in the spirit of the Foolish Old Man who removed the mountains. Then the day will come when Tiger Head Hill is transformed."

Once the poor and lower-middle peasants decide on a thing, no force can hold them back. No sooner was the 10-year plan passed than the battle to conquer nature began.

It started in the White Camel, the smallest of the seven gullies in Tachai. In the past, the ownership of its land had been divided among nine households belonging to three different clans. Their fields were so interspersed with each other that no one could make any improvements in the gully. Now, the members of the Tachai co-operative tackled it in common. They were led by Chen Yung-kuei, Party branch secretary and chairman of the co-op. Experienced and skilled in building field embankments, he took command in the fight.

It was deep winter. Tiger Head Hill was covered with snow and buffeted by howling winds. The peasants worked from dawn to dusk. Their clothes were encrusted with snow on the outside, and soaked with sweat inside. Although the temperature was 20° C. below zero, the work-site bustled with activity. "The weather's cold," people said proudly, "but our hearts are warm. The earth is frozen, but our determination and confidence will never freeze." Chia Chin-yuan, over 70, was urged to stay at home because of his age. But as soon as the battle began he rushed to the work-site to encourage the young people. He said, "I've always cherished the idea of building up new fields. But all my life, I never had a chance to reclaim even one mu. To see you doing it now, and with so much spirit, makes my old heart happy."

Winter, the old slack season, turned into a busy season. Was this a hardship? Tachai's poor and lower-middle peasants recalled the real hardship – winter in the old society. When it came, the landlords and rich peasants threw their hired labourers out. Cold and hungry, they had to go begging with their families to keep alive. Many failed to survive the long ordeal. Now, the winter "slack" had turned into the busy building of socialism. Though work was hard, life was sweet.

The arduous efforts of Tachai's peasants were richly rewarded. In only 18 days instead of the planned month, the rocky, barren White Camel Gully was transformed into 24 neat, level terraced fields protected by stone embankments. The first new, beautiful landscape was created on Tiger Head Hill. The Tachai people, amid delight and glad laughter, gave the place a new name — Co-operative Gully.

Thus they won their first battle. And every winter that followed, they continued to transform the gullies and slopes. By the end of 1955, only two winters later, the gullies in Tachai had been transformed with only one exception — the Wolves' Den.

Three Battles at Wolves' Den

Wolves' Den Gully was the worst of them all. Down its length of one and a half kilometres, deep and steep, mountain torrents rushed down like wild horses in the flood season. A folk verse ran:

Wolves' Den Gully has evils three:
Torrents, hungry wolves and rocks.
In dry weather, no grass grows.
When it rains, disaster strikes.

This was an apt description.

The first battle to tame the gully started in the winter of 1955. The method was the one used in the other six. But the result was different – the newly built stone embankments, more than 30 in number, were washed away by a fierce summer flood in 1956.

In the face of failure, some people lost heart. But after education by the Party branch, the great majority, though saddened, were undismayed. They knew well that victory could only be won by summing up the experience of defeat. Therefore, the Party branch, together with the poor and lower-middle peasants, dug deeply into the causes of the failure. Careful analysis revealed the main one to be that they had used an old method in a new situation. Specifically, they had overlooked the fact that

the torrents in Wolves' Den were exceptionally fierce and neglected to build the embankments there with deeper foundations, wider bases and bigger stones.

Their strength refreshed by the summing-up, they began the second battle that same winter. An additional change they made was to dig a small reservoir in the upper part of the gully to slow down the torrents. Their reinforced embankments were indeed adequate to resist another flood like that of 1956. But nature seemed bent on testing the Tachai people's will. In the summer of 1957, torrential rains washed away all the 25 new embankments and the reservoir as well.

Some people who had formerly advocated profiteering in farm produce or doing things only in a small way fastened on the failure. "A whole winter's efforts washed away overnight!" they said.

Class enemies added fuel to the fire, saying, "Since the beginning of the world man has gone his own way, and so has water. Where will the water run when you've dammed the gully? The proverb says, 'Man cannot fight water any more than a cock can fight a dog.' Able as they might be, how can men defeat the Dragon King of the waters!"

In those days, no one in Tachai was heavier of heart than Chen Yung-kuei. Often he squatted by the gully, smoking one pipe after another, and thinking again and again, "Is Wolves' Den Gully really unconquerable? Are we going to back away at this point?" In his mind's eye he saw the faces and twisted grins of the class enemies. Since the recent setback at Wolves' Den, the landlord and rich peasants had gone about with a springy step, as though some unexpected piece of good fortune had come their way. They were leering joyfully at each

other as if to say, "What's all this stuff about socialism being fine and collective strength being great? Let's see where all your hustle and bustle gets you paupers!"

Chen Yung-kuei thought also of his class brothers who were laying their lives on the line to build socialism. In the past, people had run home from the fields as soon as it began raining. But in the work of transforming the gullies, it was the opposite. Instead of going home, the Communists and the poor and lower-middle peasants rushed to where the flood waters were to secure the embankments. Chen recalled Chao Ta-ho who, with a badly-swollen abscessed leg, had jumped into waist-deep muddy water to block a breach, with no thought of self. Chao had refused to let anyone else take his place, even when several men tried to push him away.

In case of retreat, Chen Yung-kuei thought, his class brothers would be saddened and class enemies would surely gloat. "No matter how hard it may be," he said to himself, "we must conquer Wolves' Den Gully. It's not just a production matter. It's a fight between the two classes and two roads. We mustn't gladden those anti-socialist scoundrels and discourage our own class brothers."

He remembered Chairman Mao's words: "**In times of difficulty we must not lose sight of our achievements, must see the bright future and must pluck up our courage.**" Enlightened by Chairman Mao's teaching, he stood up resolutely and said to himself, "Communists never shirk when faced with difficulties. At this critical moment, our duty is to lead the masses forward. Retreat is out of the question."

Chen Yung-kuei stated his view at a Party branch committee meeting and then at a meeting of the whole

branch. On the following days the Party members and cadres made house-to-house visits to arouse the people, who in turn discussed the matter urgently.

Pessimism was overcome. Then Chen Yung-kuei and the co-op members got together to explore the laws of the transformation of nature in the light of the two failures.

Chen did not sleep properly for several days. One evening, as he stared in thought at the ceiling of his cave-dwelling, an idea flashed across his mind: "This cave has a whole hill on top of it. It was built years ago. Why hasn't it collapsed under the great weight in all that time?" He thought, too, of an arched stone bridge nearby. It was still in good condition though people and carts had crossed it for generations. Why could it hold up, like the cave ceiling? Because both were arched, so, the more the pressure, the tighter the stones. Wouldn't the same thing apply to the stone embankments? Shouldn't they be built with the "backs" arched against the flood waters!

In high spirits, he went to consult the poor and lower-middle peasants. All thought it a good idea and added suggestions. A new construction plan was worked out. Not only would the embankments be built in the shape of an arc, but a ditch was to be dug below each. These ditches would catch water falling from above and hold it awhile before it flowed down to the next lower level. This would reduce the force of the torrents.

The third battle against Wolves' Den started in the winter of 1957. The Party members took the lead and the poor and lower-middle peasants formed the front ranks. "We'll pull the wolves' fangs out of their mouths!" they pledged. Although Tachai had only about 60 full-time workers then, more than 70 people turned out for the campaign. Among them were 17 couples and seven entire

families. In the past, meals used to be sent to the fields only in summer. Now, even in the dead of winter, people ate at the work-site.

Quarrying rock is a tough job. Who took it on in this campaign? Chia Chin-tsai, the oldest Communist in Tachai. Still hale and hearty, he could swing a 19-kilo sledge hammer more than 100 times without respite. The skin of his hands cracked in the bitter cold, and the webbing near the thumb often bled from the concussion of hammering. Yet he never complained, but worked all out, his revolutionary enthusiasm high. One night it snowed heavily. The following day, he went to the work-site at dawn as usual, carrying work tools and a broom. At sunrise, when breakfast was brought to him by a member coming on duty, the food was frozen, but he ate it with gusto. "Why not make a fire and warm it," the man asked. "I was born and bred in hardships, so I don't need pampering now," was his answer. Deeply moved, his workmates said, "Old Chia, we'll build you a monument when you die." Chia grinned and answered, "We Communists don't make revolution for personal fame or gain. Every embankment in Wolves' Den Gully will be our monument. What's the good of any other?"

Through a winter's hard work, Wolves' Den was subdued at last. Its more than 30 embankments reared up like walls of steel. When the extraordinarily serious flood in 1963 washed out all the other embankments in the village, these stood firm.

The barren gully was transformed into fertile fields. It not only yielded excellent harvests, but was a constant inspiration to Tachai's people. In the three battles to transform Wolves' Den, they went on cultivating their fine spirit

of "keeping to the correct orientation and fighting indomitably through to the end."

By 1962, the Tachai people had successfully fulfilled their 10-year plan of improvement and construction of fields. During that decade, they built more than 180 stone embankments, quarried 130,000 cubic metres of rock and moved an average of 1,760 basketloads of rock per worker each year. More than 210,000 work-days were spent on farmland capital construction, a yearly average of 120 work-days for each worker. All fields in the brigade were improved. The 4,700 fragmented plots known as "three run-off fields" were combined first into some 2,900 and later into some 1,700 level terraced fields which could ensure good harvests despite drought or flood. The face of Tachai changed radically.

Scientific Farming

The "Eight-Point Charter" for agriculture formulated by Chairman Mao comprises deep ploughing and soil improvement, fertilizer, water conservancy, seed selection, close planting, plant protection, field management and improvement of tools. It is a scientific summary of the rich experience gained by the Chinese peasants across the centuries. It includes all the basic factors governing agricultural production and is a great programme guiding scientific farming. Besides their work on the large-scale capital construction of fields, the Tachai people farmed scientifically in accordance with all the eight points. They tilled their land as meticulously as if doing embroidery.

Chairman Mao teaches that **"in studying any complex process in which there are two or more contradictions,**

we must devote every effort to finding its principal contradiction. Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved." In applying the charter, the Tachai people stressed the principal contradiction – deep ploughing and soil improvement. Their nationally renowned "spongy fields" are the result of years of hard work on improving the soil.

These "spongy fields" have three characteristics. First, they are level and retain water, soil and manure. Second, the top-soil is more than a foot thick. Third, the soil is very fertile and its structure good.

How were these characteristics attained? Through three basic measures. First, the gullies and slopes were changed into level terraced fields by embanking. Second, the "three shallows" (shallow ploughing, hoeing and sowing) were changed into "three deeps" (deep ploughing, hoeing and sowing). Third, the soil was improved by adding earth brought from elsewhere to thicken the top-soil, besides generously applying manure.

In implementing the "Eight-Point Charter," Tachai's Party branch put the stress on soil improvement. The reason was that, in the old Tachai, the soil had been as unproductive as the ground was rugged and the top-soil thin. Water used to run off instead of sinking in. Manure, too, was washed away by the torrents. Consequently, crops could not strike deep roots or absorb enough nourishment. So, even if other technical measures were carried out properly it was labour lost. The facts proved that it was absolutely correct to tackle the question of soil improvement as the main contradiction to be solved. Without creating the "spongy fields," this barren mountain area could never have brought its yield of grain from under 50 kg. per mu to over 500 kg. per mu.

The first of the three basic measures for building the "spongy fields," i.e., turning gullies and ridges into terraced fields, has already been described. Here we will discuss in detail the second and third measures — changing over from the "three shallows" to the "three deeps," and adding earth from elsewhere plus heavy manuring.

In changing the "three shallows" into "three deeps," the key was deep ploughing. The Party branch had first proposed this in the autumn of 1955. But the only tools available then were antiquated wooden ploughs handed down from generation to generation, while oxen were the only draught power. How deeply could one plough with these? There was a local saying, "Three point three inches is true everywhere under heaven." It meant that this depth could never be exceeded. But, the Tachai people were cowed neither by difficulties nor by tradition. After repeated experiments, they developed a new method of deep ploughing. First they used a strong ox to plough four inches deep, then another ox to plough two inches deeper in its wake. By doing so, they were able to deep-plough all the fields in three years. This thickened the top-soil from three inches to more than six inches.

Since they could not plough any deeper with oxen, Chen Yung-kuei, in the summer of 1958, hit on the deep cultivation of maize by digging around each plant. Long before, in the mutual-aid period, he had reclaimed a small plot of waste land and sowed maize on it. Unfortunately, only the weeds grew well, not the crop. The more Chen looked, the angrier he became. Exasperated, he dug around the plants with a pick, going down seven to eight inches. This uprooted the grass, but he thought it must have damaged the maize too. Unexpectedly, he got more than 50 kg. of maize from this little plot that autumn. That

made him think. Then several more experiments successfully proved that all deeply cultivated fields could greatly increase yields. In 1958, therefore, when the maize seedlings had grown a foot high, he proposed deep cultivation.

Some members, conservative in their thinking, were beset by doubts. "Since ancient times," they said, "cultivation has been done with the hoe and one inch has been considered deep enough. Whoever heard of cultivating with picks?" Chen Yung-kuei, sure of his ground, tried hard to persuade them.

The method proved a success. And one day, after a storm, another strange thing occurred. In the past, such a downpour had often flooded the ditches while barely wetting the fields. But this time, there was no water in the ditches. Where had the rain gone? It had soaked into the earth which had been deeply worked over with picks. Several days later, those fields shone dark green with the best crops ever seen in Tachai.

What made cultivation by deep-digging so effective? The Party branch organized the masses for earnest analysis. They summed up the advantages under the following six heads: 1. Much moisture is retained in the soil, making it more resistant to both drought and waterlogging. Besides, since the water does not run off, soil and fertilizer are kept in the fields. 2. Deep digging injures only the side roots of the crop. It helps the main roots to strike deeper to where bigger clusters of side roots can grow in the loose soil. 3. The top-soil is thickened. 4. Aeration is better, as deep digging favours the activity of bacteria and the decomposition of organic matter, thus improving the conditions for crop growth. 5. Weeds are uprooted. 6. Autumn ploughing is made easier.

Just as Chairman Mao has pointed out, **"Our practice proves that what is perceived cannot at once be comprehended and that only what is comprehended can be more deeply perceived."** After they had put deep digging into practice and summed up their experience in it, the Tachai people gained a fuller understanding of its necessity. They continued to replace the old shallow hoeing by deep digging, and in consequence increased the depth of the top-soil itself from the previous six inches to one foot.

With this thicker top-soil as the basis, they also began to sow their maize deeper, three to four inches below the surface instead of the previous two inches. The advantage of deep sowing is that the main roots strike further down, while the branch roots also develop well. Crops so rooted resist drought, wind and premature withering.

Deep ploughing, deep digging and deep sowing constitute the "three deeps" method – an important improvement in Tachai's farming technique decisive for building the "spongy fields."

But even with the top-soil deepened in this way, its fundamental improvement still required the addition of large amounts of fertilizer and soil from other places.

This last was essential because Tachai's 800 mu of land consisted of many kinds of soil – red, black, white, sandy, etc. Some of these soils were fertile, but clayey and difficult to till. They were hard to break and dried out easily in the wind. Other soils allowed better aeration, but were too loose and friable to retain moisture and fertilizer. Could such soils be improved? A local saying instructed, "Mix soils to get a good harvest." But this was difficult to do while each household worked on its own. It became possible on a large scale only after col-

lectivization. The members of the Tachai Brigade brought sandy soil to mix with the clayey soil, and red clay to mix with the coarse soil. They kept this up year after year until all their cultivated land was transformed.

Generous organic manuring improves soil and raises its fertility. But where to find so much manure? Old Tachai had few animals, yielding only scanty amounts. Since collectivization, animal husbandry has grown rapidly. All available weeds are collected and composted. In particular, the new method of "returning the stalks to the fields" provides abundant organic manure.

In the past, except for millet stalks used as fodder, most grain stalks were wasted. After the collective road was taken, the Party branch paid much attention to this new source of manure. Helped by agro-technicians, they devised the new method of "quick composting by high-temperature fermentation." More manure brings more grain, which in turn supplies more stalks – a beneficent cycle.

