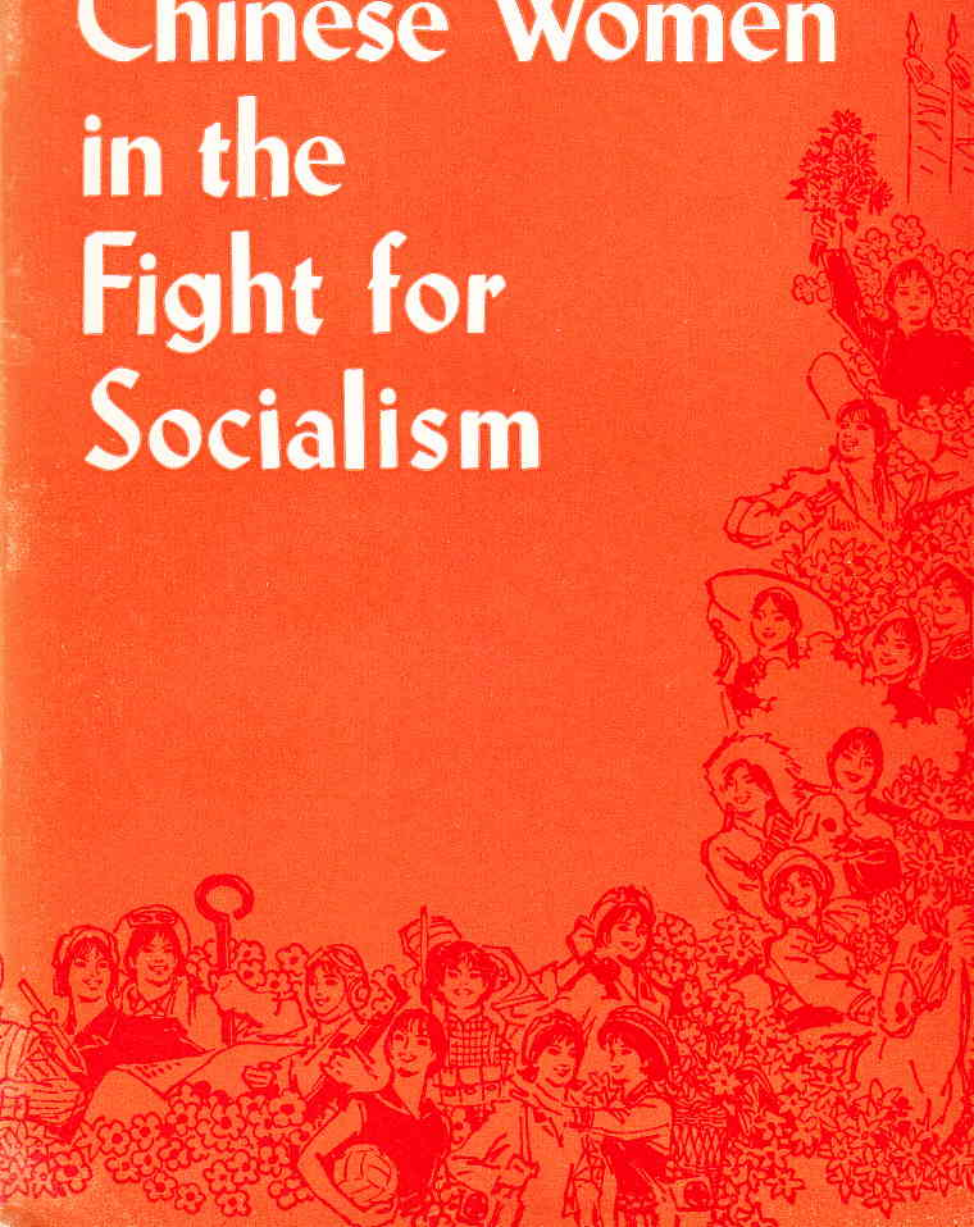


Chinese Women in the Fight for Socialism



**Chinese Women
in the Fight
for Socialism**

Compiled by Chi Pen

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS PEKING

Editor's Note

For centuries in China, whether in the feudal or semi-colonial, semi-feudal society, women were kept subservient and dependent, required by the old ethics to be delicate and submissive, resigned to their "fate." The situation is entirely different now. China's women were emancipated with the victory of the Chinese revolution and have since been working alongside the men, contributing their newly released, inexhaustible energy to the country's socialist revolution and construction. Militant and daring in thought and action, this half of the population is freed from the shackles of the old society.

The change in Chinese women's status is tremendous. How did it come about? How did Chinese women fight for their liberation? What was their experience in this struggle? What is their situation in the socialist new era in respect to work and daily life? What is the source of their strength? How do they view their country, and their own past, present and future? To answer these and similar questions we have compiled this collection of articles, some of which have already appeared in the monthly magazines *China Reconstructs* and *People's China*, the latter in Japanese.

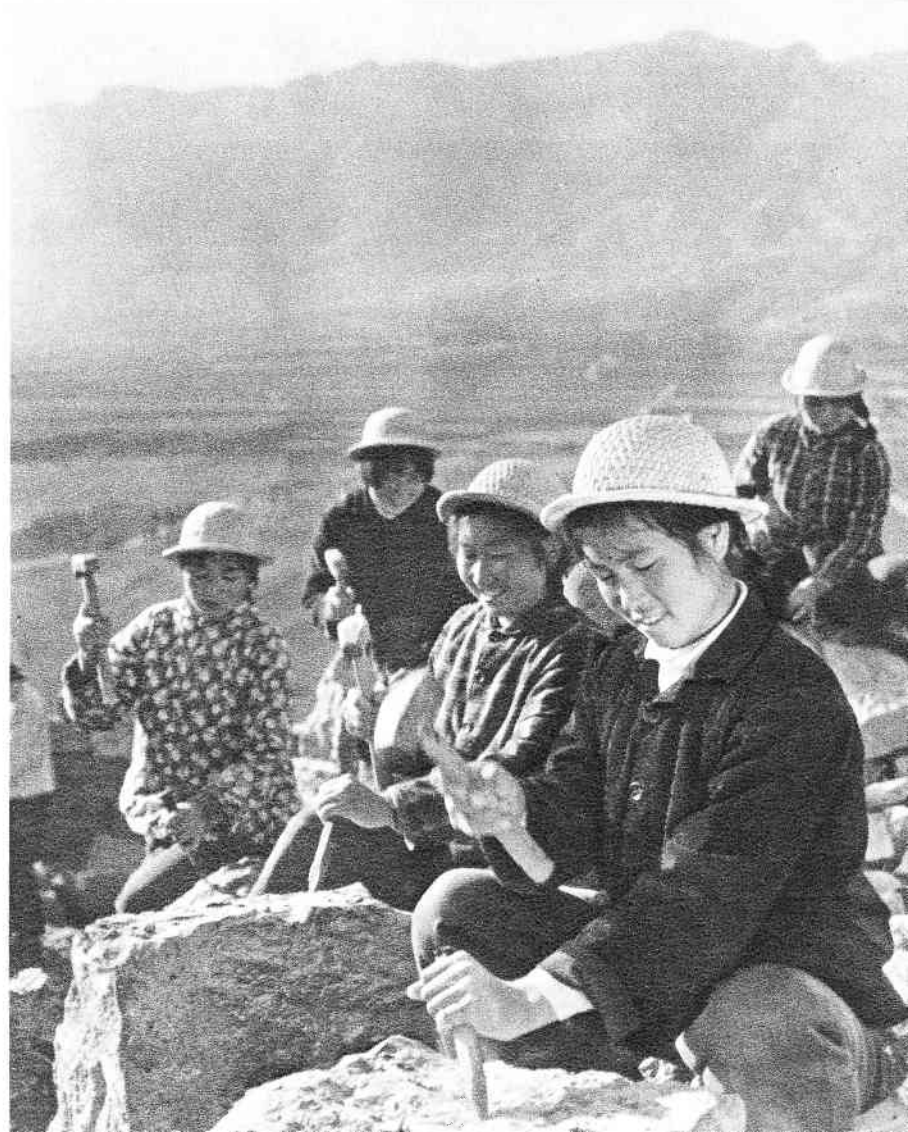


Wu Kuei-hsien (centre), who was a worker of the Northwest No. 1 State Cotton Mill, is now a Vice-Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China.



Formerly a clerk in a Shenyang city food market, Li Su-wen (*left*) serves as a Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Fourth National People's Congress.

Women working as masons on the Red Flag Canal project in Linhsien County, Honan Province,





Pan Mei-ying (of Yao nationality), Party branch secretary of the Huangshih Production Brigade in Hohsien County, Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region, on her way home after work.

Rinto, a "barefoot doctor" of Tibetan nationality in Chinghai Province, checks a child's health in a herdsman's tent.





A spirited and daring woman flier.

Wu Wen-chu (*front*), an aviation school navigating instructor, and the trainees sum up experience after flying practice.





The women's performing team of the Taching Oilfield.



The families of the Taching Oilfield workers and staff members are active in agricultural production.

Li Feng-lan, a peasant woman painter of Huhsien County, Shensi Province, doing a new picture.



Women of Hainan Island's "March 8" Fishing Trawler militia unit patrol the coast.



Militia women on the South China Sea.



Phanthog (*front*), a Tibetan woman mountaineer, and her comrades make the final assault on the Qomolangma Feng (Mount Jolmo Lungma) summit.



Back to Base Camp after the climb, Phanthog (*third right*) is warmly congratulated by the comrades.



Hsia Chu-hua, deputy secretary of the Wuhan Acrobatic Troupe Party committee, performs for the peasants.

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Women's Liberation Is an Integral Part of the Entire Revolutionary Movement

*Hsu Kuang**

Women around the world have fought long and hard to free themselves from discrimination and oppression so as to play a full role in social life and human progress. Experience has taught Chinese women that the system of exploitation is the root-cause of this discrimination and oppression, that they can win genuine liberation only by first struggling for national independence, class liberation and socialism.

Early Women's Movement

In the old China, working women were subjected to heavier oppression and exploitation than any other section of society. Ground down by imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, they were dominated by political, clan, religious and male authority. They had no political position in society and were discriminated against in the

* The author is a vice-chairman of the Peking Municipal Women's Association.

family. The old, feudal ethic that "men are superior and women inferior" made them slaves deprived of independent personalities.

Chinese working women therefore always had strong revolutionary demands. During the May 4th Movement against imperialism and feudalism in 1919, many progressive women raised the issues of equality with men, women's rights and liberation without being very clear about the relationship between women's liberation and national and class liberation or the cause of the oppression. Some believed that their inequality was due to oppression by men and that they should struggle against the men. Others put the blame on their lack of education and thought they should strive for women's education. However, as long as women's rights and status were seen purely as women's problems, not much was gained. Historical experience taught the Chinese women that these were in reality bourgeois ideas of women's rights.

Revolutionary Women's Movement

The women's movement in China moved onto the correct road when it came under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao Tsetung.

After the Party was founded in 1921, women's work was taken up by Party cadres and also by women Party members and non-Party progressive women in factories, offices, schools and other organizations. The first step was political education to awaken the masses of women. When factory workers launched a struggle for higher pay and other rights, women were urged to join the men in the fight. The special demands of women were included in the struggle.

In Shanghai, for instance, women fought against body-searching at factory gates and other humiliating and discriminatory practices.

Economic struggles often developed into political struggles waged jointly by men and women against imperialist aggression, the Kuomintang reactionary rule and the capitalist class exploitation. Fighting helped women see that their oppression came mainly from imperialism and the domestic exploiting classes and that their rights and liberation could come only in struggling against these.

Chairman Mao pointed out that **"when women all over the country rise up, that will be the day of victory for the Chinese revolution."** The history of the Chinese revolution shows this to be correct. In the first and second revolutionary civil wars of 1924-27 and 1927-37, the anti-Japanese war of 1937-45, and the liberation war of 1945-49, the large numbers of women who joined the struggle for national and class liberation were one of the forces deciding the outcome. With millions of women fighting shoulder to shoulder with the men, the Chinese people finally overthrew the reactionary rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, and both men and women became masters of the land.

Two Views of Women's Liberation

During the revolutionary wars I was in the countryside of southern Hopei Province mobilizing the women to participate in the revolutionary struggles. There were two views among us as to how to go about it.

The feudal ethic of male supremacy was strong in the rural areas and women were under the strict control of

the men. Even during the war against Japanese aggression, many husbands would not let their wives work outside the home. Some of us thought that to win liberation for women we had either to struggle against the "bull-headed" husbands and the families, or else support the women in getting a divorce.

But experience taught us differently. The common enemy of both the men and the women was Japanese imperialism. Struggling against the husbands would create antagonism between men and women within the revolutionary ranks and this would hurt our fight for national liberation. Instead of winning sympathy for women, it would put greater obstacles in the way of their liberation. When a nation is conquered by foreign aggressors, its men and women both become slaves and women's liberation is entirely out of the question.

After revolutionary political power was established in the liberated areas, there were also two different views on the question of winning welfare for women. One held that women's organizations should concentrate on problems directly concerning women. In 1947 in the liberated rural areas, with land reform about to uproot the feudal land system, some comrades held that the peasants' associations should deal with land reform while the women's associations should work only on women's welfare.

The other view was that women's associations should of course work on problems directly related to women — if they didn't they would become alienated from the masses. But the more important task, which was also the central task of the revolution, was to overthrow the feudal landlord class which oppressed all working people. If the landlords were not overthrown, women would continue to be exploited and oppressed. Moreover, even the basic neces-

sities of life could not be guaranteed for everyone. Women's welfare would for the moment be an academic question. Many discussions helped us to see that the second view was correct.

Facts have proved that equality between men and women can be achieved only when women steadily raise their political consciousness, take part in revolutionary struggles and make contributions to them, and by their example educate society and hammer away at feudal attitudes, customs and habits that put women in an inferior position. Women's welfare likewise can be won gradually only after revolutionary political power is established, the position of the entire country's working people raised, production increased and life improved. After China's liberation, laws and measures provided working women with special labour protection and conditions which lightened housework.