Besides, over years of practice, Tachai has developed a series of regulations for the scientific application of fertilizer. They include the addition of "cold" manure to fields on the sunny slopes, "hot" manure to fields on the shady slopes, ashes to clayey soil, earth from old "kang" ledge-beds (rich in chemicals from soot deposited in their heated hollows) to sandy soil, nitrogenous fertilizer for maize, and sheep dung for millet. Each kind of manure is put to the best use, and soil fertility improved.

All these measures have brought great changes in Tachai's fields. Their top-soil is now thick and high in organic content, very fertile and good in structure and retention of moisture. They feel spongy underfoot, which is the reason for their name.

The **"Eight-Point Charter"** for agriculture set forth by Chairman Mao is an integral unity, none of its points can be dispensed with. Therefore, while concentrating on soil improvement as the key point, the Tachai people pay great attention to implementing the charter as a whole.

In this regard, Tachai's basic experience lies in mass scientific experimentation by its "three-in-one" combination of cadres, old peasants and agro-technicians. Each year, the "three-in-one" group gives advice on what crop should be grown on each plot, and on methods of planting and field management. Its members observe the growth of the crops closely to discover problems and take the needed steps. After each autumn harvest, they sum up experience by mass discussion as a guide to next year's production.

In accordance with Chairman Mao's teaching, **"Go all out to mobilize the masses"** and **"do everything through trial and error,"** the Tachai Party branch has made the cultivation of experimental plots an important link in its scientific farming. Led by the cadres, the "three-in-one" group makes trials on its experimental plots each year. These plots are the first on which all-round application of the **"Eight-Point Charter"** is tested. They serve the Tachai people as an important means of exploring the laws governing increase of crop yields.

Here is an example concerning rational close planting. There used to be an old saying in Tachai: "Even if the land between the rows is wide enough for a cow to lie down in, the maize is still planted too close." At that time, only 700 to 800 plants were grown on each mu of land. Close planting was popularized gradually only after repeated experiments, and by degrees, bringing the

density to 2,400 plants per mu. In the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, some people suggested a further increase, as more manure was being used and the fields were more fertile. But this time Chen Yung-kuei, who had been consistently in favour of close planting, unexpectedly suggested an appropriate reduction.

On what did he base this view? On dialectical materialist thinking and first-hand investigation.

One summer day in 1968, Chen Yung-kuei stood looking pensively at a maize plot. He was wondering why the plants on it had thick stalks and big ears while those in other fields were taller but had smaller ears. Careful checking revealed that all these fields were equal in fertility and had been manured to the same extent — but this particular plot had been less densely planted than the others. That autumn it yielded 20 per cent more than the average.

Chen Yung-kuei put the matter before the "three-in-one" group for discussion. Study revealed that with the improved fertility of the soil, the maize plants were growing luxuriantly so that one took up the space formerly adequate for one and a half. Hence, the planting had become too close. The abundant leaves cut off light and air from neighbouring plants, and this in turn hindered flowering and pollination. Plants so overcrowded produced an overgrowth of stalks and leaves but smaller ears.

This analysis led to a new conclusion: As soil fertility kept on improving, the old practice of "the more fertile the field, the closer we plant" required modification. Instead of augmenting the number of plants per mu, it was necessary suitably to reduce it.

But not everyone could easily accept this. The Party branch committee member in charge of production argued

hotly about it with Chen Yung-kuei. He said, "In the past you pushed close planting, saying it was rational. Now, you say 'not too close' is rational. What on earth is your yardstick — your criterion?"

Chen Yung-kuei replied, "Chairman Mao pointed out long ago, **'Only social practice can be the criterion of truth.'** Whether a view is rational depends on whether our thinking conforms to objective reality. If it does, then it's rational. If not, it's irrational."

Still unconvinced, this committee member selected a test plot next to Chen Yung-kuei's and planted his maize seedlings at intervals two inches less than those stipulated by the brigade. He believed he could get a higher yield that way.

The commune members were amused. "Two cadres using two different methods," they laughed, "let's see what will happen in the autumn harvest."

In fact, the result could be clearly foreseen once the maize had eared. Chen Yung-kuei's cobs grew heavy and strong. The other man's were the opposite.

When people judged that he had lost the contest, the committee member figured, "It's true my cobs are smaller, but I have more plants, so who'll win out has yet to be seen." But at autumn harvest the plot with less plants yielded 560 kg. per mu, the one with more plants only about 500 kg.

Then the Party branch organized the masses to study Chairman Mao's philosophical thinking. This helped them see that people who stick automatically to the routine way are bound to meet setbacks, because they have no understanding of **"concrete analysis of concrete conditions"** and their **"thinking fails to advance with changing objective circumstances."** Such people fail to see that when cir-

cumstances change, yesterday's innovation may turn into today's rigid stereotype, hindering the further advance of the productive forces. Continued progress is impossible unless materialist dialectics prevails over metaphysics. Thus the struggle between the two kinds of world outlook helped the further advance of scientific farming in Tachai and taught the cadres and members a vivid lesson in ideological and political line.

In the same way as close planting, almost every new technical measure in Tachai is tested and analysed in experimental plots first, and only then extended to all the fields.

"Even if the Heavens Fall, We Can Hold Them Up!"

In the wake of their 10 years of successes, the Tachai people continued to hold aloft the red banner of the Party's general line for socialist construction, striving for greater victories. But amid their efforts, they were struck by a catastrophic flood.

In the summer of 1963, Tiger Head Hill was clothed in lush green, promising a good autumn harvest. But at the outset of August an unprecedented torrential rain pelted down for seven days and nights. The precipitation in that week exceeded that for a whole normal year. Huge torrents went rushing down the seven gullies on Tiger Head Hill, destroying roads and embankments, washing away top-soil and flattening crops. Almost all the field construction so laboriously achieved by Tachai over the 10 years was wiped out. Of the terraced fields, 139 mu were

washed clean away, with another 41 mu of crops buried under the mud. Among Tachai's 270 cave-dwellings, 190 collapsed. Of the remainder, 63 were too dangerous to live in, while only 17 were undamaged. Out of Tachai's 80-odd families, 78 were left homeless. Tiger Head Hill changed from top to foot, suddenly and drastically.

To meet this crisis, the Tachai Party branch organized an emergency rescue team with Chia Cheng-jiang, Chia Lai-heng, Liang Pien-liang and Chao Ta-ho at its head. More than 30 Communists, Youth Leaguers and core militia were its members. At the risk of their own lives, they saved people and livestock as well as grain and other property, both of the collective and of its component households, from caves and buildings about to collapse.

For three nights on end, brigade leader Chia Cheng-jiang did not get a wink of sleep. Moreover, he had injured his left foot in a fall. One day when his own cave-house was on the point of crashing down and he was rushing to rescue his wife and children, he suddenly heard a cry for help from a neighbour's home. Without hesitation, he hobbled off in that direction. By the time the neighbours had been saved, the front half of his own dwelling had caved in, trapping his family. While digging them free, he heard another urgent call for help from elsewhere. Again he turned from his own home to save comrades in distress. When he returned, the voices of his wife and children were no longer audible. What had happened? They had already been brought to safety while he was busy saving other families. Chia Chin-tsai and Sung Li-ying, hearing their cries, had got them out in time.

Late one night the roof of the brigade's warehouse began to sag, breaking the rear beam. The rescue-team

member on duty sounded the alarm: "Warehouse in danger. Quick! Everyone to the rescue!"

People instantly converged from all directions. Braving death, the old poor peasant Chao Huai-en was the first to enter the warehouse. He propped up the broken beam with his back, winning time for a group of young people led by Youth League member Chia Chi-yi to remove the contents.

Just in time, Chia Cheng-jiang shouted, "Out!" The roof fell in right behind them. By then, they had already removed 35,000 kilos of grain.

When the alarm was sounded from the warehouse, Chia Cheng-yu and Chia Cheng-hsien were just moving their own grain from their crumbling homes, transferring it from big indoor jars into sacks to take away. Immediately they poured it back into the jars and rushed with the empty sacks to the warehouse. They helped to get the grain of the collective to safety, but their own was buried in the mud.

In those days of disaster the cadres, the poor and lower-middle peasants and all other brigade members united as one. Most houses and cave-dwellings in the village were no longer habitable. The few that remained intact were vacated voluntarily by their owners, who moved with the displaced villagers into the conference room, office, food-processing workshop and school, leaving their homes for the sick and the nursing mothers.

In their extremity, what the Tachai people missed most was the firm, resonant voice of Chen Yung-kuei. He had been away since just before the flood, attending the county people's congress. During that whole critical week his heart burned with anxiety. He tried several times to call

Tachai by phone, but the lines were down. Immediately the rain abated, he hurried back home.

But the way, he found, was blocked by the swollen Sunghsi River. What to do? Ford it, he decided, even at the risk of life. The swift current was up to his chest. Only the prompt action of some young people on the bank, who jumped into the water and led him across, saved him from drowning.

And the roads! Once they had been so familiar that he could get to the village with his eyes closed. Now they were buried under a foot of mud. What had normally required less than a half-hour's walk took him two solid hours. After it, he was so caked with mud as to be almost unrecognizable. Nonetheless, the villagers were quick to spot him. The cry went up: "Yung-kuei is back!" Immediately he was surrounded by people, every one talking at once.

"Look, Yung-kuei. Our crops are washed away, and our fields are ruined."

"We've no place to live!"

"How can we go on after this?"

The grim words and expectant looks of the people stabbed at his heart. He felt rent to pieces inside. But he knew, as a vanguard fighter of the proletariat, what he had to say and do at this moment.

"How about the people?" he asked calmly.

"All safe!"

As soon as Chen Yung-kuei heard this, his knitted brow turned smooth again. Then he broke into a broad smile and said, "Bad as the flood is, I still want to congratulate you all!"

His hearers were astounded. Congratulate? They had no housing, no sheds for the livestock, and only mud where

their fields had been. The hill, the land and the village had all been turned upside down. What was there to be congratulated about?

Chen Yung-kuei knew what was in their minds. He went on talking, "Chairman Mao teaches us, '**Of all things in the world, people are the most precious.**' We've been hit by a terrible calamity. Yet we're all safe. Isn't that a cause for congratulation? Above all, we have the wise leadership of Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee. We have the collective economy as our prop. We have our spirit of hard struggle built up during the three battles in Wolves' Den Gully. These are our three 'magic weapons.' With them, we can win over all difficulties. With them, even if the heavens fall, we can hold them up! Our brigade has 35 tons of grain in reserve. It has more than 10,000 yuan of money in the bank. We won't let anyone suffer from cold or hunger."

"Suppose such a disaster had hit Tachai in the old society?" he continued. "You can imagine how many of us would have starved to death, how many families would have had to sell their children! Our old folk still remember the 1920 disaster. There were five people in my family then, and three had to be sold. Today I've a family of five again. What if I started talking of selling my wife and children now? Wouldn't you all think I'd gone crazy?"

At this, everybody laughed. For the first time the gloom weighing on the villagers' hearts began to lift.

But what to do next?

They began with investigation and study. For several days on end, Chen Yung-kuei led a group to trudge through the mud and survey the fields. Everything has two sides. Though the damage was serious, the survey also revealed favourable factors for remedying the situa-

tion. In particular, three quarters of the crop, though lying flat, was still alive in the fields and could be righted again. In fact, Chen Yung-kuei himself had already done this with scores of plants. More than this, he was even sure a high yield could be secured that year, because the brigade had applied plenty of manure and the dry spell before the flood had kept the soil very warm, so that the abundant moisture it received now should certainly make the land give high returns if only the crops could be set upright again. He decided to mobilize the masses to snatch victory from the disaster, and so demonstrate the incomparable superiority of the socialist system.

Greater than heaven and earth is the Party's concern for the people. After the flood, the Central Committee and the provincial, prefectural and county Party organizations sent delegations with warm sympathy for Tachai. Comforting letters streamed in from all parts of the country. The day after the rain ended a telephone call from the commune brought word of a prompt allocation of state funds for medical treatment, and the next day another sum for housing. The delegations, the deluge of letters and the news of the relief grants moved the brigade members to tears. They recalled that, when calamities had struck in the old days, no one in authority had cared even if people died. Now the Party and the government were showing such warm concern, they hardly knew how to express their thanks to Chairman Mao.

Should Tachai accept the proffered government aid? Some members said yes. They urged the cadres to hurry to pick up the two grants. But Chen Yung-kuei, thinking things over, recalled what had happened when a poor peasant in the brigade had slipped into relying solely on relief.

This man had a large family but with too few working members, so they had a very hard time. In those early days of co-operation, the state used to help Tachai each year with relief materials. In their distribution, this hard-up family always got a larger share than others. As time went by, the peasant began to take the solicitude of the state so much for granted that he slacked off in productive labour. One year, he and his wife put in only about 100 work-days of labour for the collective, so in the autumn distribution their work-points could not even cover their food grain allocation. When winter came, the household hadn't enough warm clothing. "Why hasn't the relief winter clothing come yet?" the wife kept inquiring day after day. Other brigade members reacted with remarks such as, "Relief, relief! The more relief one takes, the poorer one gets. It doesn't do to rely on relief!" The Party branch, accepting their criticism, tried repeatedly to teach this poor peasant that he must try to help himself, and did everything possible to provide opportunities for him and his wife to take part in labour. As a result, after 1960 they worked an average of more than 400 days between them each year. This brought an income that was not only enough to keep the family without relief, but left them with surplus grain plus money to put in the bank every year.

Chen Yung-kuei thought that what applied to this family was also applicable to the whole brigade. Chairman Mao had pointed out long ago, "**On what basis should our policy rest? It should rest on our own strength, and that means regeneration through one's own efforts.**" Ever since co-operation, Tachai had held to the principle that for anything they could do by themselves they required no help from the state or other brigades. In the

early days of co-operation, Tachai was short of funds, so it had borrowed 7,000 yuan from the state to buy 18 oxen. It repaid the loan the following year and never again asked for any aid. Moreover, taking a lesson from the case of the member whose habitual reliance on relief had led him into ever-deeper difficulty, Tachai had also declined the annual relief materials. Should the brigade deviate from its principle of self-reliance now in this disaster? At meetings of the Party branch committee and the entire branch, Chen Yung-kuei declared resolutely, "The more we are in difficulties, the higher should we raise the red banner, and the more firmly should we stick to the principle of self-reliance and hard struggle. Let the state relief fund be given to units with more difficulties. We Tachai people have the strength to ensure **'ample food and clothing by working with our own hands'** and heal our wounds from this calamity."

Just then, another and larger state grant was assigned to Tachai. Apart from this, a cart-load of relief clothing was sent by the county Party committee. But Tachai's cadres and Party members were very busy at meetings to forge unity of views, so none of them went for the relief money. What about the clothes from the county? The cadres treated the carter to a meal and sent him back, his load untouched.

Afterwards there was a bit of an uproar. Some villagers complained bitterly to the cadres, "The stuff was already delivered. But you turned it back. Don't you care about the people any more?"

Moreover, class enemies grabbed at the opportunity to mix up right and wrong. "There's an ancient saying, 'Man dies for wealth, and birds perish in search of food,'" they proclaimed. "All that money and all those clothes

were brought right to our door-step. But they turned them away. What a way to act!"

To get the members to appreciate more deeply the great significance of self-reliance and to link this principle to their actual thinking, the Party branch held seven open discussion meetings in a row. Chen Yung-kuei took part in every one, talking heart to heart with the poor and lower-middle peasants. At that time he vacated his own home for new mothers to occupy. In his emergency living quarters – the brigade's office – where he camped with many other men, he spent many sleepless nights thinking over these matters, while his companions were sound asleep.

By the seventh night he had sorted out all his ideas. On the eighth he called a general membership meeting of the brigade. His resonant opening words were: "Tonight I shall speak mainly of what I understand by Chairman Mao's great teaching of self-reliance. My title is, 'The Ten Advantages of Self-Reliance.'

"What are they?"

"One. Self-reliance allows the state to allocate funds where they are most needed so as to better build socialism.

"Two. Self-reliance helps bring the superiority of the collective economy into full play. It makes the brigade members love the collective more, rely on it more.

"Three. Self-reliance inspires us to work hard to overcome difficulties. If on the contrary we do nothing ourselves but merely rely on state relief every time difficulties come, there can be just one result: The more relief, the less our willingness to work hard, the lower our aspirations, the less our production.

"Four. Self-reliance cements the unity of the labouring people. In times of difficulty, all rely on the collective

and feel that they cannot separate from each other; then they show concern for each other, love and help each other. But people who rely solely on relief become disunited. Many even quarrel endlessly over how the relief is to be shared out.

"Five. Self-reliance promotes industry and thrift in running the brigade. When money comes in unearned, it's 'easy come easy go.' But when money is earned by one's own labour, everyone thinks twice before spending even a cent.

"Six. Self-reliance makes people modest. They see clearly that many things have yet to be done and don't turn cocky. People who don't overcome difficulties by their own efforts don't understand the arduousness of revolution. Such people are often conceited and ignorant; they don't know what to do in face of difficulties.

"Seven. Self-reliance helps train cadres and develop their talents and abilities.

"Eight. With self-reliance we can set a good example for the younger generation. They are bound to go astray if we, their elders, wait for, rely on and seek something from the outside as a way out of difficulties.

"Nine. Self-reliance spurs our brigade to emulate other brigades, learn from them, overtake them and help them in common advance. Tachai is rated as an advanced unit. If we rely on the state to build new houses and fields for us, can we still be called advanced? And what can others learn from us?

"Ten. Self-reliance strikes hard at class enemies. They're always trying to take advantage of our difficulties to stir up trouble. Overcoming difficulties with our own hands heightens our own morale and crushes the enemy's arrogance."

No sooner had Chen Yung-kuei finished than warm applause broke out. Whether to confront disaster with self-reliant effort or to run after aid is an issue of principle, of what political line to follow. Brigade members previously unaware of this point now saw it clearly. Only the class enemies, squatting in dark corners of the meeting place, lowered their heads and dared not utter a word.

"Shall we accept the relief money?"

"No!" hundreds of mouths answered in unison. And from the floor came remarks such as:

"Relief has a limit. There's no limit to what we can accomplish by self-help through production."

"Our hearts are red and loyal. Our hands are strong as iron. With them, we ourselves will build new houses and restore the washed-out fields. The calamity has smashed the old Tachai. We have strength to build anew."

At this meeting, the air of depression after the calamity dispersed like mist before the wind. On the proposal of the Party branch, the cadres and brigade members joined in analysing the situation and working out needed measures. The inspiring goal they set themselves was summed up in two brief formulas. One was the "three noes" – no requests for state aid in money, grain or other materials. The other was the "three no reductions" – no reduction in grain sales to the state, in food grain distributed to the brigade members or in the income of the collective.

When the village was gripped by ideas of pessimism and dependence, some people had proposed "First rebuild our homes, then our fields." But after painstaking political and ideological work the masses reached unanimity on a new sequence – "First rebuild our fields, then our homes." Now the initial effort was centred on

setting the crops upright, with housing next in priority. Men and women, old and young, all turned out in the fields, despite a scorching summer sun overhead and slippery mud underfoot. They worked from dawn to dusk. At sunset, the cadres would urge people over 60 and school children to go home. But none of them listened. They argued that in fighting so great a disaster, everyone able to move had his part to play. Whoever lacked strength to make a big contribution could at least make a small one. With this spirit, in five days all the toppled crops were set up again, except for the top-heavy millet. For this, the villagers hit upon the idea of binding the stems together, a dozen at a time. So they solved the millet problem as well.

Next, the Party branch led the people in a full-scale resumption of both production and home construction. The old hero Chia Chin-tsai led a group to Chinshihpo to quarry stone for building both field embankments and dwellings. This place is not far from Tachai and linked to it by a good road. But the rock face there, as big as a 1.5-mu field, was without a crack or fissure, so the quarrying was very arduous. With indomitable resolve to build a new Tachai, Chia Chin-tsai said, "No matter how hard the stone, it's a dead thing. Living men can always crack it apart." In his efforts to make the first breach in the hard rock, he broke two sledge hammers and wore down many steel drill rods and iron wedges. But before 10 days had passed, he had split the rock open. Soon large quantities of building stone were on their way to the village.

To speed up work, Chao Hsiao-ho, a poor peasant, made a suggestion: "The day is too short for all that needs to be done. So how about putting in two hours extra every evening? Inside the village, we can work by the light of

pressure-lamps to move stone and brick and lay foundations for houses. I've made up a verse:

By day we fight in the fields.
At night we build a new village.
Only those fearless of hardship,
Are real Tachai people."

Then, for several months on end, the villagers joined their efforts working four spells each day from early morning to late evening and eating lunch and supper in the fields.

To build the village anew required money. But the brigade's savings had to be used to restore production. So where would the extra cash come from? The old poor peasant Li Hsi-ching came up with an answer: "In our Tachai today almost every family has savings in the bank. What are they for if we don't use them where most needed? I'm lending all mine to the brigade." Then and there, he handed more than 1,000 yuan to the brigade bookkeeper.

Li Hsi-ching, an old man with no family, was very thrifty. Once he broke his chopsticks. Instead of spending two cents for a new pair, he went up the hill to cut suitable twigs. People used to tease him, "Uncle Hsi-ching, you've saved so much money, but who will you leave it to?" "To the revolution, to socialism," was his smiling reply. Now the opportunity had come. Following his example the brigade members put together more than 12,000 yuan as a loan to the collective that very night.

That year, Tachai was hit by no less than seven natural calamities. Drought and spring waterlogging had preceded the big summer flood. After it came two windstorms, a hailstorm and a hard frost. But calamities and difficulties did not cow the Tachai people. They had the strength to triumph over the elements. Towards the end of autumn,

glad tidings came from Tachai, taking people outside by surprise! The brigade's grain yield in that calamity year had reached 371 kg. per mu, only 4 per cent less than in the previous year. Surplus grain sold to the state totalled 120,000 kg., not a gram less than the year before. And grain consumption per head remained unchanged – over 200 kg. What is more, the brigade's total income – from farming, forestry, animal husbandry and side-occupations – was somewhat higher than in 1962. The goals of struggle it had set itself, the “three noes” and “three no reductions,” had all been realized. And the next year there was another miracle. The grain yield in the mountain village of Tachai reached 404.5 kg. per mu!

After the unparalleled flood the Party branch set forth a plan to restore the fields in five years and completely rebuild the village in 10. But many people did not then believe it possible. One opinion was: “Our field construction originally took 10 years. Now it's nearly all been washed away. In some places, the top-soil and embankment stones have disappeared along with the crops. Rebuilding will be even harder than the 10 years of original construction. And it'll take 10 more years, at least, to make the land fertile again.” Class enemies, on their part, cursed and ranted that several decades wouldn't do, or even a century. In fact no decades were needed, nor was a century, nor 10 years, nor even five. Tachai's people restored their fields in a little over two years! And before the fourth year was out all had moved into new homes. No one had expected such quick recovery.

It was a paean of victory for self-reliance. Proudly, the poor and lower-middle peasants summed it up:

“Of all the good methods, self-reliance is the best.”

“Red hearts and strong hands supply all our needs through self-reliance.”

“Self-reliance is a priceless treasure. It gives us more than enough to eat, wear and use.”

Some comments were humorous. “When you meet it head-on, a disaster turns into a paper tiger. If we'd only known this calamity would bring such great advance, we'd have wished for it earlier! If it had come five years earlier, all these changes in our Tachai would have come five years sooner.”

What does all this show?

Do the Tachai people have a trace of the servility of the past? No! They have become masters of nature.

Never-Fading Red Banner

After 1964, when Tachai's grain yield first surpassed 400 kg. per mu, the once impoverished village started to become well-to-do. Should arduous struggle be persevered in now life was easier? Chairman Mao had pointed out much earlier at the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Party, **“With victory, certain moods may grow within the Party – arrogance, the airs of a self-styled hero, inertia and unwillingness to make progress, love of pleasure and distaste for continued hard living.”** And he had warned the whole Party, **“The comrades must be taught to remain modest, prudent and free from arrogance and rashness in their style of work. The comrades must be taught to preserve the style of plain living and hard struggle.”** In accordance with Chairman Mao's teachings Tachai had passed one test – daring to struggle in the teeth of poverty and difficulties. Now, faced with

the other test, that of prosperity and victory, it displayed the same proletarian heroism. It did not change colour but persisted in revolution. It proved itself a never-fading red banner.

Chairman Mao has always stressed, **“Diligence and frugality should be practised in running factories and shops and all state-owned, co-operative and other enterprises. The principle of diligence and frugality should be observed in everything.”** Tachai is outstanding in adherence to this principle. It opposes waste and extravagance. The brigade office is a small one-storey structure with only two rooms. It contains four desks and three chairs, all over 20 years old. Its abacus, used by three bookkeepers in succession, is itself a vivid symbol of Tachai's diligence and thrift.

More than two decades ago, when the co-op was first started, it borrowed this abacus from Chen Yung-kuei. Tachai's first bookkeeper, Chia Cheng-jang, used it for 10 years. In 1963, when he became head of the brigade, he handed it down to Chao Su-heng who used it for seven more years. Then in 1970 Chao was sent to study in the university and in turn passed it on to his successor. Year after year, as the holes in the counting beads of the old abacus wore too large, adjustments were made to keep them in service. When a rod broke, it was replaced. When the frame got rickety, it was reinforced with bits of sheet-iron. Today that abacus is still on the job.

Here are some figures showing how diligently and frugally the Tachai people run their brigade.

Public accumulation: In the early years of co-operation, an average 4.1 per cent of the annual income of the collective was put aside for this purpose. With subsequent

big increases in production the proportion has gradually risen to 15 per cent, 20 per cent, or more.

Expenditure for production: Before the Cultural Revolution this averaged 25.7 per cent of the total annual income. Afterwards it dropped to just over 20 per cent.

Administrative expenditure: Before the Cultural Revolution this averaged 0.36 per cent of the total annual income, and after it, less than 0.2 per cent.

Naturally the big expansion in production and the big increases in public accumulation, coupled with a decreasing ratio of expenditure, have added up to ever-growing ability to invest in expanded reproduction.

To persist in the revolutionary tradition of diligence, frugality, plain living and hard struggle is an incessant fight. After every success in construction, bourgeois tendencies of seeking comfort and pleasure, of waste and extravagance are apt to invade the revolutionary ranks in a thousand and one ways. For this reason the Party branch has waged a constant ideological struggle against all unhealthy trends appearing in the brigade. It has organized the cadres and members to discuss “What should Tachai do now that it's rich?” It has made the spirit of hard struggle an important theme of class education and education in political line.

One autumn day after the 1971 harvest Chen Yung-kuei gleaned two basketfuls of millet ears from one of Tachai's plots. Who had done the harvesting? He was disturbed to learn that it was a youth group led by a young cadre. Regarding the matter as very important indeed, he called a membership meeting that same night.

The two basketfuls of millet were on display. Pointing to the golden grain Chen asked the youngsters, “Do you know what those are?”

"Millet ears."

"How do we get them?"

"We grow them."

"For what?"

"Why ask?" replied the youngsters, growing impatient.

"To build socialism, of course."

"Right!" Chen Yung-kuei nodded. "We grow grain to build socialism. Now if I threw these two baskets of millet away, would you agree?"

"But . . . but why?"

"Because some people've already done it."

"Who?"

"You." This exchange sparked off another round of the discussion on "What should Tachai do now that it's rich?"

"We were too careless," the young cadre who had led the harvesting group said slowly. "We left so many millet ears lying around."

"No!" an old poor peasant corrected him, "you left behind more than millet ears. Something more important. You discarded the revolutionary spirit of Tachai and the labouring people's fine qualities."

Then facts and figures were cited: In the old society, Tachai's harvests were so poor that sometimes the ears and stalks from a whole mu of land wouldn't fill a single sack. Now there were two basketfuls of gleanings from just one small plot. If all the fields of the brigade were harvested as sloppily, the waste would total one-third of the annual pre-liberation output of all Tachai. Some poor peasants sharply questioned the youngsters, "If your father and mother had had that much grain, would they have starved to death?" "Would your parents have been driven into hanging themselves?"

At these words, tears of shame welled up in the young people's eyes.

Then Chen Yung-kuei spoke earnestly to them. "Children!" he said. "Why do we need to stress the importance of hard struggle and diligence in our brigade so often? Because of how much we hate the man-eating old society! Because of how much we love socialism! Today we've won liberation. We live happily. But hundreds of millions of exploited and oppressed labouring people in the world are still forced to endure hunger and cold, like animals. We must never forget the hungry the minute our own stomachs are full. You've wasted a bit of this today. You may squander a bit of that tomorrow. If you keep on that way, you'll squander Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and the socialist state under the proletarian dictatorship. What talk can there be of supporting the world revolution if that happens? You'll have turned revisionist yourselves! So remember: Only if we keep the poor in mind can we continue to make revolution. Whoever forgets the poor as soon as he's better off himself will end up betraying the revolution."

The meeting helped the young members to learn the revolutionary tradition of hard struggle from the poor and lower-middle peasants of the older generation. Since then, when going out to harvest, they have always taken along gleaning bags and picked up every stray ear.

Chairman Mao teaches, "**We must advocate hard struggle, which is our intrinsic political characteristic.**" The capitalist forces and their agents within the Party, out of their reactionary class nature, hate Tachai bitterly because it persists in hard struggle and refuses to change colour politically even in prosperity. The old forces of habit also play their negative role, spreading the influence of

exploiting-class ideology every day, every hour. Because of all this, Tachai is often mocked and ridiculed by some people.

One August 1st when Army Day celebrations were going on in Hsiyang county town, Sung Li-ying led a group of women to join in. On their way there, they laughed and sang. But during the noon break, something happened. When they took out the rough corn bread they had brought for their lunch, some women sitting beside them, who were eating pancakes and buns of wheat, made faces and said sarcastically, "Tachai's a pioneer brigade. Yet its members can't even afford wheat bread for an outing. Isn't that a comedown!"

Sung Li-ying and her companions were so upset, they went home seething. "Why back so early?" asked Chen Yung-kuei, who had seen how blithely they had left the village but now noticed them so depressed.

"How could we be in the mood to stay on?" Sung Li-ying replied with a deep sense of having been wronged. "Today we've brought disgrace on our brigade."

"What disgrace?"

When she told him, Chen Yung-kuei held up his thumb in praise. "You brought honour and not disgrace to our Tachai," he said. "With the money we've got now, we could afford fine pastry, not just wheat cakes or buns. But you preferred corn bread, to save money for socialist construction. That's a glorious honour! So why feel inferior to the others?"

"How do we tell if a brigade is advanced or not," he went on. "We only need to look at one thing. Does it go firmly by the Party's line, principles and policies? Does it stick to hard struggle and make contributions to the state? We certainly wouldn't compete with others in eat-

ing, dressing up, pleasure-seeking and waste. If we're going to make comparisons, let's compare political consciousness, diligence, thrift and contributions to the state. We live frugally not because we're stingy but because we have high revolutionary ideals."

Then he joked, "In the village you're all young tigresses. But once outside you turn into mice, so timid you can't even stand a few snide remarks." At this, the women themselves burst into peals of laughter.

The whole thing happened years ago, but Tachai people still recall it whenever they are challenged by bourgeois ideology. The more some people scoff, the stronger grows their self-respect. No evil wind and noxious influence can shake their revolutionary determination to resist all bourgeois corrosion.

Through years of carrying forward the revolutionary tradition of hard struggle, new customs and habits have been formed in Tachai. One is for all poor and lower-middle peasants in the village to cook a "recall-bitterness" meal every Spring Festival, made up of things they had to allay their hunger with before liberation. This helps educate the younger generation not to forget the people's past sufferings and to preserve their deep hatred for the oppressing and exploiting classes. Another custom is for the women, after each autumn distribution of grain, to hold meetings to discuss how to manage their households the following year. In spite of the surplus grain and bank-savings which every family now has, members continue to live thriftily. For a definite period in the winter and spring, they eat a kind of rough bread made from corn flour mixed with bran and vegetables. A third custom they stick to despite the increasing mechanization of farming in recent years is for all young brigade members, and especially

the youngsters just graduated from school, to take their turn carrying manure on shoulder-poles up to the hill fields, for a few days under the leadership of the cadres.