Holding Up Half the Sky

The socialist system eradicated the social and class roots of the Chinese working women's oppression and exploitation. A basic change occurred in their position. Enjoying the right to work in every field, they eagerly "hold up half the sky." This expression, often heard in the new China, indicates the great force of women alongside the men in socialist revolution and construction.

There has been a great influx of women into the ranks of the working class. Many are skilled workers or technicians in jobs formerly considered unsuitable for women. They design new engineering projects, do geological pros-

pecting in the mountains, work on live high-tension lines scores of metres high; drive locomotives and pilot planes. Twenty-one per cent of the staff and workers of the Taching Oilfield, the biggest in China, are women — extraction workers, drillers, geological engineers and technicians. They have contributed much to opening up China's oil reserves.

In the people's communes, women, including school graduates who have settled down there, work together with the men to transform mountains, harness rivers and farm scientifically in an effort to raise agricultural yields. In the nine years since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began, the people of Hsiyang County in Shansi Province have completed 620 water-control projects, improved 30,000 hectares of land and tripled their grain production. This took 46 million workdays. Thirty per cent of the work for basic improvement of farmland was done by women, who do an equal share of all work in the fields.

In the cities, the majority of housewives have stepped out of their homes to work in small factories or production groups usually set up by themselves and run in the spirit of self-reliance and hard work. They add to the material wealth of the country and in the process gain a greater measure of equal rights and position socially, economically, culturally and in family life.

Women are also active in education, science, health and medicine, literature, art and sports. They account for a large number of the country's growing contingent of "bare-foot doctors" in the rural areas, giving a big boost to medical and health services there.

Working women of every nationality in China have joined the militia to help consolidate the dictatorship of the pro-

letariat and defend the socialist motherland. Times have changed: whatever men can do, women can also do.

Running the Country

Since liberation, and especially since the Cultural Revolution began, the Party and government have made special efforts to train and promote women leaders. More and more women have been admitted into the Communist Party and the Communist Youth League. Increasing numbers of outstanding women from worker or peasant families are taking their place in leading posts at all levels, some becoming Party or government leaders.

In the Cultural Revolution, Wu Kuei-hsien, a textile worker, showed outstanding political and organizational ability in uniting and leading the masses in the struggle against the counter-revolutionary revisionist line. She is now an alternate member of the Party Political Bureau and a Vice-Premier of the State Council. Li Su-wen, a clerk in a food market in Shenyang and a national model worker, is a member of the Party Central Committee and a Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC).

Many women were active organizers of China's first agricultural and stock-raising co-operatives and later the people's communes. They are pace-setters keeping the Chinese countryside on the socialist road. Lu Yu-lan, thirty-three, is a member of the Party Central Committee, a member of the NPC Standing Committee and a deputy secretary of the Hopei provincial Party committee. Paojihletai of Inner Mongolia is a member of the Party Central Committee and a member of the NPC Standing Committee. Lu Tsun-chieh

of the Tu nationality in Chinghai Province is an alternate member of the Party Central Committee and a production team leader. Pan Mei-ying of the Yao nationality in the Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region is an alternate member of the Party Central Committee. Pasang, a former serf, is now a member of the Party Central Committee, a member of the NPC Standing Committee and a vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

These women leaders have always kept in close touch with the people and served them conscientiously. The emergence of tens of thousands of women cadres of different nationalities is an important indication that women are winning liberation in China.

Breaking Down Male Supremacy

The Chinese experience has proved that each step forward in the proletarian revolution means another step forward for the women's liberation movement.

The Cultural Revolution in the past decade and the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius have brought the women's liberation movement to a new stage. Women of all nationalities have repudiated the counter-revolutionary revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao and criticized the idea of male supremacy advocated by Confucius and Lin Piao, which shackled women's minds for thousands of years. Women now see more clearly their own strength, the role they should play and what their country and people expect of them.

In trying to break down male supremacy, women lash out at such Confucian ideas as "women and slaves are

hard to manage," the "three cardinal guides and five constant virtues" and the "three obediences and four virtues."* They hit hard at the counter-revolutionary idea that "women are backward" and "women should devote themselves to their husbands," spread by Lin Piao and his followers. Criticism has raised the women's political consciousness and freed them from an inferiority complex. This has caused profound changes in their outlook and enabled them to make new contributions in their work.

There are fourteen women workers at the No. 2 Motor Vehicle Reconstruction Plant in Peking who were housewives before they came to the plant in 1958. Freeing themselves from such ideas as "women are backward," they improved the designs of dies for casting heavy steel parts for buses, which raised work efficiency four hundred fold.

At the Muchiyayu Commune, Miyun, one of Peking's suburban counties, criticism of the thinking that women were useless led to a better application of the policy of

* The "three cardinal guides" meant the sovereign guided the subject, the father guided the son, the husband guided the wife. That is to say, the sovereign, father and husband had absolute authority, while the subject, son and wife could only obey.

The "five constant virtues" referred to the so-called immutable principles of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, knowledge, and sincerity. They were the reactionary ethics the Confucians used to support the "three cardinal guides" and regulate society.

The "three obediences" meant obedience to the father when young, obedience to the husband when married, and obedience to the sons when widowed. Women were thus placed under the rule of men from the cradle to the grave.

The "four virtues" were women's virtue, speech, appearance and work. Specifically, women's virtue meant that a woman must know her place and act in complete compliance with the feudal ethical code. Women's speech meant that a woman must not talk too much. Women's appearance meant that a woman must adorn herself according to the feudal ethical code. Women's work meant that a woman must do all the household work well, and willingly serve her husband and parents-in-law.

equal pay for equal work. Work attendance among women rose from 70 to over 90 per cent. Working together, the men and women achieved in 1974 an increase of 14.5 per cent over 1973 in the commune's per-hectare yield of grain.

As the criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius deepens, it batters at all kinds of customs and habits left from the old society. In its wake, new socialist mores and new relationships between men and women are developing.

In the countryside, women came out to work in the fields but continued to do the housework at home. Then commune members joined in criticizing the Confucian idea that "men should take care of external affairs and women internal affairs" and realized that it was designed to enslave women. It is now considered the thing to do for husbands to share in the housework. Many young women have rejected the old custom of accepting engagement gifts, recognizing the practice as a disguised form of the feudal marriage by purchase.

In the city the reactionary idea that "those who study well will become officials" has come under fire because it widens the gap between mental and physical labour and between town and country. Mothers now encourage their children to go to the countryside, integrate with the peasants and work to reduce these differences.

Women's Liberation and the Struggle Against Colonialism, Imperialism and Hegemonism

Chinese women link their own work with support for the revolutionary struggles of the people of the world. They firmly support the struggle of women of other countries

against discrimination and for equal rights in political, economic, cultural, social and family life.

More and more women in various countries are joining the fight against imperialism and hegemony and for women's rights and liberation. Women of the Third World, in particular, are winning new successes in their persistent fight to win and defend national independence, safeguard national sovereignty, and develop national economies and cultures.

But the aggression and rule of imperialism and colonialism prolong the suffering of both men and women in many countries. In the Middle East, Israeli Zionism, backed by the two superpowers, has repeatedly unleashed aggressive wars against the Palestinian and other Arab peoples, driving them from their land and persecuting them. In South Africa racism deprives the Black people of even minimum human rights and freedom. The competition of the two superpowers in their attempts to dominate the world is stepping up the arms race as each feverishly develops nuclear weapons and engages in aggression, subversion, control and intervention everywhere. This threat to the peace and security of the people of the world is a vivid reminder that to win their rights and genuine emancipation women must join the fight against colonialism, imperialism and hegemonism.

Women Win Liberation Through Revolutionary Struggle

Sung Hsin-ju*

During the First Session of the Fourth National People's Congress in January 1975, we deputies held group discussions of the draft Constitution. When we came to the provision: "Women enjoy equal rights with men in all respects," I could not help thinking back on the struggle for national and class liberation and the socialist revolution I had taken part in in the past years.

"To us working women the old society and the new are two completely different worlds," I said. "In the old society we had neither position nor our own identity. I never saw my name written on any paper anywhere. I always belonged to my husband's family and was known as 'the Sung woman of the Liu family.' Today, my name, Sung Hsin-ju, appears on the list of the Congress deputies and I sit with more than two thousand men and women deputies discussing state affairs in China's highest organ of state power. Our rights are not bestowed upon us by others.

* The author is a deputy to the Fourth National People's Congress, a member of the Standing Committee of the Hopei Provincial Women's Association and Party branch secretary of the Changan Production Brigade in Jaoyang County, Hopei Province.

We women have had to fight for them and win them under the guidance of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao."

Awakening

I was born in a poor family that had worked as hired hands for landlords for several generations. In 1931, when I was sixteen, I married Liu Wang of Changan Village, Jaoyang County in Hopei Province. The Liu family was so poor that there was only a worn-out mat and some old cotton on the bed. I also married into a debt, for the Lius owed a landlord two hundred yuan. My husband was a hired hand and I wove cloth, but even though we worked our fingers nearly to the bone we weren't able to pay the debt with its mounting interest. The head of the Liu clan had money and power and bullied the poor members. When the reactionary government demanded grain or taxes, he always made us give a big share.

The old society was a living hell for the poor, and we women were at the very bottom of it. The feudal ethic of "three obediences and four virtues"* bound us like a heavy rope. Once I just stuck my head out of the door to look into the street and immediately people pointed their fingers at me and said I lacked "virtue." The men could scold and beat us whenever they felt like it and all we could do was bear it. At meals a daughter-in-law could not sit at the table with the rest of the family but had to stand by the door filling the rice bowls of her parents-in-law and husband, while she had only scraps or leftovers for herself.

* See footnote on p. 9.

The landlord constantly hounded us to pay our debt and there was nothing for me to do but hire myself out for odd jobs during the busy farming season. This gave me some contact with the outside world, and that was how I came to know about revolution earlier than many other women in our village.

In 1938, a year after the Japanese imperialists launched a full-scale invasion of China, the Eighth Route Army, which was led by the Chinese Communist Party, came to our county. An army work team in our village helped to organize a peasants' association.

During the wheat harvest that year I worked on the landlord's threshing ground turning over the grain. Even though I was soaked with sweat, the landlord accused me of being too slow and wouldn't pay me my full wage. I argued loudly with him. A hired hand named Liu Sheng-tsai who watched the quarrel sought me out later. He was impressed that I had dared to defy the landlord.

"Both you and your husband work year in and year out," he said, "but you're still deep in debt. Have you ever thought of shaking it all off and setting yourselves free?"

"Of course! But how can we?" I asked.

"There is the Communist Party. As long as we poor people aren't afraid to die, we can get together and fight to set ourselves free."

"Well, I'm not afraid to die. When do we start fighting and what is this Communist Party?"

He told me that the Communist Party was a party that led the poor people in fighting for liberation from oppression and exploitation. I learned then that he and two other farm labourers had already joined the Party, then still an underground organization. I said I also wanted to be a member of such a party. After that, Party comrades came

and talked with me and helped me to see that we were making revolution not just to liberate ourselves as individuals but to wipe out the exploiting classes and liberate all mankind. It was a lifetime struggle, but the first task at that time was to win the war against Japanese aggression. In 1938, two of us women hired hands, Hsu Yu-chieh and I, were admitted into the Party. I pledged to devote myself to the interest of the Party and give my life if necessary.

Unity and Liberation

My first assignment was to talk with the villagers and help them to understand why we had to fight the Japanese aggressors and how this fight was linked with liberating the poor people from exploitation. This was to prepare the people for the establishment of an anti-Japanese political regime.

Almost every night I had some excuse to go out, and I dropped in at neighbours' homes. People began to gossip. They said Liu Wang was henpecked, that somebody ought to take that wife of his in hand and give her a good talking-to. It was no way for a wife to behave, they said, flitting around so. My father-in-law was so angry that he wanted his son to renounce me. My husband got suspicious. But I knew they hated the Japanese invaders and the landlords as much as I did, so I explained to them what I was doing and helped them to raise their class consciousness. Later my husband was also admitted into the Party.

Led by the Party, the peasants' association aroused the masses and established an anti-Japanese democratic

government in the village. Liu Sheng-tsai was elected village head. Now that we had a revolutionary government and we poor peasants had strong backing, we women also felt stronger. As part of mobilizing the people to fight Japanese aggression, the Eighth Route Army work team also raised the slogan of equality between men and women.

Once an anti-Japanese propaganda team came to our village and put on performances decrying the fall of the three northeastern provinces to the Japanese. They showed how the invaders killed, burned and raped, making millions homeless. The villagers wept and pledged never to let themselves be enslaved.

We said to the women that the men had their peasants' association and that we women should also organize to fight the Japanese invaders. Families and public opinion were strongly against women doing this, but many young women were won over and signed up for the anti-Japanese women's association. Some old people grumbled: "When girls get to be twelve or thirteen, they should be tied to their mothers' apron strings and not be allowed to run around. That's how it's been since ancient times. Dates don't grow on willow trees, and nothing good will come from this mixing of men and women." But with the village government's support we were not to be thwarted by such feudal thinking.

We got the young women to come to a literacy class where we explained the relationship between resisting Japanese aggression and achieving equality for women. We suggested that they continue doing the housework as usual and not quarrel with their mothers-in-law. We should also work for good relationships with our fathers-in-law and husbands, we said. Only when all men and

women had the same goal of fighting the Japanese could we defeat them. If imperialism was not driven out, all of us would become slaves and there would be no equality of any kind.

Our women's association held separate forums for mothers-in-law and men, and showed them that if our country was conquered we would all be homeless, so everyone had the responsibility to fight Japanese aggression. Many older women joined our association. I was elected its chairman.

Work and Equality

We first saw equality between men and women as meaning that both had the same right to fight Japanese invasion and save our country. We felt we shouldn't just rely on the Communist Party for support but should do something useful to show our equality with the men. We worked very hard digging trenches and making shoes and socks for the army. The women also formed a self-defence unit like the one the men had. It was led by twenty-two-year-old Ho Chun-ching who had joined the Communist Party in 1932 while still in primary school. In 1938 she married a man in our village and became deputy secretary of our village Party branch. She was slight of build but very brave. She went around with a pistol in her belt, drilling the women in shooting and other exercises. All the members of the self-defence unit bobbed their hair. Like the men, they tied white towels around their heads, wore white tunics with buttons down the middle, belts and ochre-coloured trousers. They looked

quite impressive. Dressing like the men was one way of showing their desire to be equal with them. It didn't mean we had already achieved equality.

In 1940 the Japanese occupied our county town. To harass them our self-defence units made frequent surprise attacks on their strongholds and destroyed their transport line. Once we were assigned to destroy a railway about fifty kilometres from our village. Ho Chun-ching and twenty members of the women's unit covered the distance at a run at night, keeping right up with the men. While the men lifted the rails the women took out the sleepers. Enemy bullets whining over their heads didn't scare the women and they stuck to the job until it was done.

Every time our women's self-defence unit attended a review at the Eighth Route Army military district headquarters, it came back with a red citation flag. People who looked down upon women began to change their views.

When the men left for the front, the women took up all the chores, both inside and outside the home. We fetched water by carrying-pole, worked the land and fed the livestock. We gained in prestige and whittled away at feudal ideas by our example. People usually chose their leaders from among those who fought most actively against the enemy. In 1942 Ho Chun-ching was elected as our village head and chairman of the armed forces committee. Hsu Yu-chieh and I were both members of our local Party branch committee. She was in charge of production and the work to support the front. I was responsible for women's work. More than half of the leaders in the village were women.

The Test

In 1942 the Japanese imperialists began a savage "mopping-up" campaign on the north China plain. Adopting a policy of "killing all, burning all and looting all" they vainly attempted to wipe out the anti-Japanese forces of the revolutionary base on the central Hopei plain. Towards the end of March they swooped down on Changan Village, sacked and burned for three days and then set up a puppet local government known as the "Preservation Association." Alerted beforehand, we had buried our grain and gone into hiding.

On the third night Ho Chun-ching and I slipped back into the village. We smeared soot over the reactionary slogans and wrote anti-Japanese slogans over them. We smashed the signboard hung outside the "Preservation Association," then went to the home of its head. Since I was the taller, I raised Ho Chun-ching on my shoulders and she climbed over the wall, unbolted the gate and let me in. With pistols ready we burst in on the traitor and, at gun point, walked him to a graveyard and gave him a political lesson.

"Listen," said Ho pointing her pistol at him, "if you refuse to mend your ways and go on serving the enemy, you're going to get a taste of our bullets." The man trembled like a leaf.

The enemy had built forts in three nearby villages and often came out for "mopping-up" campaigns. At the risk of their lives the women of our village patrolled the area and gave cover to Party cadres and guerrilla fighters passing through. When the enemy came searching for Eighth Route Army men, the young women would protect them by claiming they were their husbands. Sometimes

we disguised ourselves and went behind enemy lines to pick up information, or ran the enemy blockade to take messages to the guerrillas. We ploughed, planted, harvested, and sent the grain to the guerrillas.

Once the Japanese discovered a tunnel entrance in Hsu Yu-chieh's home. They grabbed her pigs, grain and clothing and set fire to her house. She never wavered for a minute. A little later her husband, a guerrilla squad leader, was killed in action. She swallowed her tears, buried her husband and worked harder to raise crops and protect them from falling into enemy hands.

During those two years of intense "mopping-ups," my husband was away fighting in the guerrilla unit. Since I had worked in the anti-Japanese government I was a marked person and could not show myself in the village during the day. Carrying my year-old daughter and leading my five-year-old son, I went back and forth between the village and the enemy-held county town in all kinds of weather to watch enemy movements and report them. Then my father-in-law and my husband both died of illness, leaving me alone at twenty-nine with the two children. I was more determined than ever to wipe out the enemy. Once the Japanese seized me and tried to make me talk. They fired bullets over my head and thrust bayonets at me but couldn't get anything out of me.

In those days we had only one thought and that was to drive out the imperialists so the entire Chinese people could seek a good life — only then could we women win liberation.

Chairman Mao pointed out in 1939: **"Without the awakening of the women who comprise half the Chinese population, China's War of Resistance will not be victorious."** We women of Changan Village played a major

role in the struggle in the enemy's rear during the war. In time only five members were left in the village Party branch; four were women. We carried on the fight.

Growing Up in Struggle

After the victorious conclusion of the anti-Japanese war, the Kuomintang reactionaries started another civil war backed by the U.S. imperialists to usurp the fruits of victory. Our task was to lead the poor peasants in land reform, overthrow the feudal landlord class, establish a stable revolutionary base, support the liberation war and wipe out the Kuomintang reactionaries in our area. We now had more than eighty members in the women's militia unit — half of the village armed forces. Some hundred older women, tempered in the anti-Japanese war, formed the backbone force in land reform and the work to support the front.

There was a landlord despot in our village, and it was we women who went to his house, searched it and found money, grain and other extorted treasure hidden under the roof and buried in the ground. We also found money and jewellery on his wife. The angry masses dragged him into the street and held an accusation meeting on the spot. Many old women stood up and poured out their grievances. Each had an account to settle with the landlord, who stood with his head bowed.

When land was distributed to the poor peasants, the names of women also appeared on the certificates. It was the beginning of economic equality for women.

With most of the men fighting at the front, women took over the work of supporting it, educating the captives and keeping production going.

The Struggle Continues

After the founding of the new China I was elected secretary of the village Party branch and Ho Chun-ching became chairman of the women's association. She unstrapped her pistol and learned how to deliver babies in the modern way. She worked very hard to increase benefits for women. The new Marriage Law was a great step towards liberating the women.

After land reform, the women in our village again took the lead in the movement for agricultural co-operation. Hsu Yu-chieh and I and two women whose husbands worked in other places formed a mutual-aid team. We got a much higher per-hectare yield from the land we helped each other cultivate than was got from fields worked by individual families. In 1951 our team was the first to become a semi-socialist agricultural producers' co-operative, with seventeen poor-peasant families joining us. We got 70 per cent more grain per hectare than the individually farmed land. By 1954 ours became a socialist advanced co-op with 160 families.

Before the harnessing of the Haiho River our land was often flooded. Many of the men had gone away and become workers in various cities. Following the Party's instruction we organized the people in collective production of many kinds. The old people worked in groups to make mats, weave cloth or engage in other sidelines. I went with the young women to build dykes and fill in lowland for growing rice. All this brought in more income and strengthened our collective economy. In 1957 I attended the National Conference of Agricultural Model Workers and spoke on how we overcame the difficulties caused by floods with collective effort. In 1958 the co-

ops in four villages in our area formed a people's commune of which I was elected vice-chairman.

In the early 1960s we resisted Liu Shao-chi's counter-revolutionary revisionist line, which pushed for a return to individual farming and the disruption of the collective economy. We stuck to the socialist collective road.

My son was now a cadre in a city in Hupeh Province. When I visited him in 1964 he wanted me to stay with his family so they could look after me. I was very happy to visit my son, daughter-in-law and grandson, but I told them I had my own work to do. "Everyone should do his part for the revolution. I can't leave my commune members." I also persuaded the parents to let me take my grandson back to the countryside with me so that he could get used to plain living and physical labour.

Then came the Cultural Revolution, which smashed the schemes first of Liu Shao-chi and then of Lin Piao to restore capitalism. This revolution deepened our understanding of the struggle between the bourgeois and the proletarian lines, and we were more determined than ever to advance along Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. In 1969 I was elected deputy secretary of the commune Party committee and chairman of the revolutionary committee of my production brigade. Later I was appointed a member of the Jaoyang County Party committee. In the last few years our brigade has sunk eighty wells and built a system of irrigation canals and ditches. We have bought tractors, diesel engines and other machines for much of our farm work. We have also introduced an intensive garden-style cultivation of our fields.

After criticizing Confucius' and Lin Piao's idea of men being superior to women, we were finally able to put into practice the policy of equal pay for equal work. The

women became more eager to come out and work in the fields. Our brigade's per-hectare yield of grain rose from 3.75 tons before the Cultural Revolution to nine tons today.

The road of the revolution is a long one. The young people are the hope of the future. We who are at the helm now must think of those who will take over one day. Our Party branch has appointed a young man and a young woman in their twenties as deputy secretaries. The girl is a school graduate from the city of Tientsin.

I said at a group meeting during the Fourth National People's Congress: "I will not retire even though I am past sixty. I won't consider myself old even at eighty. I will keep up the death-defying spirit I developed during the war years and continue to fight for the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, for socialism, and for the liberation of women all over the world."

Women at the Taching Oilfield

Hsin Hua

Women play an active role as leaders at all levels and in various kinds of work at the Taching Oilfield — China's oil industrial base.

Taching is the celebrated pace-setter for China's industry, the development of which has changed China from an oil-deficient to an oil-sufficient country. From the day Taching was opened up women worked alongside the men on the grassland. Today, throughout the vast field, one meets women cadres, drillers, extractors, pipe fitters, truck and tractor drivers, engineers, doctors, teachers and shop assistants, among others.

More than 21 per cent of the oilfield's workers and staff members are women.

There is an oil extraction team composed of 119 women whose average age is twenty-one. They display high revolutionary responsibility in keeping dozens of oil- and water-wells running smoothly. Since the team was organized in 1970, they have overfulfilled their part of the country's crude oil production plan every year. The team's total output of crude oil in the years from 1970 to 1975 was four times what pre-liberation China produced in the forty-two years from the start of its oil industry in 1907.

This women's extraction team was commended as a model in 1971.

There is a pipe-fitting group of twenty women who set a record in 1974 by welding 2.5 km. of pipe-line and erecting two oil-well installations in one shift (eight persons working eight hours and using one electric welder). Their record has yet to be broken, even by men's counterpart groups.

A women truck-drivers' team has forty-six members whose average age is less than twenty-two. Only eight months after the formation of the team, the young women could drive on their own the four-ton tank-cars, or lorries with eight-ton trailers. They not only do basic maintenance but make repairs as well. This team has a record of 460,000 km. of safe driving and is an outstanding transport collective at Taching.

The twenty-six-year-old Li Hai-feng is a member of the standing committee of the oilfield Party committee and secretary of the Taching Communist Youth League. She heads sixty-some young cadres in leadership work for tens of thousands of League members in over two thousand branches. Graduating from junior middle school in 1968, and with the help of the Party and veteran workers, she made rapid progress and was soon admitted into the Communist Party. An extractor, she became a deputy political instructor of the extraction team, and from 1971 has been working in the oilfield Party committee. She has travelled to some provinces and municipalities to tell about her experience and attended many important meetings. Commenting on her, people say: "She's energetic, full of drive and often goes among the masses to discover problems in work and to solve them."

Li Hai-feng herself says: "We young women of Taching have high revolutionary ideals and a long-range aim in life. That aim is to learn from the revolutionary spirit of the old Taching workers, be good revolutionary successors, and build Taching into a flourishing oilfield in order to contribute towards developing our oil industry." At Taching, women cadres like Li Hai-feng make up over 30 per cent of the leading personnel at all levels, a higher percentage than that of the women workers and staff members.

There are many women intellectuals at the oilfield who, educated and helped by the Party organization and workers, have made encouraging political and vocational progress. Take Shen Lien-ti, a woman engineer, for instance. Joining the Taching Oilfield builders soon after graduating from the Peking Petroleum Institute in 1960, she has firmly kept in mind Chairman Mao's teaching about the need for intellectuals to integrate closely with the worker-peasant masses, and has completed many experiments and research assignments together with the workers and technicians. In 1962 Shen Lien-ti and six others tried out the first chart for determining oil saturation at Taching, which presented a scientific parameter for accurately calculating oil deposits. In 1964 she and other comrades plunged boldly into innovation and invented a mini-flow meter for testing water sample resistivity. Then, from 1971, she and her colleagues worked together for two years and successfully tried out a new geophysical well-logging method for determining the water-swept zones of the oilfields.

The Party organization and the masses thought highly of Shen Lien-ti, and in 1962 she was gloriously admitted into the Communist Party. She was made an engineer in

1964. Selected as a pace-setter many times, in 1973 she was cited as a model worker of Heilungkiang Province. At present she is the deputy head of the Taching Oilfield Extraction Research Institute Revolutionary Committee.

Women make up a third to a half of the technicians in some of Taching's research offices. In Taching's first fifteen years more than twenty thousand technical innovation items have been put into operation, which have kept production at full capacity and considerably increased the average daily well output. Women workers and technicians have made outstanding contributions in the technical innovation movement.

In China, and especially at Taching, housewives do not necessarily do the housework, nor are they inferior to their husbands. The housewives at Taching, for instance, take their place beside the menfolk, doing such productive work as farming, side-occupations and house-building for Taching's workers and peasants. They have done much towards building Taching into a new-type production base where industry and agriculture, town and country, are combined. Their representative is Hsueh Kuei-fang, head of the Taching Women's Association.

Hsueh Kuei-fang, now in her sixties, led four other housewives in Taching's early days to open up the first farmland in the wilderness there with five spades. They cultivated two hectares in the first year, getting 1.7 tons of grain, and set a good example for organizing the housewives for collective farming and sideline production. From then on the phrase "making revolution with five spades" caught on at Taching, inspiring housewives to make their contribution for our socialist motherland.

Engels pointed out: **"The emancipation of women becomes possible only when women are enabled to take**

part in production on a large, social scale, and when domestic duties require their attention only to a minor degree." The women of Taching have realized this. There is practically no housewife at Taching today who is not productively employed, except for the old, weak, ill or disabled.