The Tachai people have summed up their experience of years of persistence in the struggle between the two ideologies and two world outlooks in two brief formulas – the “five nevers” and “three keep ups.” The “five nevers” are: Never despair when odds are heavy; never be frightened when natural calamities strike; never be self-satisfied when you’ve made outstanding achievements; never be proud when you’ve won honour; never give in when evil and demoralizing winds blow. And the “three keep ups” are: As working conditions improve, keep up the spirit of hard struggle and fight against sloth; as living gets better, keep up the tradition of running the brigade frugally and diligently and fight against extravagance; when accorded high honours, keep up the style of modesty and prudence and fight against conceit.

Since the Cultural Revolution and especially since the campaign to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, the Tachai people, guided by Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line and relying on their “five nevers” and “three keep ups,” have been striving to create new things, continue their advance in the face of difficulties, and scale new heights one after another. Thus they have opened a new chapter in their socialist construction.

Advances at Every Step

Chairman Mao says, **“In the fields of the struggle for production and scientific experiment, mankind makes constant progress and nature undergoes constant change; they never remain at the same level. Therefore, man has constantly to sum up experience and go on discovering, inventing, creating and advancing. Ideas of stagnation, pessimism, inertia and complacency are all wrong.”** Tachai is an example of discovery, invention, creation and advance in the field of agriculture.

Since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, an excellent situation has emerged on every front in our country. The new high tide of socialist revolution has sped a new upsurge of the socialist construction. Tachai, on its part, has moved into a new stage in transforming the mountains, flood control and scientific farming. The main features of the stage are:

The beginning of a revolution in crop management – gradual transition to double cropping in the cold highlands of northern China;

Blazing the trail for mechanization and irrigation in the mountain areas, thus speeding the over-all modernization of China’s farming; and,

Creating man-made "plains" by levelling hillocks to fill in gullies, thus altering Tiger Head Hill and furthering the transformation of nature.

To inspire people to scale new heights, Chen Yung-kuei wrote a verse:

It is easy to look at a mountain but hard to climb it.
The higher you go, the wider the view.

Don't be held back because no one has been there
before.

Ahead, still higher peaks await us!

Many people, visiting Tachai today, feel this spirit welling up in them.

Ever-Greater Efforts

In 1965, the year after Tachai's grain yield reached 400 kg. per mu, Premier Chou En-lai accompanied an Albanian delegation to Tachai. While touring the fields, the Premier asked if the yield could be doubled again. This became a new goal of Tachai's socialist farming.

The brigade's old planned target, set in 1967, was 500 kg. per mu. But even by 1969, it had not yet been reached.

Why the slowed pace? After Tachai's yield passed 400 kg., the praise received had made some people conceited, complacent and less active in spirit. This can be seen from certain notions voiced at the time:

"No matter how fast a tree grows, it can't ever reach the sky. Aspirations must have their limit!"

"We're farming in the Taihang Mountains. Yet our crops now match those of the fertile Yangtze valley. That

should satisfy us. How much further can we go?"

In sum, these were ideas that Tachai's yield was already at its peak, there was no more potential to tap or further big increase to be made.

The Party branch was resolved to smash these stagnant, pessimistic, inert and complacent notions. It declared that Tachai must fight against conceit in victory and complacency amid high yields. In 1970, under the powerful impetus of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and through struggle against conceit and complacency, Tachai made a new break-through, exceeding the 500 kg. per mu mark. The average yield for that year was 535.5 kg. per mu, 65 kg. more than in the previous year, as compared with the cumulative increase of only 20 kg. per mu in the preceding three years.

This break-through made every heart leap with joy. A big bumper harvest celebration was suggested. But the Party branch disagreed. It decided instead to call a meeting for a deep-going refutation of conservative thinking, conceit and complacency. The basis was Tachai's new achievement—a single year's increase in yield greater than the total increase of the previous three years.

At the meeting, the Party branch led the commune members in a review of the growth of Tachai's production since collectivization. Before collectivization, 100-150 kg. of grain per mu had been considered a top yield. But soon afterwards the average yield rose above 150 kg. A few people said then, "In our mountain area, we've managed to get a crop like that in the plains. We've hit the top." The repudiation of conservatism and conceit changed these ideas. People began to think, "This might be the top for individual farming. But we're just starting on large-

scale socialist farming. We still don't know how big its potential is!"

In the Big Leap Forward year of 1958, under the guidance of the Party's general line for socialist construction, Tachai's average yield mounted to 271.5 kg. Again there were people who said, "We've never seen such yields! We've really reached the sky!" And once more the Party branch led the people in criticism of conservatism and conceit. As a result output continued to grow by wide margins each year. By 1964, the per-mu yield reached 404.5 kg.

Could it go higher still? Three years earlier, some had thought it impossible. But when conceit and complacency were swept away, Tachai broke through to 500 kg. per mu. This showed that in the previous three years, it was not over-ambitious and adventurous planning that had impeded advance, as some alleged. It was conservative thinking and conceit. In short, every time Tachai took a step forward, erroneous ideas recurred. And whenever these were criticized, the brigade took a new step forward.

While Tachai was making a renewed attack on those errors, Chairman Mao, after the Second Plenary Session of the Ninth Central Committee of the Party, called on the whole Party to **"carry out education in ideology and political line"** and on all Party cadres to **"read and study conscientiously and have a good grasp of Marxism."** Heeding this important instruction, Tachai launched a rectification campaign, with the fight against arrogance and complacency as its main theme.

What is the source of conservatism and conceit? Through study and criticism, the people of Tachai realized that their root is in the idealist and metaphysical world outlook. This regards all things as static and causes peo-

ple fettered by it always to look backward instead of forward, as though their eyes grew at the back of their heads.

What made some comrades fall into the idealist and metaphysical quagmire? Everybody wrestled with the problem and came to agree that the reason lay in the remnants of petty-proprietor mentality and traditional ideas. This produced fear of going a step further when a certain measure of success had been achieved, fear of taking risks and of losing honours gained earlier. In other words, people affected by it had begun, precisely at this point, to think more of their own interests and those of their own brigade than of the bigger, nationwide collective. Hence such notions as "Yields have hit the top," "No more potential" and "Conditions decide everything." Superficially, they seemed to show only a bit of conservatism and complacency. But their real core was selfishness. As aptly summed up by Tachai's poor and lower-middle peasants: "Whoever has the revolution in mind dares to think, act and charge ahead, bold as a lion. Whoever thinks only of protecting a reputation for past success turns timid in thought and action, soft as a mud ball. We should not be afraid of failing to set new records, but only of failing to think new thoughts. When thinking stops being revolutionary, production stagnates. When thinking goes on being red, the conditions for more production are created and output rises steadily."

People had thought: Although Tachai is small, its contributions are big. The Party branch organized the masses for deep study of Chairman Mao's teaching, **"China ought to have made a greater contribution to humanity,"** and, accordingly, to examine what Tachai had contributed to the state in the 1960s and discuss how it could do more in the 1970s. It also led them in a reckon-

ing: Tachai's grain sales to the state in the 1960s averaged 120,000 kg. a year. For maize, at the rate of 2,400 kernels to the kilogramme, this would total some 300 million kernels. Less than half of a kernel of maize for each person in China! Was that a contribution to be proud of? So they concluded, "If we compare the old Tachai with the new, the change is indeed formidable; but if we think of the larger goals, our contribution is still small."

Tachai's people have a favourite saying, "The kind of world outlook we have decides how big a job we do. If we want to double our yield, we must first do twice as well in our thinking." Educated by the campaign, they took a broader view and found a way of doubling the yield — to 800 kg. per mu.

The method adopted was a revolution in crop management leading gradually from single to double cropping, resulting in twice the previous output from each mu of land. This meant, in fact, giving full play to the superiority of collective farming.

The glorious task of trying out double-cropping was shouldered by a scientific experiment group headed by Chia Cheng-yun, an older man who had been chairman of Tachai's poor peasants' league during the land reform, and Kao Yu-liang, a young Communist Party member. Together with some agro-technicians, they reviewed the experience of the past and made further experiments for two years. Finally they devised a system of double-cropping by interplanting as follows: Winter wheat is sown in widely spaced strips, three rows to each strip. Forty days prior to the wheat harvest the following summer, maize is planted between the strips. This system requires much more water and labour than before. But with the faster development of mechanization and irrigation in Tachai in

recent years, those problems have been gradually solved. Since 1972, the intrinsic advantages of this system and intensive management have produced unfailing results, better each year than the last.

In 1972, the region had the worst drought in a century. The 20 mu of interplanted maize were yellowish and thin-stalked. Many people thought the crop was done for. But Kao Yu-liang and Chia Cheng-yun thought otherwise and led the members of the scientific experiment group in tending the young crops. Day and night, they painstakingly irrigated the fields, added manure, cultivated deeply around each plant and did other necessary jobs. That autumn, they reaped an average of 535 kg. of maize on that 20 mu. Including the 225 kg. of wheat, they set a record of 760 kg. per mu of grain for the whole year. That these 20 mu of Tachai's land could yield nearly 800 kg. per mu proved what could be done too on all of its land, which had been turned into highly fertile "spongy fields." People became confident that they could realize the 800 kg. per mu goal as mechanization and irrigation advanced. So in 1973 the double-cropped area was extended to 50 mu, and in 1974 to 100 mu.

Pioneering Farm Mechanization in Hill Areas

"The fundamental way out for agriculture lies in mechanization." To achieve mechanization step by step on the basis of collectivization is our Party's basic line for agriculture laid down by Chairman Mao himself, a basic line for persevering in socialism and overcoming cap-

italism in the struggle between the two roads in China's countryside.

Twenty years earlier during the mutual-aid team period, Tachai's people had begun longing for the day when they could "plough without oxen and light lamps without oil." In the autumn of 1951, Chen Yung-kuei went as a member of the peasants' delegation from Shansi Province to the North China Trade Fair in Tientsin, his first such long journey. The many machines displayed there dazzled this life-long mountain farmer. "Will the day come when we can work our hill fields with these machines?" he asked a man there. "No, all these machines are for the plains, not fit for mountainous areas," was the reply.

"Can mechanization be only for the plains? What about us mountain people?" Chen persisted. Nobody around could give an answer then.

The Cultural Revolution gave a new impetus to the mechanization of agriculture. In Tachai the Party-branch issued a clarion call, "Hold mechanization as important as we did collectivization." They were determined to speed it with even greater revolutionary energy than they had shown before, to win back the time lost through interference and wrecking by Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line. Within a few years, Tachai has managed to mechanize or semi-mechanize many farm operations. These include rice husking, winnowing, flour milling, fodder cutting and crushing, maize shelling, and composting. In the village and on the Tiger Head Hill, the hum of motors reverberates through the air.

Flour milling used to be done exclusively by women, at the rate of a few dozen kilogrammes a day. Often they had to do it at night after working in the fields all day.

Now all the 115,000 kg. of grain eaten in the village is processed by machinery. This has released the labour power of the women for more work in the fields.

Hay cutting and chopping stalks for compost used to occupy 18 people working with six hand-operated cutters through two seasons — winter and spring. Now, with a power-driven machine, the same work is completed in the same time by only two persons.

Maize shelling used to take a whole month with the entire brigade pitching in. Now, with machines, nine people can finish it in two weeks.

These early successes widened the vistas of the people. They came to see that for the combined development of farming, forestry and animal husbandry, the decisive thing is mechanization. It is also essential for achieving the higher productivity of labour required by double cropping. In short, speedy mechanization became the key to the further growth of production, strengthening of the collective economy and consolidation of socialism in the countryside.

Tachai began by concentrating on two essentials for over-all mechanization.

First, transport. All the brigade's fields lie on the hillside. So manure must be carried up in the spring and harvested crops brought down in the autumn. These things were traditionally done by men and animals. They constituted the hardest work and took the most manpower.

Second, deep ploughing. This was the key job in building up Tachai's "spongy fields" which assure high and stable yields. With animal power, only one-third of the fields could be deep-ploughed every year, and not deeply enough at that.

These two essentials were the two toughest to tackle. In the plain the question of transport is solved once there are enough vehicles – trucks, horse carts or tractors. But not in Tachai. Its rugged mountain paths could not accommodate such vehicles. Even if tractors had been available, they would have found it hard to turn around in its fragmented fields. Thus transport and ploughing were the hardest nuts to crack in the mechanization of hill farming.

In 1967, the Party branch appropriated funds and organized a team for experimenting with an electrically-operated aerial cable transport system. With help from factory workers, the first 300-metre aerial cable was installed on Tiger Head Hill that same winter.

Lacking mechanical means for suspending the cable, the brigade's cadres and members, braving icy wind and snow, lined up to pull the 24-mm. diameter steel rope with their shoulders and hands from one end of the route to the other.

The new device did not work well at first. The steel cables would often slip off the pulleys or the hopper turn upside down. A lot of time and labour was required to remedy each such accident. This not only affected production but was dangerous.

To get clear on the causes, it was necessary for someone to observe the entire line from the air by riding out in the hopper. Chen Yung-kuei undertook the grave risk himself. Everyone tried to dissuade him. Many offered to go in his place. But in his ears rang Chairman Mao's teaching, **"If you want knowledge, you must take part in the practice of changing reality. If you want to know the taste of a pear, you must change the pear by eating it yourself."** As a leader, he determined, he should himself first "taste"

this "pear." So he stepped into the hopper and said to the man on the switch, "Let's go!"

Chen Yung-kuei found at first hand what had caused the failures. Then everyone discussed what to do. By applying collective wisdom, the needed improvements were found and made. Since then the aerial transport has been as safe and reliable as a railway train. Seeing the hopper shuttling along the silvery cable, a member joked, "After all, our mountain area has the plain all beat in mechanized transport – we don't even need gasoline."

By 1971, five aerial cableways, with a total length of more than 2,400 metres, had been installed. And in recent years, the system has been "double-tracked." So now traffic can go both ways at the same time. Loading and unloading, formerly possible only at the two ends, can be done at any place along the line.

In the meantime the Tachai people built roads between the fields for carts and tractors. Today, most transport on Tiger Head Hill is mechanized or semi-mechanized.

With the help of the working class and of some technicians, Tachai innovated its transport in the spirit of **"use our own hands and overcome difficulties."** It also mobilized its internal strength for farm mechanization. From time to time, tractors of various types had come here for trial, and the members had gladly welcomed their arrival. But the results had invariably been disappointing, and the machines were shipped away again. None of the available models suited local conditions. One type was so heavy that it damaged the "spongy fields," another too difficult to manoeuvre in the hill fields, a third not strong enough to plough to the desired depth. . . .

Both the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council paid great attention to

mechanization in Tachai. After the 1970 and 1971 autumn harvests, several new-model tractors were sent there again. Tachai's people were overjoyed. In each trial ploughing, Chen Yung-kuei followed the tractors at close quarters, observing their ability to climb and turn, how deeply they ploughed, and whether they were hurting the "spongy fields." Once, when the ploughshares did not go deep enough, and the technicians could not fully explain why, Chen squatted down and wiped a blade clean with his sleeve. He found it covered with rust. That night, after the technicians had retired to the village, they saw lights in the fields. What was going on, they wondered. Next morning, they found the ploughshares clean and shining in the early light. Two villagers had spent all night cleaning and polishing them in defiance of cold and fatigue. The technicians were deeply moved. Their hearts turned closer to Tachai's poor and lower-middle peasants.

Jointly with the Tachai people, and spurred on by them, all quarters concerned painstakingly summed up the two years of tests. As a result, a suitable small caterpillar-tractor was produced in the autumn of 1972. It could plough to a depth of more than eight inches, run on narrow paths, climb 25-degree gradients, and manoeuvre on plots of less than half a mu. And it pressed down so lightly that Tachai's "spongy fields" did not suffer. Thus a tractor answering to the requirements of the brigade was born. Today, some 80 per cent of Tachai's land is tractor-tilled.