"Builders' Village," set up by the women headed by Hsueh Kuei-fang, shows how the Taching housewives go in for farming, sideline production and organizing daily life. This agro-industrial village is at the centre of five neighbouring units where six hundred families, or 2,700 people, live. Besides the oil workers, there are over nine hundred family members, mostly women, who engage in agriculture, subsidiary production and other work of the village. According to the needs of production and daily life, "Builders' Village" is divided into nine production and other specialized teams. In addition to offices and schools, there are more than twenty production and service organizations in this village, among them a department store, grain shop, beancurd and soyasauce processing shops, a clinic (with beds for in-patient care in the hub village and barefoot doctors in all the adjacent units), a kindergarten, post office and savings bank. All leading and administrative work is in the main done by the housewives themselves. In 1974 this agro-industrial village produced 335 tons of grain, over 800 tons of vegetables and quantities of meat, eggs and fruit.

There are forty-one agro-industrial areas like "Builders' Village" at Taching. They are a new type of workers' residential area. Tens of thousands of housewives take part in farming and sideline production in these agro-industrial villages. In a decade or more they have produced 260,000 tons of grain, 350,000 tons of vegetables and over

3,500 tons of meat. Thousands of family members have not needed any grain from the state.

Li Chang-jung, one of the responsible members in "Builders' Village," said: "Before joining in productive labour we thought only of our husbands and children, saw only our own four walls. Afterwards we broadened our view and felt that with our two hands we should not be consumers only and place a burden on the state. We should also create wealth for our country and do our best in socialist construction.

There are more than 1,500 leading cadres at all levels among the family members, eight of whom are on the Taching Party committee and the revolutionary committee. Over 2,400 family members have joined the Communist Party in the ten-odd years. They are pitching into the construction of this new-type production base at the Taching Oilfield with redoubled enthusiasm and effort.

Heroic Women Builders of the Red Flag Canal Today

Hsin Yu

From 1960 to 1969, the people of Linhsien County in Honan Province, central China, built in the rocky, precipitous Taihang Mountains the nationally renowned Red Flag Canal with its many branches totalling 1,500 kilometres. The project involved blasting out or cutting into the tops or sides of 1,250 hills, excavating 134 tunnels and building 150 aqueducts with quarried stone. With water from the Changho River on the other side of the Taihang Mountains in Pingshun County, Shansi Province flowing in its channels, the Red Flag Canal ended Linhsien's centuries-long history of water famine. Now the county's irrigated area has expanded from 10,000 mu to 620,000 mu. The people sing:

*Irrigation channels thread mountains and land,
Clear flowing water's everywhere at hand.
Drought and water-logging we no longer fear,
But reap good harvests year after year.*

In the course of canal construction, 92,000 women worked directly on the project to change the face of the county. Among them were three hundred shock teams.

Over 2,000 women learned drilling and blasting, and another 18,000 learned masonry. Some 1,300 could make explosives and 150 became expert at blasting. More than 1,200 women were cited as model workers.

After the canal was put into use, the county Party committee brought this point to the 700,000 local people: The flow of twenty-five cubic metres per second was insufficient for irrigation in the dry season, while water ran to waste in the rainy season. Some areas could not benefit fully from the canal for lack of a network of auxiliary projects. So the building of ponds, reservoirs and pumping stations to store surplus water from the rainy season for use in the dry had become the main work. Their completion would make the one Red Flag Canal function as several, and the fields give high and stable yields.

This was actually a call by the county Party committee. Filled with new drive, the heroic women canal builders once again worked shoulder to shoulder with the men commune members on the construction site, this time to build auxiliary projects.

Han Yung-ti, a woman Communist of twenty-five, said: "Formerly, the rocks of the Taihang Mountains looked like tigers to us, formidable and threatening. The successful construction of the Red Flag Canal has enabled us to see them in a new light — as nothing but beancurd. We can cut them the way we want, and make them serve as valuable material for building channels and hydro-power stations." This feeling was shared by numerous other women commune members of Linhsien County.

When she was eighteen, Han Yung-ti headed a group of thirty-five young girls from her home brigade of Peichiao, Tungkang Commune, to excavate for the Peichiao-ling Tunnel of the Red Flag Canal project. Together with

the men, they attacked a hill in heavy snow. Veteran masons helped them to master the whole process of blowing up rocks — how to swing a hammer, drill holes, fill in explosives and light the fuses. They finished the thousand-metre-long tunnel in a matter of months and made the water flow through the canal into 70 per cent of their brigade's land.

In the second half of 1973 the county leadership chose from among the canal builders a contingent of skilled workers to specialize in surveying the county's underground water resources, and designing and building hydro-power and pumping stations. Han Yung-ti was not only among the women in the contingent but was made its deputy leader. In four months these workers built a 1,170-kilowatt hydro-power station. In 1974 they sank over forty pumpwells, a new contribution to the county's water conservancy work. Han Yung-ti is also a vice-chairman of the county poor and lower-middle peasants' association and a member of the Anyang prefectural Party committee, Honan Province.

Another woman builder, the thirty-two-year-old Sung Yueh-lien of poor-peasant origin, is in charge of organizing the women's labour force in Liuma Brigade, Hengshui Commune. For five consecutive years she worked on the Red Flag Canal. When they were building a fifty-arch aqueduct four hundred metres long and fourteen metres high without cranes to lift the large blocks of stone, this country woman and her fellow workers improvised a derrick that solved the problem.

After the canal was completed, she went back to her brigade and led two hundred women in building another aqueduct, which took only 160 days. They worked quite independently, making lime and cutting stone themselves.

The aqueduct as it stands today is 680 metres long, 15 metres high and 7.5 metres wide. With 115 arches allowing torrential waters to pass unhindered, it has actually two decks, the upper one a trough for canal water, and the lower one a traffic road.

"We have the leadership of Chairman Mao and the Communist Party, and we live under the superior system of socialism," Sung Yueh-lien said to us. "We Chinese women feel it our duty to contribute towards the emancipation of our working sisters throughout the world and of mankind as a whole!"

Many young women now active in farmland capital construction were still children when the canal was being built. But seeing the heroism of their mothers and elder sisters who worked on it, they too were fired with the revolutionary fervour to devote their youth to changing the face of their motherland. Yang Chun-ying is one of these young women.

She was still a pupil when the canal was being built near her village, and her school organized the children for voluntary labour on the project. Little Yang Chun-ying vied with her schoolmates in carrying stone and shovelling earth. In 1973, she led a shock team of ten young women from her village to join in a project where three thousand peasants were erecting embankments across a river flat to create more fields. The first stretch of an embankment they built was washed out by flood waters, but they did not lose heart. They studied Chairman Mao's teachings and severely criticized the concept, "Heaven ordains all." Convinced that human will can conquer nature, they gained new strength and were ready for another go. In the process they eagerly learned the skills of blasting and masonry from the veterans among the former poor peasants. Later, this "iron girls" shock team was elected an advanced unit

and cited by the higher Party committee. The other 860 women on the construction site emulated Yang Chun-ying's team, and over a hundred of them were elected model workers. The project resulted in 1,300 mu of level, fertile fields from which bountiful rice and wheat harvests have been reaped.

The people of Linhsien have created one new, splendid scene after another by their hard work. Medium-sized and small reservoirs along the canal now number 360, and 760-odd electrical, mechanical or hydro-turbine pumping stations have been built to irrigate the hilly fields higher up. There are 1,300 pump-wells and 42,000 wells and cisterns for storing rain water. All of these represent a share of the women commune members' labour.

Owing to severe water shortage Linhsien was limited to low-yield, drought-resistant crops over the centuries, while cultivation remained rather crude. Now that they have the canal, the commune members are determined to apply Chairman Mao's "Eight-Point Charter" for agriculture* and concentrate on production extensively and intensively by farming scientifically. Women are active in all this, saying: "We shouldn't go on tilling the land the way our grandparents did. Things have changed since we have brought in water, and it's time to change our farming methods!"

Li Tsai-lien, deputy secretary of the Hsichang Brigade Party branch and one of the women canal builders, today

* It provides under (1) soil, for deep ploughing, improvement, general survey and land planning; (2) fertilizer, for rational application; (3) water, for building water conservancy works and rational use; (4) seed, for popularization of good strains; and for (5) rational close planting; (6) plant protection, prevention and elimination of plant diseases and pests; (7) field management; (8) innovation of farm tools.

also heads the brigade's scientific experiment group whose twenty-odd women members grow new strains of wheat, rice, maize and cotton on their twenty-four mu of experimental plots. Once, when someone remarked that it might be all right for women to deep-plough or level the land but certainly not to engage in scientific experiment, their refutation was instant. "Why not?" they demanded. "Science was created by the labouring people. If we take a scientific attitude we can certainly master it!" They endured hardship and fatigue to collect detailed data from their experiments, sometimes staying in the fields under scorching sun for hours at a time to observe the growth of crops. They took great care in irrigating and manuring their plots and were exacting in comparing between different strains. They reaped 6,000 kilos of high-quality maize seed and, besides supplying their own brigade, provided 2,000 kilos to others. Output increased considerably, and Hsichang has been getting over 50 kilos more grain per mu each of the past few years. The average per-mu grain yield in 1974 was 385 kilos; for ginned cotton it was 75 kilos. The brigade sold 200,000 kilos of marketable grain to the state. An old poor peasant was moved as he scooped up a handful of wheat, and said: "Never before in my life have I seen such good crops in these mountains!"

As a matter of fact, every production brigade of Linhsien County has its women commune members like Li Tsai-lien who go in for scientific farming and get remarkable results. Hao Kuei-ying, a twenty-three-year-old Communist Youth Leaguer of Tungyao Brigade, is another. Back at work in her village after graduating from middle school, she learned the habits of cotton aphides and found a method, suited to local conditions, to eliminate the pest. The county Party committee called an on-the-spot meeting to popu-

larize her experience. Another woman, Wang Hsien-mei, who is now twenty-eight and became a deputy secretary of a brigade Party branch in the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, maintains the dauntless spirit displayed in building the canal and has done very well in leading her brigade members to level the fields and practise continuous cropping and interplanting.

There are now over 2,700 women participating in scientific experiment groups set up in every brigade of Linhsien. The county has fifty all-woman cotton-growing groups. These seasoned canal builders have achieved very good results in scientific farming.

Notes of a Woman Textile Worker

Chin Chiao-ying

Among Peking's more than 50,000 textile workers over 30,000 are women, 72 per cent of them married. How do these women work, and how do they live? We can catch a glimpse from the following notes by Chin Chiao-ying, a veteran worker of the spinning shop, Peking No. 3 Cotton Mill, who is now secretary of the shop's general Party branch. — Ed.

"Chair of Happiness"

Reducing the leg-work was for us spinners a long-cherished dream which has now come true.

Rows of spindles in the spinning shop turn swiftly as workers make their rounds of the machines tying broken ends — sitting comfortably on tracked swivel chairs.

When the first of such electrically operated chairs was put to use, the young people thronged around it, talking and laughing excitedly. The old workers, their eyes moist with emotion, called it "chair of happiness."

I began to work at a textile mill in Shanghai when I was fourteen. We child-labourers had to work twelve hours a day in a damp and stuffy workshop, which was more like a steam-oven, and were not allowed to stop the machines even for meals. The shop floor was wet and slippery,

and after keeping up with those spindles all day long, even grown-ups felt their heads swimming, their backs aching and their legs heavy like sticks of wood. Of course, we youngsters always got the worst of it. We had only to sit down beside the machines for the foreman's lash to fall on us. The bosses bled us white and the foremen insulted and humiliated us at will. Recalling the sufferings of the old days, I'm always happy and excited to see the great changes today in modernization, and realize that we are masters of the mill.

Our mill, established in 1956, is equipped entirely with China-made machines. The shops are spacious and bright, with automatic air conditioning keeping them at a constant temperature of between 24° and 27° C. There is cooling equipment for the high-temperature season, when cold beverages are also provided free of charge.

Now, workers in the spinning, weaving and twisting shops go about their work "chair-borne," while the doffing and cleaning processes in the spinning shop have been mechanized. Workers examining the finished product are also provided with swivel seats.

A movement for technical revolution and innovation has swept the mill. Its aim is to lessen labour intensity and raise efficiency and the quality of the product, as well as save labour power for such relatively intense work as spinning and weaving so that each worker will have fewer looms and spindles to look after. Reduced labour intensity has also enabled more workers to attend full-time short-term courses for the study of Marxist-Leninist classics and Chairman Mao's works. And we have been sending more and more outstanding young workers to study in colleges and universities. It's only natural that we working people, who suffered so much in the old days, use the one word

"happiness" to express our feeling when we cite the achievements since liberation. And so our "chair of happiness" got its name.

On Chao Li-hua's Illness

Chao Li-hua is thirty-nine and the mother of four. Healthy and seldom ill, she works in the maintenance shop.

At the end of 1973 when the Peking Maternity Hospital was making its biennial cancer-prevention check at our mill, Chao Li-hua did not go for the examination despite the mill Party committee's urging everyone to have the check. Finding no report for this woman worker, Dr. Wang of the mill's clinic asked about it and got the following reply: "I don't need any test. I weigh seventy-five kilos, have a good appetite and sleep well. I've never had any trouble at all." Still, Dr. Wang persuaded her to have the test.

A few weeks later Chao Li-hua was asked to report for another check. Further examination confirmed an early carcinoma of the cervix. She was hospitalized and had a radical operation — hysterectomy including lymph nodes. Chao Li-hua recovered rapidly and was discharged from hospital after three weeks. All expenses were paid by the state except for food, and she received her wage in full throughout her hospitalization and five months' convalescence at home.

With a working record of eighteen years and high political consciousness, Chao Li-hua was impatient to resume work. So the leaders of her shop, careful that she should not overwork, finally assigned her to draw blueprints for the technical innovation team of the opening and cleaning

room. Although it was a much lighter job, her wage remained the same.