Much else that was new was done in mechanization by the Tachai people. The workshop at the east end of the village both repairs farm tools and machines and does small-scale research in farm mechanization. In the past few years, it has improved rice-husking and flour-milling

machines and produced others for threshing and winnowing millet, threshing rice, etc. In brief, in the effort to mechanize farming, the Tachai people have stuck to self-reliance not only in funds, maintenance and repair, but also in solving most of their technical problems. They have also improved a number of farm tools to suit the brigade's needs.

Man-Made "Plains": Lopping Off Hillocks to Fill Gullies

While speeding the building of socialist agriculture, Tachai started something new — the creation of "plains" by lopping off hillocks and loess columns to fill its gullies.

When Tachai completed its 10-year plan of field construction, there were people who said, "We've already transformed the seven gullies and eight ridges. That's about all that can be done to build up fields."

Was this really true? During the movement against arrogance and complacency launched after the 1970 autumn harvest, Chen Yung-kuei often pondered this problem. Although Tiger Head Hill was familiar to him since his earliest childhood and he had climbed it countless times, now he behaved like a newcomer there. For days on end, he walked up and down it, looking now at this now at that, and staring at the hillocks and loess pillars jutting out of the gullies. One day, while gazing down at the brigade's threshing ground, a fresh idea struck him — the mounds and columns could be sliced off to fill gullies and make substantial tracts of flat, new land.

Hadn't there once been a hillock in the middle of the village? There had, and Tachai itself was named after

it. Where was that hillock now? It had been levelled to make that very threshing ground. In the first year of the Tachai co-operative, the only available threshing ground had measured only 0.3 mu, too small for the crops from its several hundred mu of fields. To make a larger one, the villagers had spent two years in digging away the hillock in the centre of the village and used the earth to fill an adjacent gully to create an eight-mu stretch of flat land.

If the same use could be made of the hillocks and loess pillars in all seven gullies, thought Chen Yung-kuei, what a lot of enlarged fields could be built in Tachai! And, it would help pave the way for mechanized farming in this mountain area.

Soon afterwards, the Party branch committee held an unusual meeting – in which the participants deliberated while walking over Tiger Head Hill. Chen Yung-kuei, who was up in front, stopped now and then to point at the hillocks and ardently explain his bold idea.

His words broadened the vistas of the other members. All came to share his enthusiasm. Their previous ideas on how to mechanize hill farming, they said excitedly, had been too one-sided. They had centred only on seeking farm machinery that would fit Tachai's hilly terrain but neglected the other aspect – changing the terrain to suit the machinery. If "plains" could be created by removing hillocks to fill gullies, the problem could be attacked from both aspects. What a grand idea!

Next, the plan for reshaping Tiger Head Hill was handed to a general meeting of the brigade to discuss. The whole village was astir over the brave innovation. The general conclusion was: We used to think we had done everything possible to transform nature and that our basic

construction of fields was all finished. Now we see how much more can be accomplished. Never again will we say we've done all there was to do.

Work started immediately thereafter. That year, at the junction of Mahuang, Laofen and Co-op gullies, the Tachai people created the new "10-Mu Plain" by removing five hillocks to fill in three depressions. Then, they battled for several successive winters and springs in four gullies – Houti, Laofen, Mahuang and Wolves' Den. The stirring scenes of the three battles at Wolves' Den Gully were re-enacted.

But history never simply repeats itself. This gallant undertaking was to take many times the effort put into the Wolves' Den. An example was the levelling of the nine hillocks in Houti Gully in the winter of 1971. The biggest, called Gourd Mouth, was 30 metres high, 50 metres wide and a half-kilometre long. Who would have dared to think of shifting such a "giant" in the past? But now over 200 heroic fighters sprang to action, braving biting wind and heavy snow. Wielding spades and picks, they turned the site into a dust-shrouded battlefield with stones and earth flying about as if dynamited. Soon Gourd Mouth hillock began to shrink in size.

A bulldozer arrived but was unable to climb up to the top. At once, a group of women volunteered to pave the way for it. To do so, they had to tackle a loess cliff. Kuo Ai-lien decided, "I'm a Party member. I must lead in the attack." She cut the first foothold on the sheer earth wall, steadied herself and worked her way upward, with a dozen or so girls following. Thus they opened a road to the top for the bulldozer and got it up there.

Bent to human will, the machine showed its powers. A few days later, however, it encountered another snag –

beneath the sandy surface was a layer of gritty clay it couldn't budge. What to do? A meeting to collect ideas, held on the spot, decided on blasting. Chao Su-hsiao and five other militiamen volunteered for the work.

Chao Su-hsiao, son of a poor peasant, thought hard about how to do the job well. Because the group was inexperienced, the first demolition was not effective, even though a lot of explosives were used. Chen Yung-kuei encouraged the young men. "To fight in a war," he said, "you must first learn how. Blasting too must have its laws. Try to get at them." That night at home Chao pondered on why the explosives hadn't performed as expected. So absorbed was he in the problem that he didn't even touch his supper. Finally he figured out a better way. First, dig the blast tunnel deep into the centre of the hillock, to use the full potential of the explosive. Second, slant the tunnel at a certain depth, instead of making it straight all the way, so as to direct the force of the blast against the soil, and not let any escape through the mouth of the digging.

"That's it. That's the right answer." He was convinced.

By the time the solution took shape in his mind, the new day had dawned as well. Carrying a short-handled spade, he hurried up to the site, dug the hole and laid the charge as planned.

"Keep clear! Blast!"

The hillock shuddered and heaved, then crumbled into a huge heap of earth. Formerly, with six people working at blasting, one bulldozer had been more than enough to move the debris. Now, three bulldozers could not keep up with three blasters. Previously, blasting had been hit-or-miss, with no assurance of how much earth one charge

would shift. Now, its laws had been mastered, the effect could be accurately predicted.

First, blast. Then, bulldoze. This way the work efficiency increased by scores of times.

In May 1974, with the help of scientific personnel, the people of Tachai began to apply explosion dynamics to the building of new fields. By oriented blasting, rocks and earth were shifted in a pre-determined direction, and moreover in such a way that the earth would cover the rocks. This multiplied efficiency again.

Chairman Mao said, "**Without a firm and correct political orientation, it is impossible to promote a style of hard struggle. Without the style of hard struggle, it is impossible to maintain a firm and correct political orientation.**" Now, watching Chao Su-hsiao give the detonation signal, the subsequent roaring explosion and the disappearance of a whole hillock in its wake, one might think: How easy it is to level hills with machinery. But in fact mechanization can never replace the effort of man. How hard Chao Su-hsiao and his mates had to toil in digging the tunnels for the charges! The soil was hard, and the cramped working space allowed only for the use of short-handled tools. The men had to labour with bent backs, removing the earth bit by bit, for hours on end. At a certain depth, the lack of fresh air made breathing difficult. Then they would encourage each other, "Hard? Think of the Red Army in the Long March. Tired? Compare yourself with the older revolutionaries."

What moved them profoundly was to see the old hero Chia Chin-tsai hewing stones with redoubled effort to bank the man-made "plains." Though he had been sent to hospital several times with stomach ailments, the doctors could never keep him there as long as required. The

minute he could move about, he would slip away to work. Sometimes, when feeling too ill to work, he would say, "I won't come tomorrow. I hope you'll all do a bit more to make up for me." But the following morning, he'd turn up. The young people urged him, "Uncle, you should take better care of your health. We won't let you wear yourself out like this." But he would answer with a smile, "The heavy load on our shoulders is to fight and prevent revisionism. As long as I live and breathe, I won't lay down the hammer with which I'm building socialism."

The revolutionary spirit of their elders went to the hearts of the young people. Chao Lao-hu, son of the Tachai martyr Chao Ta-ho, was a young member of Chao Su-hsiao's detonation team. Taking the model deeds of older revolutionaries as his example, Lao-hu was always the first to start digging, the last to leave when the fuse was lit. Once, injured by a flying stone, he came back on the job before he had completely recovered. When his mates insisted that he rest, he replied, "If we don't want to backslide when life gets better, we've got to temper ourselves where it's tough. I was too young for the old battles to transform our fields. This is a fine chance for me to temper myself. I'm going to step on the gas and work like that bulldozer."

Tachai's people will never forget still another hero — the Party member Shih Kuei-lin, who commanded their militia company for 18 years. A meritorious fighter for the people, he had been wounded three times in the Liberation War. As head of Tachai's militia, he resolutely carried out Chairman Mao's instruction to put people's militia work on a solid basis organizationally, politically and militarily. In the building of the socialist new Tachai, he went wherever there was hardship and difficulty.

On December 29, 1972, when the building of man-made "plains" began in the Wolves' Den, his 80-year-old mother asked him, "Kuei-lin, why all this new work in Wolves' Den Gully? We have plenty to eat and wear in Tachai now, so why move these hillocks? I haven't gone to many meetings for years, so it's up to you to tell me."

"Mother!" Kuei-lin fondly explained, "if we were working only for Tachai, we could have eased off long ago. The reason we have to go on working hard is because it's for all the oppressed people of the world."

Four days later, he sacrificed his life on the construction site. Thus Shih Kuei-lin, following Chao Hsiao-ho and Chao Ta-ho, became Tachai's third hero of glorious memory. As Chen Yung-kuei often says, the man-made "plains" of Tachai were built not only with the sweat of labour but also with the blood of martyrs.

By the spring of 1974, Tachai's people had levelled 37 heights in four of its seven gullies and built nearly 200 mu of man-made "plains," expanding the cultivated area by 150 mu. In the 15 years following the third battle in Wolves' Den in 1957, this gully alone yielded 120,000 kg. of grain. In 1973, the first year after the man-made "plain" was built there, its output reached 41,000 kg., as much as in all the previous five years. Before the "plain" was built, who could have imagined that this gully had a potential of five times its former output.

Chairman Mao says, **"Socialism has freed not only the labouring people and the means of production from the old society, but also the vast realm of nature which could not be made use of in the old society."** This new development, the creation of "plains" by slicing off hillocks to fill gullies, is a heart-stirring paean to socialism.

"The Worse the Drought, the Harder We'll Fight!"

In modernizing hill farming, the Tachai Brigade uses the two methods of mechanization and irrigation. From 1972 on, the village was hit by serious drought for three years on end. In all those years, its people concentrated on irrigation and wrested good harvests from the soil.

The brigade had sunk a deep well on low ground as early as 1964. Later, learning from advanced experiences elsewhere, it dug 11 catchment wells for rain water on Tiger Head Hill, marking the beginning of irrigation there. Another advance was made in 1967 after the start of the Cultural Revolution. Helped by an army unit assigned to support agriculture, the Tachai people built the seven-kilometre-long Army and People Canal, which brings water from Kuochuang Reservoir to Tiger Head Hill, and the Support Agriculture Storage Pond accommodating 3,150 cubic metres of water. These facilities created a good basis for the irrigation of Tachai's land. But it was not until 1972 that the brigade really implemented the concept that water conservation is the life blood of agriculture.

That year the village was struck by the worst drought of the century. No significant rain fell throughout the farming season. Precipitation for the whole year dropped to some 100 mm. as compared with the normal 500-600 mm., and even this scant rainfall was the sum of many scattered drizzles. A local peasant proverb says, "It drizzles on the 13th of April and pours on the 13th of May." That year it proved untrue.

Faced with the grim menace, what were people to do? Wait passively for rain or rely on struggle? Should man bow to heaven or fight it? The issue was not merely one

of a contest between man and nature. It was a fight between two ideologies and two lines. The campaign to criticize Lin Piao and rectify style of work was unfolding throughout the country. The Party branch led the cadres and masses of Tachai in making an earnest study of the important directives from Chairman Mao and the Party's Central Committee and launching a deep-going criticism of idealist apriorism and the notion that history is created by heroes, both fallacies advocated by Lin Piao. This study and criticism deepened the Tachai people's awareness of the truth that the people are the makers of history, and their understanding of the relationship between man and nature. The aroused masses became more clearly aware of their own strength, and the cadres recognized the strength of the masses. At one of the criticism meetings the militant slogan was raised, "The worse the drought, the harder we'll fight!"

In the old society, people often pinned their hopes on heaven for a good harvest. Now, they were determined to end man's dependence on heaven for food. After their study of Chairman Mao's brilliant article, "Cast Away Illusions, Prepare for Struggle," arranged by the Party branch, the villagers' confidence mounted high. "Rely on heaven, and we go hungry," they concluded. "Fight drought with irrigation, and we conquer nature." Thenceforth, the army of militant critics of Lin Piao became an army of fighters against drought as well.

The scene that ensued was majestic! Everyone, including cart drivers, noodle makers, kiln workers, stonecutters, carpenters and blacksmiths, came with shoulderpoles or handcarts to join the fray. Even the old hero Chia Chin-tsai, so seldom seen away from his quarry, grabbed a spade and rushed to the site.

Chia Chang-so, a young member of the Party branch committee, led a youth shock force in the arduous task of digging ditches to conduct water to the fields. They worked ceaselessly for 10 days and nights, lighting kerosene lamps when darkness fell.

Kuo Feng-lien, deputy secretary of the Party branch, led the "iron girls" in carrying water uphill for irrigation. Sometimes they toiled 17 or 18 hours a day. Soaked with water and sweat and caked with mud, the girls kept on laughing and singing as they worked.

Ardent criticism and hard work wrought tremendous changes in Tachai. That year its per-mu yield of grain reached 473.5 kg. Moreover, an irrigation network began to take shape on Tiger Head Hill. It watered over 400 mu of land, half of Tachai's cultivated area.

The drought of 1972 lasted into early June, 1973. Throughout its 17 months there was hardly a bit of rain or snow. At the April sowing, the "spongy fields" were bone dry to a depth of one foot. Visitors who checked on the fields were dismayed. "What can be done?" they lamented. "It's too dry to sow."

The menace was real indeed. Tachai faced a trial even more severe than in 1972. But did the villagers knit their brows in anxiety? No! As early as the autumn of 1972, the Party branch had prepared them mentally for a tough fight. It had warned them, "'One lean year is no cause for worry, but several drought years in a row are really to be feared,' says the adage. So let's think. What's to be done if this drought lasts another year or two?"

"We can withstand it!" was the villagers' stout answer. "We won't rest on past successes, but work twice as hard to extend irrigation. The coming year may be good or

bad, but we'll prepare for a bad one. The calamity may be minor or serious, but we'll get ready for a big one. The calamity may last one year or several, but we'll prepare for the worst."

A new fighting slogan now rang through the village: "One drought year, work harder. Two drought years, fight like hell. Three drought years, force high yields out of the soil just the same!"

The brigade speeded up its building of man-made "plains" to enlarge the irrigated area. It also sent some of its strongest workers to join in the construction of the Yangchiapo Reservoir. This, when completed, would connect the Tiger Head Hill irrigation system with that of the whole county.

In those days, the people of Tachai prized water as if it were oil. Saving water became a way of life. Every house had a big jar to store its waste water, which a special team collected each morning to moisten the fields. The new-built fields in Laofen Gully were the driest, so 42,000 buckets of waste water were poured on them during the sowing season.

Every night, the brigade's conference room was brightly lit. Here the day-time "plain-builders" continued to fight on another front. Making use of the long winter evenings, they reviewed the 10 two-line struggles within the Party and the road Tachai had traversed, so that they could better understand the Party's basic line and deepen the movement to criticize Lin Piao and rectify style of work.

Indignantly denouncing the crimes committed by the Lin Piao anti-Party clique, they recalled disaster years in the old society and drew a contrast with the excellent situation in the new.

The worst previous drought year had been 1920. Then just 40 rainless days during the crop-ripening period had resulted in a real famine.

In 1972, the natural calamity was far more serious. The dry spell lasted all through from sowing to harvest, yet the grain yield was eight or nine times that of the best year before the liberation.

What a glaring contrast! In the old society a minor drought meant a famine. Now even a major drought was powerless to do harm.