In the old society, many women that I worked with had horrible experiences. Afraid of losing their jobs, they hid illness or pregnancy. Any acutely ill were fired summarily, while many became homeless or died of their illness and poverty. I think of these bitter past scenes and contrast them with the happy life today of such women as Chao Li-hua.

Socialist China shows over-all concern for women workers and pays special attention to their needs during menstruation, pregnancy and confinement, and for breast-feeding. Hygienic supplies are available for their periods. Lighter work is given in pregnancy — from the seventh month onward they do not tend machines or take any night shifts. A fifty-six-day maternity leave is given for normal delivery and seventy days for difficult delivery, both with full pay. Mothers may have their babies cared for at the mill-run nursery at the end of the leave, paying only 2.5 yuan a month for this service. They are allowed working time to breast-feed their babies — twice a day under eight months, and once a day for several months afterwards, each nursing period lasting forty minutes. With their babies well looked after, mothers can put their minds at ease and concentrate on their work.

Before liberation, the bosses dismissed married women workers on various pretexts, while older workers had an even more difficult and wretched time of it. Now 90 per cent of the women workers in our mill are married and they may retire at the age of fifty or fifty-five according to the kind of work they do, with old-age pensions equivalent to 70 per cent of their wages. A funeral allowance equivalent to two months' wages is granted upon the death of a

worker, and if the family is in economic difficulty or if there is no one to support her lineal dependents under sixteen, a relief fund is given; aged dependents with no one to rely on are taken care of by the state.

"The socialist system is really fine," the workers say. "The state solves all problems of our livelihood, such as child-bearing, old age, sickness and death."

Workers' Dining-Room and Other Facilities

I went to the dining-room for lunch with leaders of Shift C, as we were to meet together at noon. It took only a few minutes to queue and buy a meat pie, a bowl of noodles in soup and a side dish, paying twenty fen in all. With a menu of more than fifty varieties of staple food and meat and vegetable dishes, our dining-room keeps on improving.

The dining-room is open around the clock, providing six meals staggered to suit the different shifts. It is situated close to the workers' living quarters so that working couples can pick up the staple items there on their way home after work and cook some dishes very quickly on their own gas stoves.

The dining-room is considered a welfare facility, with the food good and the prices low. The wages of the more than a hundred cooks, expenses for building and repair of the dining-room, gas, water, electricity and equipment are all met by the mill's welfare fund.

For the workers' convenience, the workshops and living quarters are well laid out and are only a few hundred metres apart. The living quarters take up a larger floor space than the workshops by twenty thousand square metres. Consisting of forty buildings of three or four

storeys, they are provided with clinic, kindergarten, primary and middle schools, grain shop, grocery, department store, savings bank, dining-room, barber shop and bath-house services, plus a large hall for performances, films and meetings. There are also a football field and an illuminated basketball court.

Both my husband and I suffered a lot in the old society. There are four in our happy family now. He is a maintenance worker in our twisting shop with a monthly wage of eighty-seven yuan, while I get eighty-two yuan. He is a member of the Workers' Mao Tsetung Thought Propaganda Team sent by our mill to the Peking No. 2 Foreign Languages Institute, and he has been elected to the college leadership. Our son and daughter are both in junior middle school. All the four of us share in the household chores, and the facilities in the living quarters enable us to have more time for recreation. We go to the theatre or cinema every week. But being worker cadres denied school education before liberation, my husband and I realize that we must devote more spare time to studying Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought so as to raise our theoretical level and be able to work better.

The Movement to Criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, and Our Hopes

I was excited by the meeting held a moment ago in the weaving shop to criticize *Classic for Women*, a reactionary book preaching the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius with which the reactionary feudal ruling class tried to fetter women's minds.

Standing in front of the Honour Roll I saw scores of advanced workers' photographs and read about their deeds. The familiar faces reminded me of what they had done as the main force in production. Sixty per cent of them are women.

The leader of Shift C, Wei Chung-jen, a Communist in her thirties, is one of these model workers. Co-operating closely with Li Chin-chen, her shift's woman Party branch secretary, she has set a good example to her comrades, revitalizing the collective so that it has overfulfilled its production quota month after month.

But according to the reactionary preachings of Confucius and Mencius as embodied in *Classic for Women*, we women should be subordinate to men, "be obedient to the father when young, to the husband when married and to the sons when widowed"; we should also be content in poverty and accept whatever is our lot, for such is "pre-ordained by fate" and therefore unalterable. What rubbish!

With the victory of the people's revolution, the three big mountains weighing down on the Chinese people — imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism — were removed, and the oppressive shackles on women smashed. The broad masses of us working women, now masters of our own destiny, are participating in the running of our proletarian state and working hard for socialist construction. Take our spinning shop for example. It has more than a thousand workers. Many of its leading cadres, including the secretary and deputy secretary of the general Party branch, shop head and deputy head and trade union chairman, are women. Five of our mill's seven shop heads are from among us women workers and four of the seven standing committee members of its revolutionary committee

are also women. Liu Cheh, secretary of the mill's Party committee and concurrently chairman of its revolutionary committee, is a veteran woman cadre. Women share with the men in the leadership of our enterprise with its 6,400 workers and staff members (of whom 70 per cent are women), 87,000 spindles and 3,100 looms. Annual production is 100,000 bales of cotton yarn and 100 million metres of textiles of forty-eight varieties, including cotton cloth, mixed fabrics and dacron of woolly medium-length fibre. Our mill's profit in a year is more than sufficient to build another mill of its size.

Facts are the most withering criticism of Confucius' and Lin Piao's fallacies belittling women.

And so it is not any "will of Heaven" but the great people's revolution led by Chairman Mao which has changed everything in China so that we labouring people have won liberation and become masters of the country. Only with the people liberated and the old social system transformed can women be truly emancipated. Through the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius and through studying the theory of the proletarian dictatorship we aim to raise our revolutionary consciousness and weave more and better fabrics by working hard and resourcefully. We want to live up to the expectations of Chairman Mao and conscientiously play the role of "holding up half the sky" for socialism.

Maturing of a Yao Woman Cadre

Ho Chiang-chun

In south China's Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region there live in compact communities eleven minority nationalities including the Chuang, Yao, Miao and Tung. Each nationality here now has its own women cadres holding leading posts at various levels. The thirteen counties in the Chuang-populated Nanning region, for instance, have eighteen Chuang women cadres at county level responsible for industrial and farm production, culture, education, etc. Among the Ching nationality with a total population of only 2,300 in Kwangsi, there are more than sixty women taking up leadership duties at county, commune, production brigade and production team levels. Educated in Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, large numbers of minority women cadres have been steadily maturing and playing an important role in China's socialist revolution and construction. The forty-five-year-old Pan Mei-ying of Yao nationality is one of these women.

"Class Emancipation Liberated Me."

In the old society, when Pan Mei-ying was still a child she worked together with her parents as farm labourers and

household servants of landlords. Now she is deputy secretary of the Hohsien County Party committee and vice-chairman of the county revolutionary committee. She was elected delegate to the Ninth and Tenth National Congresses of the Chinese Communist Party where she was also elected alternate member of the Party's Central Committee. Thinking back on her progress she says: "I was liberated with the emancipation of the working class. Only with the leadership of Chairman Mao and the Communist Party, and with the establishment of the socialist system, can there be the happiness of us women of minority nationalities today."

Pan Mei-ying grew up in a Yao area deep in the mountains of eastern Kwangsi. Before liberation the people there farmed with the primitive "slash and burn" method and lived in abject poverty. In times of natural disasters they abandoned their homes and land and trekked from mountain to mountain struggling for existence, which gave them the contemptuous name of "mountain-hopping Yaos." Wherever they went, however, they could not escape exploitation and oppression by the feudal landlords and local tyrants. The Yao people had to pay rent on every bit of wasteland they opened, and even had to pay a toll when they passed a place or drank water from a stream or well.

When Pan Mei-ying was sixteen her father died, worn out by a lifetime of hard work and too poor to consult a doctor when he fell ill. Pressed by a heartless landlord for payment of rent and debts, her mother was forced to sell her eleven-year-old sister. Within ten days of the death of Mei-ying's father, her mother also died in agony. Orphaned, Mei-ying had no way out but to become a child-bride, and for the next few years suffered every kind of abuse.

Late in 1950 the Chinese People's Liberation Army reached the Yao mountains and wiped out the remnant Kuomintang troops hiding there. Soon afterwards a People's Government delegation and a nationalities work team visited the area, bringing the people large quantities of salt and cotton cloth, which they had lacked. Movements for land reform and to carry out the Marriage Law followed. Overjoyed at having been liberated, Pan Mei-ying and the other poor and lower-middle peasants of Yao nationality rose to fight the landlords and seize back their land.

"Even better days will come," a member of the work team told her, "when we get organized and take the road of collective farming and build socialism by following Chairman Mao's instructions." How Pan Mei-ying longed for such better days!

Collectivization

In 1955, Chairman Mao's instructions on agricultural co-operation spread through the mountain villages where the Yao people had begun to settle and to farm in mutual-aid teams. Pan Mei-ying, then twenty-five, discussed with the poorest families in her village and together they organized its first elementary agricultural producers' co-operative. She was elected deputy head of the co-op which in the very next year became an advanced type.

This step was enough to arouse the vindictiveness of the handful of class enemies who had been overthrown. Beating the drums for withdrawal from the co-op, they spread it about that "a co-op can never make a go of it in this backward mountainous area of scattered settlements. It's like a rabbit's tail — you're soon at the end of it." Pan

Mei-ying stood in the van of the struggle. She and the other co-op cadres went deep among the masses, holding meetings and talking with the people. They recalled the past bitterness of individual farming and "mountain-hopping," and pointed out how much production had risen since they had settled down and improved their farming methods. They were convinced they could achieve common prosperity only by strengthening collective farming. The masses thus raised their political consciousness and defeated the class enemies' plots, consolidated the co-op and made it strike root in their mountain village.

Pan Mei-ying was admitted into the Chinese Communist Party in 1957. Later the Party sent her, who had lived a sub-human existence before liberation and had never had a day's schooling, to the Kwangsi Institute for Nationalities to study revolutionary theory and cultural subjects.

When she returned home after two years' study, the movement for collective farming had developed further and people's communes had been established in her home place, as elsewhere in China. She was elected Party branch secretary of Huangshih Production Brigade, Putou People's Commune, Hohsien County.

In the early sixties, the evil wind blowing for individual farming stirred up by the capitalist-roader in the Party Liu Shao-chi and his followers made its way into the Yao mountains. One day a higher-level cadre said to Pan Mei-ying: "The instruction from above is to fix output quotas on the basis of the individual household. That's a good way to stimulate production. See that your brigade carries it out."

But Pan Mei-ying thought of Chairman Mao's call for socialism. What that cadre had said would mean working on one's own as in the old society.

"No," she said firmly, "we're going to follow Chairman Mao's instructions. No one can make us turn back."

"Better look out if you don't do as we say," the man threatened. But Pan Mei-ying continued her rounds of the village collecting the brigade members' opinions.

"Farming individually is as risky as walking a single-plank bridge over a ravine," said peasants who had suffered bitterly in the old society. "Only socialism is our lifeline. We poor and lower-middle peasants will stay with collective farming, keep it as firm as an old pine against any storm."

Beginning in 1965 Huangshih Brigade suffered from two years of drought. Streams dried up and the fields cracked. The class enemies spread the rumour that Heaven was showing its wrath, and that Huangshih was no longer livable. Their intention was to incite people to move away to other mountains, and a few brigade members were in fact taken in and planned to go away.

At a brigade meeting Pan Mei-ying said with emotion: "In the old days we were always helpless when natural disasters struck, because we worked individually. We went from mountain to mountain, but did we ever find a way out? No. Wherever we went we lived on wild roots and covered ourselves with fibre matting. Now, why are these people urging us to leave our home village? They want to break up our people's commune, that's why. We shouldn't allow ourselves to be fooled. We can overcome every difficulty as long as we rely on our collective strength."

Convinced by her reasonable argument, the brigade members responded: "You're right. We'll build our area into a new socialist countryside with our own hands!"

Pan Mei-ying and the rest of the brigade Party branch committee led the masses to build ponds and reservoirs

up in the mountains so that spring water could be stored to irrigate the fields. Huangshih's drought was beaten.

Pan Mei-ying has deepened her awareness of class struggle in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution that started in 1966. In 1972 she went to work in a production team for gaining experience at the grassroots. There she learned that the team had made a plan to increase their paddy fields to average one mu per person as part of the movement to learn from the national pace-setter, the Tachai Brigade in Shansi Province, but had later given up the project. Investigation revealed that a counter-revolutionary had tried to sabotage the movement by spreading it around that the land to be developed belonged to him because his ancestors had farmed it. Whatever would be reaped from it should be his and, he threatened, if he didn't get it he would tell the "mountain god" to see that nothing grew there, or else to strike dead anyone who attempted to harvest the crop.

"Ridiculous superstition! I'm going anyway," said Pan Mei-ying hotly, and with hoe and chopper she went up the mountain and cut away brambles and thorns to build terraced fields. Emboldened by her example, the team members went up too and soon realized their one-mu-per-capita plan.

In 1971 Pan Mei-ying introduced from the plains into two production teams better strains of rice seed in order to get a higher yield from the poor, cold mountain slopes. She worked on experimental plots alongside the team members and cadres, and learned to grow these and other good strains, to irrigate and apply fertilizer scientifically, and to prevent and eliminate pests and plant diseases. Team members who had their doubts about scientific farming were now convinced, and the whole brigade began

growing improved strains of rice. Its 1973 grain harvest showed more than a dozen-fold increase over the pre-liberation annual total for dry-land crops in the area. And the figure for 1974 topped this by more than 30 per cent. Since the Cultural Revolution began, the brigade, led by Pan Mei-ying, has reclaimed large areas in the mountains, raised saplings and planted them out over twelve thousand mu of land. Formerly bare mountains have been clothed in greenery.

Keeping the Fine Traits of the Working People

At the Party's Ninth National Congress in 1969, Pan Mei-ying heard Chairman Mao say in person that members of the Party Central Committee should **"see to it that they do not divorce themselves from the masses or from productive labour while performing their duties."** Never forgetting Chairman Mao's teaching, she has made strict demands on herself so as to keep the fine traits of the working people all her life.

As alternate member of the Party Central Committee and member of the Party committee of the Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region, Pan Mei-ying is often away at important meetings. But when in the village she does as much farm work together with the commune members as possible.

Once on her way home from a meeting she passed a production team at work. She had already walked forty kilometres over difficult mountain paths and it was late in the day, but she put down her bag and picked up a hoe to join the team members. They asked her to do the

work the next day, but she said: "There's still an hour of daylight." Not until it was quite dark did she pick up her bag and go home.

Wherever she goes she talks with the commune members, learns about how things stand, discusses work and tries to solve problems.

She also takes to her heart the brigade members' daily life, goes to visit them and learns what their difficulties are. It often takes her six or seven days to make her rounds of the teams, and twenty days to visit every family, as the 1,600 people live scattered in 120 places in the mountains. One stormy night she made a trip to deliver money the brigade had given a member who had a financial problem. Even in the heat of summer she goes on foot over the mountains to see sick brigade members. Once when the house of one of them burned down, Pan Mei-ying immediately picked up her bedding and walked the ten kilometres to the place. Though still weak from a recent operation, she pitched in and helped the family cut bamboo, put up a new house and make new furniture. Moved to tears, the brigade member said: "Mei-ying always has our vexations at heart."

In the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, Pan Mei-ying and the rest of the Party branch committee have continued to lead the masses in this struggle to uphold Marxism and fight revisionism. In two years she studied such Marxist-Leninist writings as *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* and all the four volumes of *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* by using the dictionary and with help from her comrades. This theoretical study has helped to raise further her consciousness

of class struggle and the struggle between the revolutionary and revisionist lines.

She always tries to play an active part at meetings criticizing Lin Piao and Confucius. She draws from her own experience in repudiating the Confucian-Mencian concept that "those who work with their minds govern while those who toil with their hands are governed," and in refuting Lin Piao's attack on cadre participation in collective productive labour. She says with deep feeling: "One of the main ways of distinguishing a proletarian cadre from an official of the exploiting classes is to see whether he persists in productive labour and has close ties with the masses, or looks down on physical labour and the working people. We cadres are just ordinary workers. The only difference, if any, between us and the masses is that as cadres we should do more for the people."

After a repudiation meeting, Pan Mei-ying, in large woven-bamboo hat and straw sandals, and with a basket on her back, often takes up her hoe and chopper to work with the brigade members, doing her bit to build their Yao mountains into a new, socialist countryside.

After Taking Up a Leading Post

An Hui

Thousands upon thousands of women cadres have stepped to the fore in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and among them is the young woman worker Chiang Yu-feng, who in the spring of 1971 was elected to the standing committee of the Anhwei provincial Party committee.

Chiang Yu-feng's experience has been ordinary, and yet in some ways unusual.

How does this former village girl, now in a position of such responsibility, work and live?

Be Even More Modest in Face of Success

Chiang Yu-feng still works at the Worker-Peasant Machine Plant of Wuhu city in Anhwei Province, which started out as a production group of twelve people making nails from wire. In 1963 she was made head of the group while at the same time purchasing and issuing supplies and assigning work. Under Chiang's leadership, the workshop grew into a machine plant of two hundred workers and staff able to produce whole sets of automobile bearing bushes. It is an advanced unit in Anhwei Province.

This achievement posed before Chiang Yu-feng and the entire plant a new question: To continue making progress, or rest on their laurels?

In early autumn 1972 a commune member from a nearby county came rushing to the plant. "The bearing bushes of our brigade's Type 'S195' walking tractor are worn out, but we can't get a new set anywhere," he said anxiously. "Can you help us out?"

Without any hesitation Chiang agreed, calling on lathe turners, bench workers, forgers and millers from several production groups for this urgent task.

After three days a fine set of bearing bushes was produced. The commune member was entirely satisfied, but Chiang Yu-feng wasn't. She thought: "S195" has been replaced by newer types, and spare parts for it are no longer produced, while a lot of "S195" tractors are still in use in southern Anhwei Province. The bearing bushes on a tractor wear out easily. Shall we "retire" the "S195" tractors for lack of new bearing bushes?

She discussed this problem with other members of the Party branch and the revolutionary committee and they decided to request permission from the higher authorities to produce bearing bushes for the "S195" tractor. Their request was granted in the latter part of October, and they were assigned to produce 3,500 sets of bushes that year.

The news caused a small uproar at the plant. Some saw difficulties and said: "We're producing several times more automobile bearing bushes this year. How can we turn out so many tractor bushes as well in so little time?" Others said: "We have to have different equipment to produce spare parts for those obsolete tractors. It's not worthwhile."



Kuo Feng-lien, Party branch secretary of the national pace-setting Tachai Production Brigade, persists in collective labour in the fields.

Middle school graduates in a rural area devote their youth to building a new, socialist countryside.



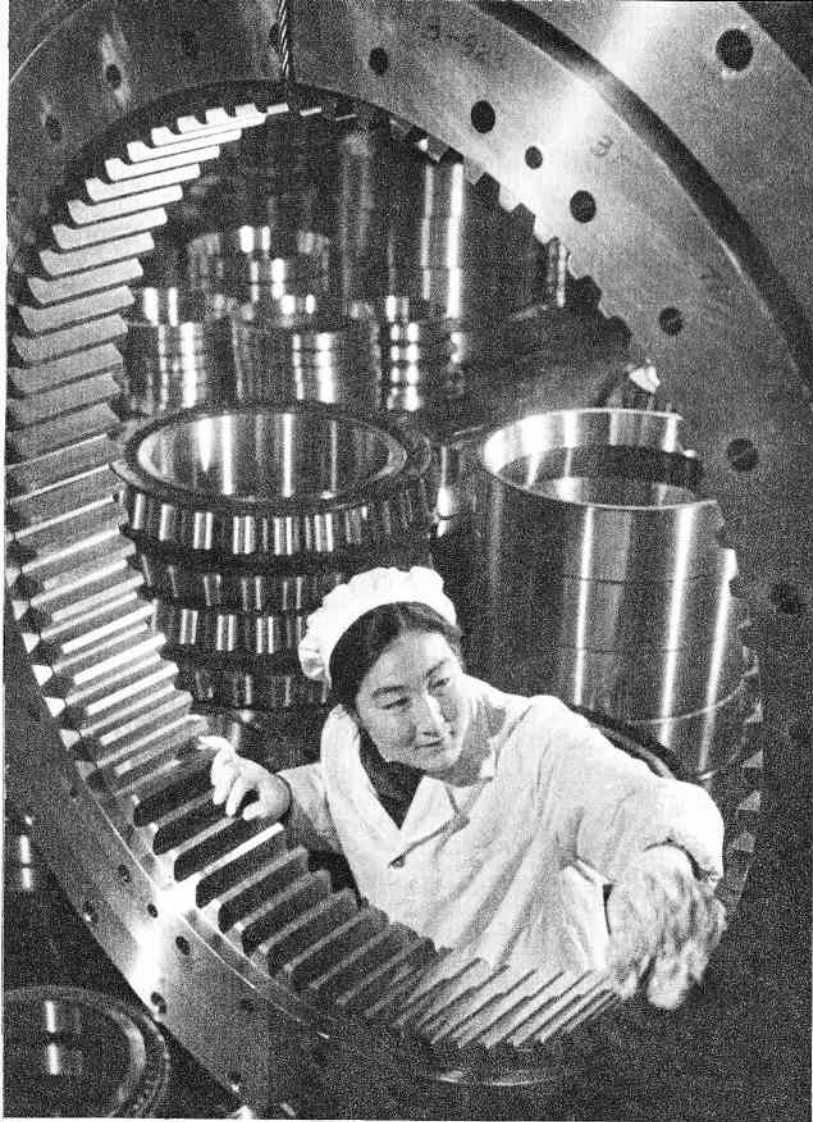
These women work high up in the air.



Tibetan nationality women miners of
a Tibet Autonomous Region colliery.

Woman electrician.





Woman technician of the Loyang
Ball-Bearing Plant, Honan Province.

Tseden Zhogar, a woman technician of Tibetan nationality
at the Lhasa Machine Repair and Assembly Plant in the
Tibet Autonomous Region, compares notes with a Han
technician.



The Uighur woman parachutist Tzukei.



People's Liberation Army lineswomen working in the snow.



Wang Cheng-shu (*right*), woman scientist of the Atomic Energy Research Institute, Chinese Academy of Sciences, trains young researchers.

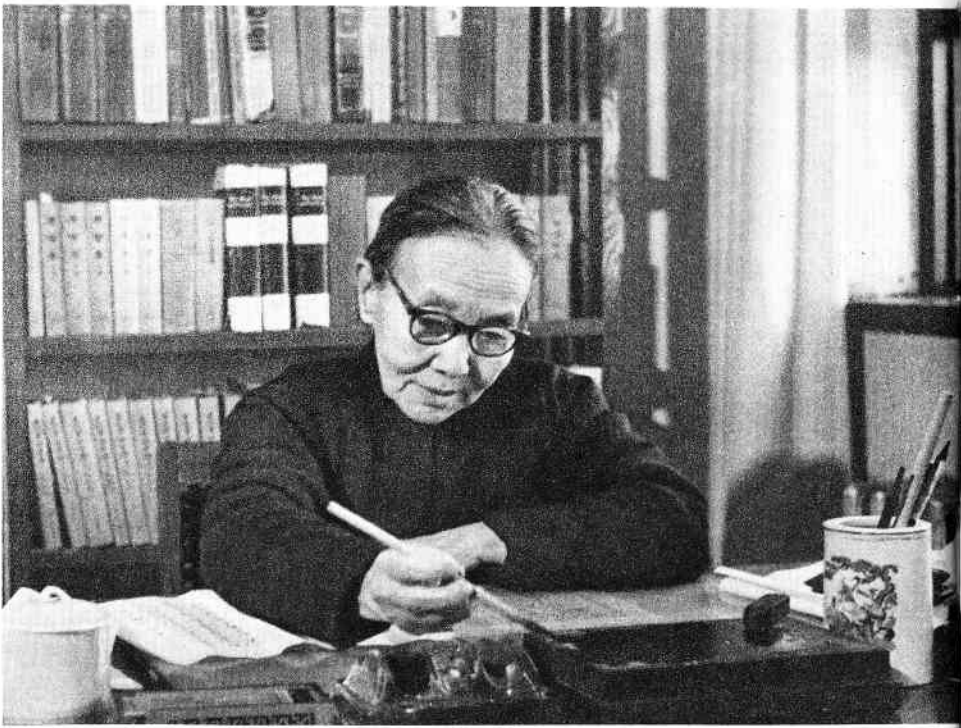
Girl students of Peking's Tsinghua University transistor parts section study a new oxidation method under a teacher's guidance.



Woman teacher.



"Barefoot doctor" in a fishing village, Kwangtung Province.



The woman writer Hsieh Ping-hsin.

Jihpiya of Uighur nationality, member of the Sinkiang Song and Dance Ensemble, sings for the herdsmen in a pastoral area.





Professor of microbiology Lin Fei-ching of the Shanghai No. 1 Medical College researching into prevention of chronic bronchitis.

To these objections Chiang replied firmly: "Without overcoming difficulties we can do nothing in this world. It's like climbing a mountain. We can't do it without exerting effort. Comrades, we should keep in mind supporting socialist construction in the countryside. Those several thousand sets of bushes mean several thousand tractors in the fields. We can't just think of our own plant."

Tense struggle ensued at the plant to support agriculture, and Chiang Yu-feng was in the van of it. She marked the line for the welding workers doing oxygen cutting of the steel plates, which she placed red-hot one after another on the iron slab for workers to shape with big hammers. Everywhere she went the workers' spirits rose. With this young woman setting the pace the workers not only fulfilled the year's original task but, in two months' time they produced the required number of tractor bearing bushes as well.

This success made the workers more far-sighted and deep-thinking. In the next two years, more and more commendations poured in to the Worker-Peasant Machine Plant. But these did not turn Chiang Yu-feng's head. Once, while attending a meeting in the provincial capital Hofei, she made a special visit to an automobile factory to ask for suggestions to improve their work. The comrade who received her said politely: "It's not easy for a small plant like yours to produce automobile bearing bushes. How can we still make suggestions for your work?"

But Chiang Yu-feng was serious. "You must tell us where improvements can be made. The automobiles won't make allowances for our plant being small!"

The comrade smiled and then showed her two sets of bearing bushes of the same specification. One set had been produced by the Worker-Peasant Machine Plant, her factory, and the other was the product of a similar plant in Wuhan.

The two sets looked quite alike, but on closer inspection Chiang Yu-feng noticed a little difference. She requested an on-the-spot meeting in the auto factory workshop to examine the quality of her plant's product.

Upon her return, she discussed with her comrades how to improve the quality of their bearing bushes. They decided to learn from the Wuhan factory, and she went there herself with several other worker activists.

Closer to the Workers Than to Kin

Chiang Yu-feng shows greater concern for the workers than for herself. She not only knows all the workers well. She also knows most of their family members. When problems arise in workers' families, she usually learns of them promptly and does her best to solve them.

The young electrician Kuan Yu-lung was burdened with bourgeois thinking and was sometimes in low spirits. This really pained Yu-feng, who had many talks with this class brother. Young Kuan, however, did not understand that Chiang Yu-feng was really trying to help him, and he avoided her. When she went to his home to talk with him, he had nothing to say. During the Cultural Revolution Kuan continued making mistakes, and at a crucial moment she went again to the young man's home.

There, Chiang Yu-feng said with deep feeling: "I am also to blame for young Kuan's mistakes. I'm the Party branch secretary but I haven't given him enough help."