Poor and lower-middle peasants who spoke at the meeting painted the following picture: "In the old society, when drought afflicted us, we depended on heaven, but heaven wouldn't give us rain. We depended on the earth, but earth wouldn't grow us food. We depended on our parents, but how could they feed us when they were starving themselves? Today, we rely on Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, on socialism, on the collective economy. They are truly dependable. They never fail us. With them, we can live well even in a drought year. With them, we have the spirit to defy all difficulties and rally to tackle the toughest problems. If anyone dares try bring back capitalism, we'll fight him to the end."

Then came the 1973 spring sowing. It was a decisive moment. To sow at all, Tachai had to fight the drought. Although now in a position to channel water to part of its fields, it chose not to do so for the sake of other brigades. The five big rivers running through Hsiyang County had almost dried up. So had most reservoirs in the area. All over the county, people were preparing to sow by dibbling. Some fraternal brigades had difficulties worse than Tachai's as they had to fetch water from afar. How precious was water at this moment! Yet the poor and lower-middle

peasants of Tachai saw something else as more precious — the communist style which calls for the highest devotion to the common interest, for leaving all convenience to others while shouldering difficulties oneself. In March, at the height of the drought, the Kuochuang Reservoir notified the Tachai Brigade that it could supply all the water needed for its crops. Tachai's reply was: In a drought, water means grain. It is not in the spirit of Tachai to make liberal use of water while neighbour brigades go short.

The Party branch decided to concede the water from the reservoir to the others. For Tachai's own sowing, the brigade members would carry water on their own shoulders. So as soon as the water from the Kuochuang Reservoir flowed into Tachai's storage pond, it was pumped over Tiger Head Hill to two neighbouring brigades. It did not just flow to them, it flowed into the hearts of the 200,000 people of the whole county!

Carrying water for dibbling over large areas was new to Tachai. It might seem that under such difficulties it would be a feat to get the crop sown at all, much less stress quality. But Tachai didn't think that way. At an "idea session," the elder peasants worked out an eight-step process for dibbling, urging that each be strictly carried out.

This method required five times the normal year's labour for sowing. Where to get all that labour power? "From revolutionization and mechanization" was Tachai's answer. Chen Yung-kuei was away attending a meeting, so brigade leader Chia Cheng-jang took command of the unusual sowing. Tractors and horse-drawn carts went into action. The villagers, en masse and in high spirits, shuttled with buckets of water on shoulder-poles between the fields and the near-dry river. From a distance, they

looked like an endless column as they climbed Tiger Head Hill, fanning out into an open-order assault as they scattered in the high fields—a magnificent panorama of battle against drought! In 40 days, these heroic creators of history dibbled nearly a million holes and carried 240,000 bucketfuls of water. Theirs was the revolutionary spirit of “a hundred loads of water, a thousand li* on foot, for each mu of land.” With this spirit, they completed the high-quality sowing of 500 mu of maize. Thus they lived up to their fighting pledge: “We’ll defeat heaven and make it fret and fume! Rather wear ourselves to the bone than miss a single sprout!”

“Everything divides into two.” Drought made sowing very hard. That was a bad thing. But the people of Tachai turned the pressure of the disaster into a motive force. With shoulder-poles and buckets, they got the water to where it was needed for dibbling, and so succeeded with the sowing. And in early June, a heavy rain, helped by the pent-up heat in the soil, sent the maize shooting up. So a bad thing was turned into a good thing. Guided by Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line and spurred forward by the movement to criticize Lin Piao and rectify working style, the people of Tachai went all out as never before, won the battle against the unprecedented drought and in the end reaped an unprecedented bumper harvest. Their grain yield reached 510.5 kg. per mu. For the third consecutive year, the crop was a high one. And because the man-made “plains” had enlarged the brigade’s cultivated area, its total grain output reached 385,000 kg., an all-time high.

* One li equals half a kilometre.

In 1974 came the deep-going and sustained mass movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius. It came in Tachai’s third year of battle against the ever-worsening drought. What is more, a ruinous gale hit the village that summer. Yet the Tachai people, more daring and resourceful than ever after their long tempering, beat back all the calamities with heightened socialist enthusiasm and greater strength. They wrested yet another good harvest, comparable to that of the previous year, from their land. Their feat smashed the old Confucian mental shackles such as “Man proposes, heaven disposes,” and “Life and death are pre-ordained; wealth and honour come from heaven.” At a criticism meeting, an aged poor peasant said, “In my young days, the people feared heaven. Now it’s the opposite. Revolution has turned the world upside down.”

VII

The Fighting Bastion

"A train's speed depends on its locomotive. Tachai's fast growth depends on the Party's leadership. Nothing can be done well without a good Party branch committee." This is the profound lesson drawn by the Tachai people from their long experience of revolutionary struggle.

In some places that lag behind, the leadership puts the blame on the backwardness of the masses. The Tachai Party branch committee thinks differently. It holds, "No matter what the place, the masses want to make revolution and are ready to work hard for it. There can only be backward leadership, but never backward masses." It holds that in grasping the most vital thing – the Party line, the first and foremost task is to build the Party well.

Building a Good Leading Core

"Cadres are a decisive factor, once the political line is determined." The main task in building a Party branch into a staunch fighting bastion is the forging of a revolutionized leading group closely linked with the masses and composed of old, middle-aged and young cadres, to ensure that leadership stays firmly in the hands of Marxists.

It is the salient feature of the Tachai Party branch that its leading core – the branch committee – resolutely carries out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and exerts centralized leadership over the entire brigade.

Long ago, during the War of Resistance Against Japan, Chairman Mao pointed out, **"It is necessary to train a great many people as vanguards of the revolution. People who are politically far-sighted. People imbued with the spirit of struggle and self-sacrifice. People with largeness of mind who are loyal, active and upright. People who never pursue selfish interests, but are wholeheartedly for the liberation of the nation and society. People who fear no difficulties, but remain steadfast and advance courageously in the face of difficulties. People who are neither high and mighty nor seekers after the limelight, but are conscientious and full of practical sense. If China has a host of such vanguard elements, the tasks of the Chinese revolution will be successfully fulfilled."** Tachai's Party branch committee consists of such vanguard elements.

Chen Yung-kuei often says, "Without a relatively stable group of cadres, there can be no steady increase in yields or long-term concept in construction, nor can experienced cadres be trained." Tachai's Party branch committee is such a relatively stable leading body. Of its nine members, two are over 55 years of age and three around 45. These older cadres have done leading work for more than 20 years now. The people have given them affectionate names such as "Fine Headman," "Iron Shoulders," "Incorruptible Accountant," "Never-Rest," and "Knows Our Hearts."

But it is necessary also to take young people into the leading bodies. Only thus can the revolutionary cause

of the Chinese proletariat, initiated by our Party under the leadership of Chairman Mao, be carried forward. So of Tachai's nine Party branch committee members, four are around 25. They too have been given fond nicknames, "Little Warrior," "Iron Girl," "Book-Lover," and "First to Act."

Tachai's splendid leading body did not drop from the sky. It has been gradually forged in the three revolutionary movements in accordance with Chairman Mao's line in Party-building, and its members have been selected and trained according to the Party's cadre policy.

First and foremost, Tachai's leading body had a good "squad leader," Chen Yung-kuei. How was he chosen? The story goes back to that old hero of nationwide renown, Chia Chin-tsai, former secretary of the Tachai Party branch.

Chia Chin-tsai, a farm-hand for 25 years in the old society, was one of Tachai's oldest Party members. He was secretary of the Party branch for six years from 1947, when it was first organized, to 1952. During that period, he led the land reform and mutual-aid movement and nurtured seven new Party members from among the poor and lower-middle peasants. Chen Yung-kuei was one of these.

Chia Chin-tsai served the cause of the revolution faithfully and was loved by the Tachai people. But, when the big renegade Liu Shao-chi was trumpeting such fallacies as "developing a rich peasant economy" and "exploitation has its merits," Chia lost his bearings. As a result, Tachai deviated from the correct path for a time.

Who was the first to combat and correct this error? Chen Yung-kuei, whom Chia himself had trained and sponsored. According to the bourgeois philosophy of life, Chen's action should have been a personal affront to Old

Chia, to be repaid by life-long hatred. But Chia Chin-tsai, a Communist, stood above his own personal interests; he thought only of the interests of the Party and the people. So he took Chen Yung-kuei's criticism not as an insult but as a sign of Chen's loyalty to the Party and the revolution. The more Chen criticized him, the closer he felt to Chen. During that very time, he thrice recommended to the Party branch that Chen Yung-kuei be elected to take his place as Party secretary. From the depths of his heart, he said, "We join the Party and make revolution to free all mankind, to realize communism. We're no forest band which goes by the rule 'The first to come is king!' Our revolutionary cause must be carried forward, generation after generation. When we discover a person of high promise, we should let him develop."

By contrast, the landlord and rich peasants of Tachai were then sowing dissension by appealing to clan ties. "There are so many people in Tachai surnamed Chia," they growled. "Why should the only Chen in the village be picked as leader?" This put Chia Chin-tsai on the alert. "Not all the Chias are one family," he said to the poor and lower-middle peasants. "I was born a Chia. But for half of my life I was exploited by the landlords who were also named Chia. Chen Yung-kuei is one of us, a son of the poor like ourselves. We're class brothers, really of one flesh and blood."

When the villagers did not promptly accept his nomination of Chen, Chia Chin-tsai went to see the secretary of the district Party committee. "Are you trying to shirk the duty of leadership?" this leading cadre asked. "That's not it," Chia answered with deep sincerity. "Chairman Mao rescued me from a sea of bitterness. I'm determined to devote my whole life to the Party and not part from the

revolution till I die. My rank may change, my determination to make the revolution never will!"

Old Chia's deeds matched his words. When his proposal was finally accepted, he did all he could to help Chen Yung-kuei do the work well. When Chen consulted him, which often happened, he gave him strong support. In 1955, Tachai bought 18 plough oxen. They were very important to the co-op, but several stockmen in succession failed to keep them in top condition. Chen Yung-kuei worried, "Who will be the best at this challenging job?" Chia Chin-tsai bravely came forward, saying, "Let me have a try!" After the spring ploughing, he took the oxen to graze on Chanling Hill 30 km. away. For more than three months until the autumn harvest was over, he never rested at noon or slept through the night. By the time he returned to the village with the oxen, his skin had peeled from sunburn, his lips were cracked and his clothes torn. But all the animals were fat and sleek.

In the third battle at Wolves' Den in the winter of 1957, Chia Chin-tsai took on the tough job of hewing stone. Since then 19 years have passed, but the old hero, now 67, continues to wield his hammer on Tiger Head Hill.

At the First Plenary Session of the Tenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party held in 1973, Chen Yung-kuei was elected to the Party's Political Bureau, and in 1975 during the Fourth National People's Congress, he was appointed Vice-Premier. Thus he became a leader of the Party and the state. Chia Chin-tsai remained an ordinary commune member. So there is now a vast difference in their relative positions. But it denotes only the revolutionary division of labour, not "high" or "low" social status. These two old comrades-in-arms are equally respected by all.

One day, the famous Heroic 8th Company of the PLA came to visit Tachai. Learning how Chia Chin-tsai had worked through the years, they lined up, saluted the old man, and one by one shook his calloused hand to express their deep respect for this seasoned revolutionary.

Chia Chin-tsai's noble spirit of building the Party in the interests of the vast majority, without thought of self, established a fine tradition in Tachai's Party branch. It makes benefit to the revolution, and not just seniority, its criterion for the selection of cadres. It regards the bourgeois notions of joining the Party in order to climb high, vying for power and money and forming factional groups as utterly vile. This spirit of integrity is an important reason why the Tachai Party branch committee has been able to build itself into a good leading body.

Does this mean that there has never been argument over selecting cadres in Tachai? Not at all. There have been arguments, sometimes hot ones. For instance, a wide difference of views arose when Chen Yung-kuei recommended that Liang Pien-liang, once a stripling in the Oldsters and Youngsters Team and now the deputy Party secretary, be made a cadre.

In the old society, Liang Pien-liang was poor and despised. He came to Tachai as a beggar boy. When he was recommended as a cadre, some people shook their heads and said, "No. This young man can't even talk distinctly, and hasn't any experience. How can he lead dozens of households in farming?" Class enemies took the chance to sneer, "That ragamuffin! He's just put down his begging bowl. What a commander!" But Chen Yung-kuei and most of the poor and lower-middle peasants held that what counts in a man is his awareness of the struggle between the two lines, his political stand and

fighting will. Liang's bitter sufferings in the old society had endowed him with a deep hatred for all class enemies and a firm political stand. He had a deep love for Chairman Mao and socialism. He was invariably earnest and resolute in carrying out the Party's line and policies. Certainly, he would make a good servant of the people. If such a good comrade couldn't be chosen, then who could? After a vigorous debate, a common view was at last reached, based on the Party's cadre policy of "appointing people on their merit." Liang was elected to be a leading cadre and a member of the Party branch committee.

In his new capacity, Liang Pien-liang continued to be loyal to the Party and the people, and worked hard to develop his strong points and overcome his shortcomings. In a few years he had tempered himself into a "**red and expert**" commander. His political qualities were manifested in his hatred of evil, his readiness to correct any error he might make, his crystal-clear political integrity and revolutionary spirit of "fearing neither hardship nor death." They made him a model for both cadres and rank-and-file.

At the start, Liang felt inadequate as a cadre because of his illiteracy. Once he said he would rather be an ordinary member of the brigade, as before. Chen Yung-kuei criticized him seriously for this, finally moving the iron-strong young man to tears. This was immediately seized upon by a fellow with ulterior motives. Thinking that Liang must be resentful, he said with feigned concern, "My boy, you work so hard all day, then knock yourself out with extra work at night. Your eyes are red with fatigue! Yet see what you get for all your toil. He scolded you as he wouldn't even scold his own son!" Liang, at once smelling

"gun-powder" behind this scoundrel's honeyed words, wiped away his tears and retorted, "Want to know why I'm upset? Because I haven't done my work well! I can't face Chairman Mao. I've let down Uncle Yung-kuei and other people who helped me. That's what brought me to tears. Do you think you can drive in your wedge here? Let me tell you something. I'm no one for you to fool with!"

The poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai say of Pien-liang that he has only the revolution in his heart and never thinks of himself. Before the overhead cable transport was installed, the hardest job in Tachai was carrying manure up the hill. But Liang did it for more than 40 days on end each spring, carrying the heaviest loads, going at the fastest pace. That was why the villagers affectionately dubbed him "Iron Shoulders." In 1959 when hog cholera was prevalent nearby, he kept watch over the piggery for 30 days and nights on end. Then the villagers, deeply moved by his spirit, began to call him "Iron Man." He is not made of iron, of course, but of flesh and blood. But his revolutionary will gives him boundless energy and courage. Whenever there is a dangerous job to be done, he dashes forward with the shout, "Everybody stand back! Let me go!" Liang has been injured three times while thus taking the lead in facing risks.

The people are glad from the bottom of their hearts to have found such a good cadre.

In 1964, Chairman Mao, having summed up the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat at home and abroad, put forward the strategic task of training millions of successors for the cause of proletarian revolution and formulated the five criteria for such successors. How did Tachai implement these principles? How, in

particular, did it carry out the principle of **"practise Marxism, and not revisionism"** in testing, judging and choosing its cadres? Chairman Mao points out, **"Successors to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat come forward in mass struggles and are tempered in the great storms of revolution. It is essential to test and judge cadres and choose and train successors in the long course of mass struggle."** Each member of the Tachai Party branch committee was chosen through such testing. For instance, deputy Party secretary Kuo Feng-lien (who became the Party secretary after the Tenth National Congress of the Party, replacing Chen Yung-kuei), now 29, underwent three major tests before she was elected to the leading body.

The first was in 1963 when the great flood struck Tachai. She was then just 16, fresh out of primary school. But her behaviour in the struggle to rebuild and rehabilitate the village was outstanding. Together with the poor peasant's daughter Chao Su-lan, she led in organizing a shock force of young women. Shoulder to shoulder with their elders, these girls braved wind and rain and were always where the going was toughest. One bitter-cold day in January when they were working on building up the fields, the earth was frozen to a depth of more than three feet, but they wouldn't stop digging. Their hands cracked, bleeding between forefinger and thumb. The hearts of the older people ached at the sight. "Girls," said Chen Yung-kuei. "It's bitter today. Go on home now. Come back when it's warmer."

"Shall we go home?" the 23 young women debated in the snow-covered field. Kuo Feng-lien spoke up first. "Sure the weather's cold, but our hearts aren't. The earth is frozen but we aren't. What the older people can stand,

we can too!" With that, they all got back to work in the bitter wind. Seeing their spirit, the older peasants stroked the icicles from their beards and said admiringly, "These girls of ours! They're made of iron. Let's call them iron girls." Not only did the name stick — it became the team's formal title.

Defying sub-zero weather to build the fields as quickly as possible, the heroic Tachai people worked four spells each day, with two meals delivered to the fields. By the time it came to them, the food was frozen through and through. But the iron girls, like their elders, ate it with relish — for the sake of the great task in which they were engaged.

Kuo Feng-lien composed a song:

O icy meal
You're sweet.
O icy meal
You're fragrant.
With you we don't forget our roots,
And work with greater strength.

She sang it in the fields to encourage her workmates. Hearing her voice ringing out over Tiger Head Hill, the Party branch knew Tachai had grown a fine new successor.

Her second test was in 1964 and 1965. The Tachai Brigade was already nationally famous. Kuo Feng-lien herself had won renown as an iron girl, sharp-shooter and singer. So naturally she became a target for the "sugar-coated bullets" of the bourgeoisie. There were people from the outside who tried many tricks to entice her to leave the rural area. But with help from the Party branch, she was able resolutely to follow the correct road pointed

out by Chairman Mao for school graduates, resist every temptation and remain determined to settle down in the countryside. Later on, she married a young shepherd in the brigade. In short, she won the battle against the corrosive influence of the bourgeoisie.

Kuo Feng-lien's third test came in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Responding to Chairman Mao's call, she organized Tachai's Red Guard rebels against revisionism. Amid many sharp and complex struggles, she remained fearless and firm in principle, dared to resist and struggle against contrary winds and became a revolutionary path-breaker. In the winter of 1967 she was sent to represent the Tachai Militia Company at a conference of the North China region. There, Chen Po-ta, a leading member of the Lin Piao anti-Party clique and an anti-Communist Kuomintang element, personally tried to bully her for her firm adherence to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Kuo Feng-lien, undaunted, resisted the wrong line. Her revolutionary spirit of daring to go against the tide made her the popularly-acknowledged standard-bearer of Tachai's new generation.

Women are an important force in determining the success or defeat of the revolution. In order to build a good leading body, the Tachai Party branch paid great attention to selecting and training cadres from among working women. Today, three of the nine members of Tachai's Party branch committee are women. They occupy a similar or higher proportion in other revolutionary organizations in Tachai. In the Youth League branch committee, four of the seven members are women.

Tachai's prime example of "women holding up half the sky" is its deputy Party secretary Sung Li-ying. She

has been a cadre for 29 years ever since the age of 18. In all this time, she has put the interests of the revolution first, never flinching from a hard task. She shows extraordinary vigour in all revolutionary work.

In old China, fettered by feudal taboos, Tachai's women were not allowed to shoulder a hoe while walking, go into a field bare-footed, enter a sheep pen or threshing ground, or even speak loudly in front of any man. Sung Li-ying took the lead in smashing these fetters. As time went on, she became the mother of four children. Without any older family members to help with household chores, and shouldering heavy public duties, she sometimes had to leave her laundry soaking for days before she could find time to do it. Yet she never complained when she was up to her ears in work as a cadre, or when farm work was arduous. She has not let her family burdens drag her back.

In her early years as a cadre, when encountering setbacks in work and beset by endless household chores, she had indeed sometimes become dispirited. Noticing this, members of the Party branch committee would come and help her out. Chen Yung-kuei repeatedly told her, "A Party member mustn't get angry over personal matters or lose heart before difficulties, but go all out for the revolution." Whenever she spoke at a meeting in those days, she was all nerves. After a few words, she could find no more to say. Chen Yung-kuei would sit by her side, encourage her to go on, at times correct whatever she said that was incorrect and fill in what she left out.

Thus were Tachai's women cadres brought up and trained with the solicitude and help of the Party branch.

Cadres Work in the Fields: A Measure of Fundamental Importance

Chairman Mao teaches us, **"By taking part in collective productive labour, the cadres maintain extensive, constant and close ties with the working people. This is a major measure of fundamental importance for a socialist system; it helps to overcome bureaucracy and to prevent revisionism and dogmatism."** Doing what Chairman Mao teaches, Tachai cadres have retained their character of ordinary working people over more than 20 years.

In the very first year of collectivization, Tachai's cadres heard such remarks as: "It's good to have a co-op. Our one worry is that we won't be able to feed the cadres." The masses were troubled: Would the cadres, after the collectivization, become "managers who live without labour."

The words "won't be able to feed the cadres" grated on the ear. But the Tachai Party branch used this abrasive comment to give the cadres a deep class education. Time and again – at meetings of the Party branch committee, the full Party branch and the cadres – they discussed this question hotly. The deeply-felt opinion they formed was as follows: "In the old days, the landlords and rich peasants lived well without doing any work. What did we think of them then? And if we ourselves now become 'non-labouring managers,' what will the masses think? Chairman Mao and the Communist Party have led us to make the revolution against just such parasites. If we stop taking part in labour as soon as we turn into cadres, how will we be different from those blood-suckers?"

After thus raising the class consciousness of the Party members and cadres, the branch committee laid down

three principles for themselves: "Don't be selfish. Seek no privileges. Take an active part in collective productive labour." To the masses, they said sincerely, "Before liberation, all of us worked like beasts of burden for the landlords. We never had enough food, but got a bellyful of beatings. What kind of life was that? Today, with the rest of our class brothers and sisters, we are building socialism with our own hands. Isn't that a marvellous and satisfying fact? If we now fall into selfish ways or live on unearned income, it will mean we've forgotten our class roots. We hope you will all supervise us to prevent this."

The Party branch committee considers all the three principles important, and especially so the principle of taking part in collective labour, without which the other two cannot be carried out. As the old saying goes, "Laziness is the mother of a hundred evils." Sloth is the frequent forerunner of corruption of thought.

To guarantee that the cadres have time for work in the fields, the Tachai Brigade has adopted a "three don'ts" rule for them to follow, except in cases of extraordinary necessity. They are: 1. Don't call meetings in the village during working hours; 2. don't work in the office during the hours of field labour; and 3. don't call brigade members away from field labour for talks. It has also devised and consistently observed a routine for meetings concerned with day-to-day farming. First, the Party branch committee members gather in the evening to review the day's work and plan for the next day. Second, when having breakfast together with the other villagers under Tachai's old willow tree, as is the local custom, they announce the day's arrangements, making efficient use of mealtimes for work assignment, political study and discussion. Third, the cadres go with everybody else to work in

the fields. There, if needed, they call a rest-break meeting, combining time out for a smoke with study and discussion. That is how Tachai's cadres "arrange work scientifically and participate in collective labour regularly."

In Tachai, the cadres are the first to shoulder difficulties and the last to enjoy comforts. Their watchwords are: "Cadres must take the lead in work and do more than others." "Cadres should sweat more, but not be paid more; carry a greater load, but not claim greater consideration; live more simply than the masses, not enjoy more comforts." For years, they have always been the first to take on the hard or crucial jobs, such as handling the drill in sowing grain, cleaning out manure in summer, reinforcing the dykes against floods under heavy rain and extending scientific farming. But when grain and vegetables are distributed, they leave the best to the rank-and-file. After the day's labour in the fields, when other villagers go home, the cadres begin working in the office, and often continue deep into the night. No matter how heavy their additional duties, they get no more remuneration than a villager of the same rating in field labour.

In Tachai, the bookkeeper, like other cadres, works in the fields in daytime and does the books only in spare time. Chia Cheng-jang, a member of the Party branch committee, held this job for 10 years. Except at the year's end when preparation for the annual distribution required a few days in the office, he did all his work at night.

Once he stayed to work in the office for a few hours during the day to rush off some statistics. Coming out, he met the villagers returning from the fields. Suddenly his face flushed crimson with shame. Before his eyes rose the scene when he had first been elected book-

keeper. When the co-op began, there had been only one literate person in the village—a rich peasant's son. Though this man knew enough to keep accounts, the poor and lower-middle peasants did not trust him because he shied away from collective labour. So the job was given to Chia Cheng-jang. Chia had worked as a hired hand for 16 years and been a coal miner for four years in the old society. His schooling was confined to two winter classes. Yet among the poor and lower-middle peasants in Tachai, he was then the most "educated." When he was entrusted with the books, he could neither write properly nor count on the abacus. Many of his entries were made with rings and other symbols only he himself could understand. But his comrades had showered him with encouragement. "You can learn what you don't know," they said. "We've all suffered together. We have faith in you." Amid these memories, Chia asked himself, "How can I sit in the office while the poor and lower-middle peasants, my own class brothers, work in the fields? If this goes on, won't I cut myself off from the masses?" Since then, he has never worked in the office on an ordinary day, and has put in more than 350 work-days in the fields each year. The earnings from this are more than sufficient to keep him and his family. Never has he taken advantage of his post for any personal gain or privilege. For many years, the villagers praised him as their "Incorruptible Accountant."

Tachai's cadres never act contrary to policy. And though entitled to some subsidiary work-points,* they

* "Subsidiary work-points" are work-points allotted in lieu of those that would be earned in the fields when a cadre must unavoidably give time to other duties.

accept as few as possible, or none. Chen Yung-kuei, as secretary of the Party branch, was entitled to 100 days' worth, and Chia Cheng-jang, as bookkeeper, to 80. In 1963, Chen Yung-kuei cut his own subsidy to 45 days, and Chia to 50 days. After 1963 the principal cadres of the brigade rejected such subsidiary points altogether.

Early in 1959, Chia Cheng-jang was elected leader of the brigade. Chao Su-heng, a poor peasant's son who had just graduated from school, then became the bookkeeper. Though very quick at accounting he tended to shun field labour. "Su-heng has graduated in school work," the poor and lower-middle peasants said, "but not in farm work." The Party branch tried to educate him time and again. "If we never set foot in the fields, what kind of labouring people are we?" they said. "In Tachai, there can be no such thing as a non-labouring cadre." Each time the young man would nod and agree in words, but he never changed in deeds. Whenever he could find some bit of office work to do, he would use it as a pretext to stay away from the fields.

The Party branch met to discuss his behaviour. Its conclusion was: For cadres to take part in collective labour is a fine tradition of our Party which no one should make light of. A cadre who does not love productive labour cannot share the standpoint, thoughts and feelings of the working people, cannot consistently protect the people's interests or concern himself with the problems of the masses. He can neither resolutely carry out the Party's line and policies, nor lead in persisting along the socialist road. Especially is this so for a cadre in charge of finance. If he shuns physical labour, he'll find it hard to remain honest and public-spirited and stick firmly to the principle of running the brigade with diligence and thrift.

On these grounds the Party branch passed a resolution: Henceforward, no one can be a cadre in Tachai who does not have a good record in physical labour. Those who are already cadres shall be required to make up the necessary labour they have missed.

Accordingly, Chao Su-heng was transferred to work in the fields for a few years under the direction of Chia Cheng-jang. The latter resumed the job of bookkeeping during that time. Only four years later, when Chao had made a good showing in labour, did Chia Cheng-jang leave to formally take up the leadership of the brigade.

Tachai's cadres often say, "In using someone, know his mind; in working land, know its characteristics." Without taking part in physical labour, no cadre can know what the commune members are thinking, nor grasp the main problems in work. It's like fighting a battle. A commander who doesn't know the mood of the fighters cannot win a victory, any more than he can win without knowing what's happening on the enemy side, or without knowing the art of warfare. Only when they labour side by side with the rank-and-file can cadres gain intimate knowledge of the land, the people, and what needs to be done. Only then will people listen to what they say and help them in their tasks, and only then can they lead effectively and grow in prestige.

Some people think that the main function of a cadre is to generate new ideas. Unless he does this, they say, a cadre isn't of much help to the collective, however hard he works. The opinion of the Tachai cadres is: "Where do new ideas come from? Only from practice and from the masses. Only if they plunge in person into the three revolutionary movements can cadres see, hear, learn and

talk sensibly, and do their job well. Only thus can they bring the wisdom of the people to a focus, sum up their experience and come up with new ideas each year. There's no other way a cadre can become able and effective in work. Cadres who are divorced from physical labour are bound to lose touch with reality, become estranged from the masses and see and hear nothing as though blind and deaf. Such cadres can do nothing but boast. They are useless and will never produce good ideas."

Because Tachai's cadres hold these views, it has never occurred to them that physical labour "interferes with leadership work." On the contrary, they consider it indispensable to leading properly, or even knowing how to. But how do they practise these precepts? They have summed up their method in the "six diligents": 1. "Diligent legs" to go around and inspect all the fields. 2. "Diligent hands" to take the lead in labour. 3. "Diligent ears" to listen to what people say. 4. "Diligent eyes" to see how the brigade members show up. 5. "Diligent minds" to study and analyse problems. 6. "Diligent mouths" to do the maximum of political and ideological work.

Since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Tachai's principal cadres, Chen Yung-kuei and others, have all taken up leading posts at various levels of the Party and state. Consequently they spend more time away from Tachai and have less time for physical labour. Furthermore, the brigade has hundreds of visitors every day, and there are always some correspondents, artists and writers living in the village. To take care of all these guests and explain matters to them is another tax on the cadres' time. But despite their changed positions, higher honours, busier life and heavier responsibilities, they pay as much attention

as ever to physical labour. In fact, they make greater efforts to safeguard time for it by arranging their schedules so as to receive guests and reporters in the mornings and evenings, or before or after meals. And when representatives from the commune, county, prefecture or province come to consult them on work, very often they simply receive them while doing farm work, and discuss and settle matters while sitting on the field ridges. Receptions of foreign personalities, which usually take longer, are also sandwiched between periods of productive labour, even though these may then be shorter.

Comrade Chen Yung-kuei, for one, is not at all like an "official" and still looks the same old working peasant. When in the village, he continues as a full-time labourer along with everybody else. His sweat runs together with theirs, his heart beats in unison with theirs. In seven years as top leader of Hsiyang County, he never had an office in its principal town, but directed its affairs from Tachai Village. Sometimes he would work in the fields till after sunset, and only after supper set off to attend a county Party committee meeting. When it was over, he would hurry back home in the wee hours in order to turn out in the fields at the usual time the next morning. And when making trips to Taiyuan or Peking for meetings, he would step into the waiting car right after laying down his hoe, and go straight back into the fields as soon as he came back.

One day, Chen was notified of a provincial Party committee meeting to take place in Taiyuan at eight o'clock the following morning. Instead of making an early start on the long journey, he put in a full day's work in

the fields, then called two after-supper meetings, one in Tachai and the other at the county town, to arrange work during his absence. By the time he left for Taiyuan more than 150 km. away, it was two in the morning. A nap on the road was all the rest he had that night. "Yung-kuei never misses work in fields or office, he misses his sleep instead," he heard someone say. "I'm doing all right," he responded jokingly. "Missing out on just one thing, not everything."

Since the Cultural Revolution, the Party branch has often organized the Party members and cadres in Tachai Brigade to sum up its historical experience in the light of the Party's basic line. The question is put: Why is it that Tachai has never gone astray since the collectivization? An important part of the answer, by general agreement, is that the brigade's cadres are genuinely unselfish, seek no privilege and take part regularly in collective productive labour. As a result, they are upright in conduct, their ears are sharp, their eyes are wide open, and in the face of wrong political lines, they are confident and dare to fight.

During the Ninth National Congress of the Party, Chairman Mao gave an instruction concerning the comrades from grass-roots units newly elected to the Central Committee, **"See to it that they do not divorce themselves from the masses or from productive labour while performing their duties."** Tachai's cadres, immediately they heard this, made a rule for themselves: "A cadre's position may change, but three things must never change – taking part in labour, close ties with the masses and the style of hard struggle and plain living."