Kuan's family was moved to tears, and the young man himself raised his head and looked at Chiang questioningly. She continued in a clear voice: "Young Kuan is a worker in our plant, a member of the working class. It's up to me to lead him well and never permit the bourgeoisie to drag a class brother out of our ranks!"

The deep class concern shown him by this comrade-in-arms and her high expectations of him made Kuan realize his mistakes, and for the first time he wept.

Two years passed. Kuan Yu-lung had changed a lot and was on many occasions cited as an advanced, able worker. When the family is together on a Sunday, his father often says animatedly: "Class brothers and sisters are closer than our own loved ones. Who knows where our Yu-lung would have slid to by now and how he'd be lagging behind, if not for Chiang Yu-feng's help!"

Kuan Yu-lung's family is not the only one at the Worker-Peasant Machine Plant that feels the warm class concern of Chiang Yu-feng. When the old worker Liu Ming-tang injured his hand while working, Chiang Yu-feng went with him to the hospital and stayed there caring for him for more than twenty hours till she was assured he was out of danger.

Two childless old workers who are bed-ridden with paralysis are cared for by Chiang Yu-feng and other cadres of the plant in turn. These old workers say: "We owe such care and concern shown us in our old age and sickness to Chairman Mao and the Communist Party. Chairman Mao educates good Party members and cadres so that they are like our own near and dear ones."

Breaking with Traditional Ideas

The past few years have seen many shiny bearing bushes produced at the Worker-Peasant Machine Plant, and many fine deeds by Chiang Yu-feng. This young woman cadre, however, asks for nothing for herself. She refuses all subsidies and keeps public and private accounts strictly separate. When a light switch in her home was repaired by the plant electrician, she bought and replaced all the materials he had used. Also, though she is entitled to public bus-fare to and from the plant every day, she insists on walking the two to three kilometres even in bad weather. Urged to move into a new apartment block near the plant, she said: "I'm a worker, not a resident, of the plant and I won't move in till all of our workers have new, convenient housing."

After Chiang Yu-feng was elected to the standing committee of the provincial Party committee, some of her peasant relatives expected her to buy chemical fertilizer, electric motors or aluminium wire for their communes, and some of her friends asked her to get work transfers for them. These were problems to be solved by the departments concerned, and it was these rather than any particular person that should have been approached. At first she did not know what to make of this, but then she thought of what an old comrade had once told her: "As a new cadre, you will meet a lot of obstacles in your way forward. The old force of habit, certain wrong tendencies in society and the centuries-old traditional ideas — all of these will assail you and you must be mentally prepared for them." The comrade had also suggested that she re-read the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, which she did seriously. The following paragraph had particu-

larly impressed her: **"The Communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations; no wonder that its development involves the most radical rupture with traditional ideas."**

Chiang Yu-feng firmly refused to use her position to fulfil the personal requests of her relatives and friends. Gossip about her soon spread around her home town. Some were saying: "Yu-feng is a cadre at provincial level but she shows us no consideration at all."

Chiang Yu-feng decided to visit her home town during the next Spring Festival. Before going there by boat with her husband and youngest child, however, she first called upon families of old workers at the plant.

Back in her home town, she was at once visited by relatives and neighbours, after whose departure she called her family together to discuss some problems. There was the question of her younger sister going to the countryside.

A clash of views arose from the beginning. The mother did not like the idea of her youngest daughter, Yu-chen, settling in the countryside, nor did Yu-chen herself, though she agreed in principle with re-education by the poor and lower-middle peasants. Yu-chen thought that as a senior middle-school graduate, and especially with a sister in the provincial Party standing committee, she ought to return to town after two years in the countryside. Chiang Yu-feng thought differently. She said her youngest sister should make up her mind to follow Chairman Mao's revolutionary line of integrating with the workers and peasants and make revolution in the countryside her whole lifetime. After Chiang Yu-feng had spoken, a long silence fell over the whole family. It was the mother who broke it, saying: "Yu-feng! You're a provincial cadre now. You

ought to help your brothers and sisters, our relatives and friends, to solve their problems.”

Yu-feng was well aware of what her mother was driving at. At the same time she had a lot to say herself, so she drew near to her mother and said with deep affection: “Mother, since liberation you have always told us that the present fine situation of our family is due to Chairman Mao. Shouldn’t we listen to what he teaches us then? **‘Who is it that gives us our power? It is the working class, the poor and lower-middle peasants . . .’** is what Chairman Mao says. The Party and the people have given me the responsibility of serving the people, not of getting special privileges. It’s an old idea handed down through centuries that anyone in a leading post benefits the whole family. It’s up to us to smash such ideas. As a member of the provincial Party standing committee, a people’s cadre, I must serve the people wholeheartedly, place their interests first and never look out just for myself, my own family or any other few people. That is the main difference between the Communist Party and the Kuo-mintang. . . .”

By lamp light that night Chiang Yu-feng explained the truth of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and Chairman Mao’s consistent instructions. Discussion went far into the night, there seeming to be no end to what the family had to say about their misery in the past and the happiness they enjoyed now and looked forward to in the future. They felt excited and their vision became broader.

On the third day of the festival Chiang Yu-feng bade farewell to her family and kinfolks and returned to the plant. She was well satisfied with her visit.

The Source of Wisdom and Strength

People say: “Chiang Yu-feng is like a torch.”

Where, then, did she get her fire? What is her inexhaustible source of wisdom and strength?

Chiang Yu-feng had only three years of primary schooling before she started to work. The Party educated her and gradually raised her political consciousness. She studied Chairman Mao’s works for their content, at the same time raising her literacy level from them. She often carried Chairman Mao’s works with her, asking other comrades to help her with words she did not know. Studying these works became essential to her life. Then, after being elected to the provincial Party standing committee she began studying the Marxist-Leninist classics.

In a political study class sponsored by the provincial Party committee in the winter of 1971, Chiang Yu-feng felt strong class hatred towards the revisionist line and the crimes of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao, but she had difficulty criticizing them theoretically. She began a thorough study of Engels’ *Anti-Dühring*, and became deeply absorbed in this work, though it was no easy reading for her with her low literacy level. Still she had the determination and courage to overcome her difficulty, and she continued as before, asking her comrades to explain terms and passages she did not understand. The more she studied, the more interested she became in the book, comparing sham communists of the Dühring type with the counter-revolutionary revisionists Liu Shao-chi, Lin Piao et al. birds of a feather. Her strength in struggle came from Marxism-Leninism.

Since then she has persisted in her study of the Marxist-Leninist classics and Chairman Mao’s works, devoting

from a half to one hour to this each evening after work. Besides Chairman Mao's works, she made a serious study of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, *Anti-Dühring*, *The State and Revolution* and "Left-Wing" Communism, *an Infantile Disorder*, among others, greatly raising her ideological level. She says with profound appreciation: "To do revolutionary work requires guidance by the correct line and constantly raising one's consciousness of class and the two-line struggle. The Marxist-Leninist classics and the works of Chairman Mao are the real source of our strength."

Women Fliers

Lu Chieh

"Why, It's a Young Woman!"

Braving the sharp, howling winds and heavy snowfall of the Inner Mongolian grasslands, a group of steel workers were sweeping the runway of the crudely equipped and seldom used airport. A plane was to bring them the oxygen they needed to overhaul a boiler that had gone out of order when everybody in the plant was endeavouring to produce more for socialism. To gain time, a department of the higher leadership had decided to send a transport plane, and the workers had volunteered to arrive early to prepare the short, narrow, gravel-surfaced runway for the plane's safe landing.

Suddenly there was the whir of an engine. The plane was approaching, for one could make out on its wings a red star with the insignia of the Chinese People's Liberation Army at the centre.

The plane circled over the airport then headed straight for the runway, not touching down, however, but swooping past and pulling up again. The workers, excitedly expectant only a minute ago, watched in suspense. If they

could only provide better landing facilities! What would they do if the oxygen could not be delivered? Anxious eyes focused on the plane as it flew off, then circled back. It made for the runway again, this time as slowly as possible, then, touching down, the plane moved smoothly and swiftly along till it came to a stop at the other end.

"A beauty! That was perfect, young man." People cheered as they gathered round the plane, loud in their praise of the difficult landing. A worker, from behind, threw both arms around the neck of the aviator who had just alighted from the plane. "Thanks! Thanks a million, Comrade PLA man!" he effused. When the aviator turned round smiling, however, the worker quickly let his arms fall to his sides.

"Why," he cried, awkwardly rubbing his hands together, "it's a young woman!" Then he turned to the crowd and exclaimed, "It's a woman pilot, a woman comrade!" The people shouted and applauded enthusiastically. Little had they expected a woman to come on behalf of the People's Liberation Army and help them out at this critical hour in such foul weather.

The one bringing the oxygen was Wu Chu-ti, among the first women pilots trained in 1950, when the new China began to build her air force. Celebrating International Working Women's Day in 1952, China's women aviators flew for the first time over the capital's Tien An Men Square, their silvery planes in the sky inspiring the newly emancipated Chinese women. A mass celebration was held in their honour, and at a reception in Chung-nanhai, our great leader Chairman Mao encouraged them to serve the people wholeheartedly.

Four Altitudes

Most people used to consider flying quite different from driving a car or piloting a ship, because it called for greater courage and skill.

"What difficulties do women face in becoming aviators?" I asked Wu Hsiu-mei, one of China's first women fliers. She paused for a moment before replying. "Well, in my twenty-odd years' experience as a flier I've had to overcome four big obstacles, or I shall say, climb to four altitudes." As the first step, Wu Hsiu-mei learned to pilot the plane, which wasn't too difficult as women after all are not inferior to men in mind or spirit.

People with old ideas of male supremacy had to accept the fact that women could fly, but they still had doubts about their ability to fulfil flying missions. "It's hard enough for them to stay in the sky," some said sceptically. "Isn't it too much for them to carry out missions?" But the women knew that flying to serve the people was a task entrusted to them by the Party and Chairman Mao — it was what the people expected of them. They overcame all obstacles in their way and, working as men's equals, winged their way all over the country, transporting passengers to and from other countries, airdropping relief goods, rescuing fishermen, preventing and fighting forest fires and engaging in scientific research, aerial prospecting and surveying and mining exploration. This was the second altitude they climbed.

Once women aviators become mothers, some people take it for granted that they will no longer fly. In fact, in the new China young mothers resume flying missions when their children are five or six months old. And Wu Chu-ti flew her mission to the grasslands soon after childbirth.

I learned that China's women fliers enjoy a happy family life, with household chores shared with their husbands. Nurseries and kindergartens set up by the air force service pay great attention to the children's healthy growth so that their mothers work with ease of mind. Becoming flying mothers — this is what the women aviators call attaining the third altitude.

"But how long is the working life of a woman flier?" The brave, spirited Wu Hsiu-mei standing before me had answered this question well through action. Some of her classmates in that first group of women fliers now work in leading air force departments, others teach in aviation schools. But Wu Hsiu-mei, forty-four and the mother of two children, has three thousand flying hours to her credit. Today she leads young men and women fliers in exploring China's immense air space. People say she is climbing the fourth altitude.

Aboard a Jet Airliner

One fine day I boarded a jet airliner piloted by the woman flier Wang Yun and sped through the blue expanse of territorial air at eight hundred kilometres per hour at an altitude of nearly ten thousand metres. White clouds billowed beneath me.

Nearly forty, Wang Yun is the mother of two boys. Her husband teaches at the Peking Aeronautical Engineering Institute.

In the pilot's cabin, I was fascinated by her deftness in handling the controls after her three thousand hours of flying experience. When the plane had climbed far

above the snowy clouds, she switched on the autopilot and turned to speak to me.

Wang Yun was against describing flying as "the occupation of the brave," and disagreed even more strongly with describing it as "the occupation of the talented." One's ability comes from learning, she said, and skill is acquired through practice, upon which all genuine knowledge is based. Above all, it is the wise leadership of the Communist Party and Chairman Mao, and the superiority of the socialist system, that open up horizons for women to develop their capacities.

When Wang Yun was four before liberation, her mother died of puerperal fever after giving birth to a second child. The father went out to try to make a living and was never heard of again. Wang Yun was left to be brought up by an aunt who supported them by taking in sewing. The victory of the revolution changed the miserable lot of women in China. Wang Yun joined the people's army where she received her training as one of China's first women jet-plane pilots.

It was in 1973 after the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution had developed in China that Wang Yun and her classmate Han Shu-chin learned to fly jet airliners. Of the same age and with the same record of three thousand flying hours, the two women nonetheless handled their machines differently. Wang Yun was quick, daring but somewhat impetuous, while Han Shu-chin was meticulous and flexible. As both firmness and flexibility are required in piloting a plane, and especially a large passenger plane, Wang Yun found she lacked those qualities for making quick progress. In landing practice, if her plane did not come down too hard then it teetered from side to side. Still with warm and patient instruction by veteran

pilots and her own hard practice, Wang Yun was able to make a feather-light landing with her heavy plane. "Now such landings are second nature with me," Wang Yun said proudly. "I let the back part of the double main landing gear touch down first, while the nose tilts up slightly. In this way the plane floats along so lightly that the passengers hardly know they're on the ground."

When the plane landed swiftly on the runway I knew what Wang Yun meant. She climbed out of the cabin and warmly greeted the ground personnel coming to meet her. Her appreciation of their co-operation was obvious. Like a rider patting his mount, she wiped the fuselage of her plane gently with a cloth.

Wang Yun and Han Shu-chin were made deputy wing commanders in 1974.

From Navigator to Divisional Deputy Political Commissar

A number of women pilots have been promoted to leading posts since the Cultural Revolution began. One of these, Wang Shan-fu, whom I met at an airport, is a divisional deputy political commissar. Thirty-nine years old, of medium height and wearing her hair in a straight bob, she looked unaffected and modest.