The following table shows the number of days of physical work done each year by Tachai's principal cadres, averaged over the entire period from 1966 to 1973:

Name	Post	Work-days
Chen Yung-kuei	Party Secretary	234.5
Kuo Feng-lien	Deputy Secretary, now Secretary	288
Chia Cheng-jang	Member of Party branch committee and Brigade Leader	351.5
Liang Pien-liang	Deputy Secretary	350.5
Sung Li-ying	Deputy Secretary	310
Chia Lai-heng	Member of Party branch committee and Deputy Brigade Leader	250
Chia Tsun-so	Deputy Secretary and Secretary of Youth League branch committee	316
Chia Chang-so	Member of Party branch committee and Militia Company Commander	352.5
Liang Hsin-wen	Member of Party branch committee	350

Note: Kuo Feng-lien's average was reduced by a period of absence to serve in the commune centre. Chia Lai-heng put in less work-days than others because he has suffered from a chronic illness in recent years. Liang Hsin-wen's figure was for 1973 alone.

Just a few figures. But they give deep food for thought. They reflect the high degree of revolutionization of the thinking of Tachai's cadres. Behind these statistics, one can hear their firm footsteps along the road of continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

To Be Servants of the People

"The line of the Communist Party is the line of the people." Another thing that makes the Party branch of Tachai a strong bastion in the three great revolutionary movements is that it fully lives up to the Party's fine tradition of close links with the masses.

To build the Party in the common interests of the people or in the selfish interests of a few? This is the watershed distinguishing the proletarian political party from bourgeois ones. It is the touchstone of whether one is a real Communist Party member or a phony. All these years, the Tachai Party branch has been imbuing its members and cadres with the principle of building the Party in the interests of the people. It has taught them always and everywhere to be concerned for the masses and serve the people wholeheartedly.

At the beginning of agricultural collectivization, Tachai was still very poor and life for the co-op members was hard. The Party branch, while leading the masses to change the conditions of farming, showed the utmost concern for their well-being. Many moving stories of that time remain deep in people's hearts to this day.

Two shepherds, Li Chiao-yueh and Chia Fu-yuan, lived in a shed high on the hill. One day their bedding was burned up by accident. When Chen Yung-kuei heard this, he at once brought two quilts from his own home for the shepherds to use, leaving only one to cover his entire family of four. He deliberately took this hardship on himself so that his class brothers would be warm at night.

Chao Fa-ming, an aged and ailing man supported by the brigade welfare fund, needed personal care. Chen

Yung-kuei often went himself to cook, fetch coal and water, or brew medicine for old Chao.

Jen En-ni, an old poor-peasant woman, fell ill and could not leave her bed. Li Hu-ni, a Party member, nursed her for more than 20 days, doing everything needed to keep her fed, clean and comfortable.

Some of the co-op members had eaten up all their grain before the new harvest. To keep them in food without resorting to state aid, Tachai's Party members and cadres lived on bran and wild greens themselves, conceding their grain to the needy households.

Later, as Tachai grew more prosperous, this tradition of concern for the masses remained. "We're servants of the people," say Tachai's leaders. "It will always be our duty to concern ourselves with the masses."

Since the Cultural Revolution, Chen Yung-kuei has taken up leading posts at the county, prefectural, provincial and national level in turn. But no matter how busy he may be, he always finds time when in Tachai to visit the poor and lower-middle peasants and inquire warmly about how they are living. Sung Mien-ni, a poor-peasant woman in her seventies, had spells of stomach trouble when she could not stand a normal diet. Chen Yung-kuei discussed this with the cadres and had 15 kilogrammes of her grain exchanged at the brigade's storehouse for nourishing red beans, which they specially arranged to grind into flour that she could more easily digest. Immensely moved, Granny Sung exclaimed, "What can I say, Yung-kuei! You're so busy with state affairs now. But you still come to attend to these trifles for me." Trifles? Not in the eyes of Chen Yung-kuei to whom anything affecting the welfare of the poor and lower-middle peasants is important. "Only one who is a bosom friend of the people

can be their trusted leader." Chairman Mao said long ago that it is necessary to **"pay close attention to the well-being of the masses,"** and, **"We should convince the masses that we represent their interests, that our lives are intimately bound up with theirs."** Tachai's Party members and cadres always remember this teaching of Chairman Mao's.

In 1971, an expectant mother asked the brigade to arrange for her to get a few kilos of fine grain. It was a reasonable request, but was ignored by the cadre in charge. The matter was discussed at a meeting of the Party branch committee. The result was a new rule: From then on, eight kilogrammes of fine grain was to be delivered to every new mother personally by a member of the Party branch committee.

Tachai's Party members and cadres, who show great concern for others, care little for themselves. Some of the villagers, whenever they prepared an especially tasty meal at home, used to send over a dish to the cadres as a token of regard. The Party branch committee held that this practice might in time cause cadres to feel privileged, lead to gossip and harm the work. So it called a special meeting of the brigade members and announced, "Sending gifts to cadres is no way to show concern for them. On the contrary, it is a way of demoralizing them. From now on, no one will be allowed to do it."

On another occasion a gift came to Chen Yung-kuei in token of thanks from a neighbouring brigade to which Tachai had conceded its ration of chemical fertilizer at Chen's initiative. It was a bottle of edible oil and a slab of pork which the head of that brigade brought over personally in a basket.

"This isn't right, comrade," Chen Yung-kuei dissuaded him. "We're building socialism, and to help each other is our duty. But you're treating the new relationship among the people like the old one. That doesn't fit in with socialism. All we in Tachai want is to see your brigade do well in the socialist revolution. That's the best way to show your appreciation."

Taught by Chen's attitude, the leader of the other brigade thanked him, apologized for his action and took the gifts back home.

As Tachai became more prosperous, a new notion began to be bandied about. "We've plenty of grain and money now. What does it matter if the cadres are a bit extravagant in eating and drinking?" The Party branch committee, seeing this as a dangerous symptom, called a special meeting to discuss it. All recalled that in the hard early days, only cadres who were absolutely honest and public-spirited had been able to lead the masses in arduous struggle. What about now, when things were better? They concluded that it was no less essential that the cadres remain forever incorruptible if they were to lead the masses in carrying the revolution further forward. Or, to put it more concretely, "Every grain of the collective's crop, every cent of its money is a fruit of the labour of the poor and lower-middle peasants and other brigade members. No cadre is entitled to anything unearned."

Seeking no privileges for themselves, Tachai's cadres are also strict with their family members in this respect. Liang Pien-liang has a younger sister in a neighbouring village. One day she learned that Tachai's supply and marketing co-op had received some high-quality cloth and sent him money and cloth coupons to buy her some through the "back door." Liang told her, "Back-door

dealings undermine the socialist system. They're against the interests of the masses. We can't just go by family ties and throw away the proletarian political line." So he returned her money and cloth coupons.

Liang correctly understood that as a Party cadre he should act in the interests of the majority, not just of himself and his kin. A clean break must be made with the exploiting-class maxim, "When one member becomes an official, the whole family rises to eminence." Now people say, "As the cadres act, so the masses will follow." If cadres take advantage of their position to "go by the back door," the masses will certainly take the wrong road as well. This is how Liang Pien-liang reasoned with his sister, giving her a profound lesson.

Tachai has a principle, "When work isn't done well, look for the reason within the Party; when brigade members do something wrong, look for the problem within the leadership." Apart from very serious cases, ordinary brigade members who err in one matter or another are not required to make a self-criticism or subjected to strong public criticism at large meetings. Only the cadres must criticize themselves in public if they make a mistake. On one occasion in 1971, a member of the Party branch committee violated this principle by severely criticizing a rank-and-filer at a women's meeting. This led to a small-scale "rectification" within the Party branch committee.

The whole matter, from beginning to end, was as follows: The criticized woman member had indeed been lax in work, very free with her mouth, and therefore unpopular among her work-mates. At the meeting, someone had suggested that she should stand up and explain herself. The cadre, who was in the chair, should have corrected this trend. Instead, she allowed the meeting to

become one of severe criticism of this woman. In the subsequent branch committee rectification the cadre made light of her own mistake. She admitted that her handling of the meeting had been wrong, but maintained this was only a matter of method of work, not of important principle. After she herself was criticized, however, she realized that the issue was not merely one of method but of for whom power is wielded, and what political line is followed. Proceeding from this new understanding she declared, "The Party and the people entrust us with power so that we may carry out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. This obligates us to practise democracy towards the people while exercising dictatorship over enemies. It absolutely does not mean that we have the right to use our power to suppress the people. The member with shortcomings is our own class sister. My duty is to help her to awaken politically so that she will correct those faults herself. But I wrongly put pressure on her, which proved that I was taking the wrong stand."

Thereupon, she went to the woman member's home to apologize. At first, she got the cold shoulder. But she went again and again. The third time they talked things out, and old grudges were forgotten. Someone asked this cadre afterwards, "Didn't you feel you were losing face, going to someone's home thrice to apologize?" She replied, "Personal 'face' must be subordinated to the Party line, not the other way round."

China is a socialist state under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The working class, the poor and lower-middle peasants and all the masses of working people are the country's masters. They have the right to exercise revolutionary supervision over cadres of all ranks in organs of the Party and state.

This revolutionary supervision is an important reason why Tachai's cadres have remained good servants of the people.

To mobilize the masses fully for such supervision, Tachai's Party branch in recent years has conducted open-door Party rectification campaigns in accordance with Chairman Mao's teaching, **"Every Party branch must re-consolidate itself in the midst of the masses."** At the Party branch meetings, in which the masses outside the Party are also invited to take part, each committee member publicly "dissects" his or her own thinking and conduct in work and life, so that the Party members, poor and lower-middle peasants and other villagers can "scrutinize these leading comrades from head to foot." Here "head" means the direction they take, the political line they follow, and the level of their political understanding. And "foot" means their links with the people and how well they carry out the Party's mass line. This voluntary submission by Party branch committee members to mass scrutiny is called "daring to take the locomotive to the repair shop for an overhaul."

Most of the opinions aired on such occasions are correct, though some, of course, are not. To encourage the masses to speak up without reserve, Tachai's Party branch accepts and acts resolutely on the correct criticisms and explains things to those who voice wrong ones, but never turns hostile or suppresses criticisms, much less retaliates. Once a branch committeeman made a mistake which a villager reported to the branch committee. Upon hearing this, the committeeman's first words were, "Who brought this story?" The rest of the committee at once criticized him for his reaction. Such an attitude on the part of the Party branch committee constitutes powerful backing for

brigade members who dare speak out. The Party's fine tradition of close links with the masses is strongly rooted among the old Party members and cadres of Tachai. But what about the newer ones?

In the spring of 1973, Chia Tsun-so, a young Party branch committeewoman, went to Taiyuan to attend the Shansi provincial congress of the Communist Youth League. As she was also a member of the provincial Party committee, she was assigned a better room and the use of a car. But she insisted on living and studying together with other representatives of her county and told Chen Yung-kuei so. Chen praised her attitude, saying that one should keep up with others in ideological level, in being strict with oneself in work, and in plain living, but never contend for privilege. And no office-holder should start behaving like a "big shot."

In the elections of members of the Standing Committee of the Shansi Provincial Revolutionary Committee in 1967 and of the Shansi Provincial Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in 1971, the Tachai Brigade was asked to nominate one of its own people. By seniority, merit, prestige and ability, all the old and middle-aged members of the Tachai Party branch committee were fully qualified. But, bearing in mind the strategic task of training successors for the proletarian revolutionary cause, they recommended Kuo Feng-lien and Chia Tsun-so, both in their twenties. After their position changed, these two young women kept reminding each other, "Among Tachai's cadres, we are the youngest and have contributed the least. That we've now been given such high honours and posts shows the Party's loving fostering of young cadres. We must keep this solicitude by the older generation in mind and never get the wrong idea that we ourselves are

anything marvellous." So, as their positions rose, they demanded more of themselves. Like their elders they have remained diligent servants and sincere pupils of the people.

"What is a true bastion of iron? It is the masses, the millions upon millions of people who genuinely and sincerely support the revolution." Tachai's Party members and cadres serve the masses wholeheartedly, rely on them and solicit their supervision. So naturally, the people trust and support them; and the poor and lower-middle peasants and other brigade members are united closely around the Party. When the Party branch calls, the people plunge into action promptly and with invincible strength.

Epilogue

Back in 1964, after Chairman Mao issued his great call, **"In agriculture, learn from Tachai,"** the Tachai people had made the pledge, "The purpose of being in the forefront is not to win honours, but to draw others forward. We'll always remember our duty as an exemplar, and never let the Party and the people down." To make sure of fulfilling this pledge, the Party branch put out two slogans:

"The whole nation is learning from Tachai and Tachai should learn from the whole nation!"

"Tachai leads the way for Hsiyang County and Hsiyang County spurs Tachai forward!"

The Party branch also defined how Tachai should learn from the whole nation: "When we go out of Tachai, we are the learners; everyone coming to Tachai is our teacher." When the cadres or members travel to conferences or on study tours, they learn modestly from other advanced units in order to enrich Tachai's own experience. Since the Cultural Revolution, the brigade has sent people to visit and learn from such units all over China. From every tour they bring back something new and inspiring. In particular, the revolutionary tradition of the Ching Kang Mountains, China's first revolutionary base area founded by Chairman Mao in 1927, and the spirit of Nanniwan, near Yen-an, where revolutionary fighters reclaimed land to win self-sufficiency during the War of Resistance Against Japan, have become founts of strength for the

Tachai people, inspiring them to go ever forward. And visitors to Tachai are regarded as teachers coming to its door with treasures of knowledge to impart. The villagers receive them warmly, learn from them modestly and welcome their comments.

To ensure that "Tachai leads the way for Hsiyang County," the Party branch prescribes: "What Tachai does, the county follows; what the county is going to do, Tachai does first."

"What Tachai does, the county follows" denotes the method of extending local experience to wider areas. It was consistently employed by Chen Yung-kuei after he became a major leader of Hsiyang County. Tachai's basic experience is its perseverance in the Party's basic line. This was the key link that Chen Yung-kuei grasped firmly and extended to the whole county. Tachai was also the trail-blazer in many specific undertakings. The county followed the road already laid out, and so could advance at a faster pace. However, Tachai's experience, when it is spread, must be combined with the concrete steps in the three great revolutionary movements of each time and place. These present some of their own new problems, which Tachai itself has not yet faced. Hence the concept, "what the county is going to do, Tachai does first." Tachai plays the role of experimental brigade for the entire county, of "the seed of experience that makes the whole area bloom." At times, lessons are learned from failures as well as successes. These too are brought to the attention of the entire county.

As for the phrase, "Hsiyang County spurs Tachai forward," the brigade's Party branch explains it thus: "If the whole county does not progress, Tachai may fall prey to conceit; if the whole county makes great progress, Ta-

chai will push ahead with increased vigour." The increased vigour flows from a broad view of the over-all situation. Whatever Tachai does, it thinks of the effect in Hsiyang County, in Shansi Province and all China. It pays close attention to the new achievements of the county, province and nation in the movement to learn from Tachai in agriculture, and takes them as a spur to itself to forge still further ahead. In other words, work over the whole area is promoted by experience at a key point, and the key point itself is stimulated to greater efforts by the achievements of the area.

To learn from the nation, to lead the county, to be spurred on by the county – these three inter-reacting links have produced more and more changes in Tachai since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and especially since the campaign to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius.

Today, what makes the deepest impression on the visitors to Hsiyang County is not just the one Tachai, but the great many "Tachais." Since the Cultural Revolution, guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and with the Tachai Brigade taking the lead, "red Tachai flowers" have bloomed everywhere. Hsiyang has become the nation's first "Tachai-type county."

Shortly before the founding of the People's Republic of China, our great leader Chairman Mao predicted, "**We are not only good at destroying the old world, we are also good at building the new.**" The Tachai peasants are precisely such heroes, good in building the new world. Through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the campaign to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, and study of the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, they have been striding forward, ever more militantly, along the broad socialist road.

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外文出版社出版(北京)
1977年(32开)第一版
编号: (英)17050-105

00095
17-E-1395P