On February 4, 1975 an earthquake struck the southern part of China's northeastern province of Liaoning. Wang Shan-fu and her team flew to the spot that very night to airdrop relief supplies and rescue the wounded. "Like at other places in this great socialist country of ours, the people of the disaster-stricken area were acting splendidly," she said, describing some of the scenes. Thanks

to preventive work, losses were exceedingly small despite the severity of the quake. From the air she saw work going on smoothly, with the workers and peasants well organized. Airdropped relief goods had been distributed by salvaging teams, and mat-shed shelters were put up at once. There was no confusion, and on the third day after the earthquake the commune members went back to the fields as usual.

Wang Shan-fu and her team worked in the area for over a month. A truly outstanding commander, she often stayed on duty round the clock in the temporary command headquarters the whole time.

Wang Shan-fu had started as a navigator. Once her team accepted an emergency mission to Pohai Bay where they were to airdrop winter clothes and food to commune fishermen marooned by a sudden snowstorm. When their plane approached the bay there was a heavy fog and they could hardly distinguish water from sky. Even flying at an altitude of 150 metres they could not spot the target. Wang Shan-fu consulted the crew leader and they decided to fly still lower. The plane was now nearly skimming the water. Finally they found the helpless fishing boats, but their most difficult problem had not yet been solved. The relief goods should land within the fishermen's reach but must not hit and damage the boats or injure the fishermen. Wang Shan-fu, known for her boldness and precision, again consulted the crew leader. They decided to swoop low enough to ensure the supplies being dropped near the fishing boats, and time and again the brave, persevering crew flew at sixty metres and accomplished their mission with flying colours.

Daughter of a railway worker, Wang Shan-fu is outgoing and gets on well with people. She is unassuming,

conscientious and eager to learn, keeps the people's interests and problems at heart and is considerate of the rank and file. In early 1975 she was elected a deputy and attended the Fourth National People's Congress. A classmate one year her junior, Chu Hui-fen, was also among the second group of women pilots. Chu Hui-fen is today deputy political commissar of the General Administration of Civil Aviation of China, an alternate member of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and a member of the Standing Committee of the Fourth National People's Congress.

Growing Up Together with the New China

In the third group of women fliers trained after liberation are ten born the same year as the new China. Unlike their predecessors, their experience had been entirely in the happiness of the new, socialist society.

Seventeen years ago, at a mass rally celebrating the new China's tenth anniversary, a group of children danced in parade past Tien An Men Square. They carried colourful flowers woven into the Chinese characters saying: "I'm the same age as the new China." Today multitudes of young people their age are working in various fields to build the great socialist motherland. Among these are the ten women fliers, who work as crew leaders, instructors or flying officers, in the very backbone in China's air force.

Liu Hsiao-lien, for example, is a staff officer in charge of combat-training in a flight regiment. In 1973 when the fighters were practising for airdrops she felt the training programme needed improvement so as to make better use

of the airfields and planes. She tried several different arrangements without success, but this did not shake her determination. After repeated trials and studying the results with her colleagues, she formulated a new plan which was rational and commended by the regiment.

Liu Hsiao-lien and her team once received orders at night to lead the way on a flying mission. They ran into a thunderstorm, the air currents were treacherous and the planes were tossed up and down like ships on a choppy sea. Liu Hsiao-lien's one thought was her responsibility to the Party and the people, and how she should emulate those who had dedicated their lives to the revolution. Ready to meet whatever danger lay before her, she got her bearings in the split-second flashes of lightning. Grasping the control rod, she swiftly and daringly made a sharp turn, then pulled up to climb higher. In this way Liu Hsiao-lien led her colleagues through the storm and safely to their destination.

Eaglets on the Wing

Some spirited young women were practising take-off and landing at the airfield. Graduates of a flying school, they were the fourth group of women pilots to be trained in the new China.

Ten years ago, when the Cultural Revolution was developing in China, these young women were Red Guards who responded to Chairman Mao's call and plunged into society to rid it of evils. Nor have these young women pilots lost the Red Guards' daring in thought and action, but are full of revolutionary drive and very little influenced by conservative ideas. The tall and sturdy Chou Hsiang-

tang is one of these former Red Guards. One day soon after she put on her new army uniform, she wore her old Red Guard armband to have her picture taken. The armband was a constant reminder of her militant life as a Red Guard when she took her first step in the revolution.

Chou Hsiang-tang's father was a skilled stone-engraver in Shantung Province. The family moved to Peking when her father was asked to join in the work of erecting the Monument to the People's Heroes on Tien An Men Square. After both parents died, Hsiang-tang and her two younger sisters grew up cared for by the new society. They had deep love for the Communist Party and socialism, and it was this love that made them hate to the core the capitalist-roaders in the Party and bad elements from the old society who vainly attempted to restore capitalism. When Chairman Mao initiated the Cultural Revolution, Hsiang-tang joined the Red Guards. She can never forget the occasions on which she saw Chairman Mao.

Hsiang-tang looks upon her life as a flier with revolutionary romantic imagination. On her first solo flight she was fairly bursting with excitement in the clear blue sky, and she recited to herself: "The many-coloured clouds are at arms' length, my country's magnificent rivers and mountains within my gaze."

Walking along a railway track one day, she noticed some rails were shiny while others were dull and rusty. The shiny rails were ones that carried frequent, heavy loads, while the dull ones carried little weight and were subjected to less friction. Were not people like this? thought Hsiang-tang. She realized that to become a people's flier worthy of the name she should brighten herself by bearing heavy burdens for the revolution. She placed high demands on herself to live up to the Party's expect-

tations. She studied hard and tempered herself, making conscientious effort to become a worthy successor to the revolutionary cause. She should have a correct political outlook, high socialist consciousness, professional skill and strong physique.

At the gun signal Chou Hsiang-tang and her brave, spirited team-mates ran and climbed into their planes. One after another they roared down the runway, took off smoothly and climbed into the blue sky. China's women eaglets who have taken wing and fly in the country's territorial airspace are growing ever stronger.

Rintso—a Fine Woman “Barefoot Doctor”

Yu Hai-hua

A young Tibetan woman named Rintso from the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Chinghai Province was among the delegates to the Tenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1973. She was a standing committee member of the Chhumarleb County Party committee and a member of the Tsothri Brigade Party branch committee of the Jimar People's Commune. Her many good deeds as the brigade's "barefoot doctor" are cited by the people of her home village, who warmly praise her as a doctor with the communist spirit.

Tibetan Herdsmen's Good Doctor

The Tsothri Production Brigade is located in the southern foothills of the Bayan Kara Mountains, font of the Yangtze River. The peaks, averaging five thousand metres above sea level, are snow-capped the year round. The weather is fickle, with snow sometimes falling in June. The herdsmen live in tents scattered over the brigade's 1,200 square kilometres of mountainous grazing grounds, which are infested with wild animals.

Over the years Rintso has made her rounds of this area on yak-back, giving medical care to the brigade's 110 households. She serves members of Tsothri Brigade heart and soul, and they reciprocate by showing their affection and trust in her.

The brigade herdsmen call Rintso the "patients' agent," because of her readiness to help others, often doing household chores for her patients and working in their production teams while caring for them. When the herds-woman Tsomo was ill, Rintso visited her daily for nearly two weeks, looking after her, doing the milking and collecting cow-dung for fuel. She did Tsomo's part of the butter-making quota assigned by the production team, but insisted that the work-points be recorded in Tsomo's account book. The herdsmen were moved and commented: "Rintso is one of us, a fine doctor educated by Chairman Mao!"

One morning in April 1972 when both Rintso and her son were ill, a herdsman named Paldan and his wife came with their seriously ill little boy, whom Rintso diagnosed as suffering from acute pneumonia and dysentery. She had little medicine left in her kit, but without hesitation she gave the child the penicillin she had intended to give her own son. Paldan and his wife saw that the doctor and her son were sick, and they left at once.

After they had gone, Rintso kept thinking: He's their only son. If something should happen to him, what would they do? She got out of bed, tucked the covers round her son, slung her medical kit over her shoulder and went to Paldan's home to give the boy further care. The couple felt embarrassed and said: "You and your son are both sick. Why did you come?"

"It's your boy that worries me," replied Rintso. She picked up the child and watched over him for a whole day, till finally Paldan and his wife persuaded her to go back and nurse her own son.

Early the next morning the dogs barked outside Paldan's tent and then came Rintso's voice: "Uncle Paldan, how's the boy?" Rintso lived nearly fifteen kilometres away, and yet she arrived at their tent so early out of concern for their son! Paldan and his wife came out to greet their doctor, whose eyebrows and hair were white with frost. Rintso stayed that day till the child took a turn for the better. Paldan couldn't say enough in her praise. "You've saved our son and we can never forget you, our benefactor," he said.

"The real benefactor is the Communist Party and Chairman Mao," Rintso explained. "Without them I wouldn't be here at all."

Slave into Doctor

Rintso was born in 1945 into the family of a poor Tibetan herdsman in Tari County, Chinghai Province. Her mother died a year later in childbirth. When she was five, a herdowner shot and killed her father in cold blood, and after that she and her brothers and sisters roamed the area, begging. Reaching Chhumarleb County, they were seized by four herdowners and made slaves. Six-year-old Rintso had to tend the calves by day and sleep in the sheepfold at night.

One snowy night the son of one of the herdowners dragged Rintso, who was nestling against the animals for warmth, to his father's tent to scratch his itchy back. The

herdowner had a skin disease which made him look like a mangy dog. When the exhausted child dozed off, the herdowner flogged her and forced her to sit in a pile of snow for three days and nights. Rintso's cries from cold and hunger stabbed the other slaves to the heart, and though they had been forbidden to comfort her, one old slave slipped her an old sheepskin for cover and stuffed a handful of *tsamba*, or roasted highland barley, into her mouth.

When Rintso was eleven, the herdowner made her churn butter, an adult's job, after her regular day's work. She had to do it standing on a pile of hay, for even when she stood on tiptoe she was not as tall as the churn. For each churnful she had to wield the paddle three thousand times, twice as many as an adult had to, and she often fainted from fatigue, which meant another flogging.

Rintso could stand such inhuman treatment no longer, and her fellow slaves also said: "Dawn follows the darkest hour of the night, Rintso!"

At last the sun shone in the sky. Liberation tore off the most dismal page of history. The slave girl's bitter life came to an end in 1958 when democratic reforms were carried out in the stock-breeding areas of Chinghai with the aid of a work group sent by the Communist Party. Rintso could not at first understand the full significance of this historic change, but when the cadres invited her to their headquarters, outfitted her in new clothes and treated her to buttered tea, she was moved to tears. For the first time in her life Rintso, who had lost her parents and been a slave since the age of six, felt the warm concern of the Party.

The work group thought of training her in medicine, which she could learn by assisting the doctors and nurses

who had come with them. Rintso was thrilled at the prospect. How fine it would be for the emancipated herdsmen to have their own doctor! "But I've never been to school, how could I do it?" she asked.

"You can learn medicine anyway," a member of the work group replied. "Don't you want to be a master of the country?"

Be "a master of the country"? The idea was new to Rintso. So the work group explained the meaning of revolution to her and she began to understand.

But when the class enemies heard of Rintso learning medicine from the work group, they took fright and tried to intimidate her. "You learn medicine from the Hans and they'll carry you off," they railed. But, as sheep which have been exposed to a blizzard long for a sunny slope, so does a slave who has suffered under the slaveowner's lash follow the Party. Rintso defiantly refuted the class enemies. "I work with the cadres sent by Chairman Mao," she said. "What's wrong with that?"

They threatened her, and one of them said: "A woman studying medicine would only offend the demon spirits. We won't take your medicine!"

Rintso's ready reply was: "The masses of herdspeople will take it."

Reared by the Party and now infuriated by the class enemies' malicious words, Rintso felt like a ball of fire. How she yearned to become a doctor on the grassland! A nurse taught her the technique of giving injections and she practised on herself.

Later, on several occasions she attended the cadres' and medical training courses sponsored by the autonomous prefecture. She delved into the medical literature and studied avidly *Serve the People, In Memory of*

Norman Bethune and other articles by Chairman Mao, and her class consciousness grew to direct her medical skill. In 1960 she was given the opportunity to work in the Chhumarleb County town hospital but, knowing the need of her native place for doctors and the need of her class brothers and sisters there with whom she had shared weal and woe, she asked to return to the grassland as a part-time medical worker.

The Party supported Rintso's request, and early in 1961 she returned to Tsothri Production Brigade. There, determined to devote her youth to the socialist grassland as the Party taught her, she soon proved herself a model both in medical work and in herding. She was always out the earliest for milking, spun woollen yarn till late at night and volunteered for the hardest jobs. She was commended as a good commune member at the end of each year.

Rintso seemed a mild enough young woman, but she was a dynamo when it came to taking part in collective labour as a commune member or serving the people as a "barefoot doctor." For the past dozen years and more she has made medical rounds of the production teams by yak, over mountains and rapids, defying bears and wolves.

In time Rintso married and had a baby, whom she took with her on her rounds, the child and her medicine kit on another yak. Sometimes, while leading her yak on her rounds she also spins woollen yarn.

Tibetan-Han Solidarity

Nineteen sixty-eight was a good year for stock-breeding at Tsothri Brigade. When winter came, herd after herd

of fattened cattle and sheep were driven off for sale to the state. Every household slaughtered sheep and cattle for its winter supply of meat, and the tents were piled high with butter and other milk products.

Each year, Han and Tibetan cadres from the county and commune came to help the herdspeople with the year-end work. Scenes of Tibetan-Han unity for a common goal were seen everywhere. One of those who went to Tsothri Brigade to assist with distributing income and protecting the sheep and cattle from cold was Li Hsueh-liang, a Han book-keeper of Jimar Commune. The Tibetan brigade members warmly welcomed the Han cadres, affectionately calling them "cadres sent by the Party and Chairman Mao."

On such occasions Rintso stays with a friend so as to put her tent at the cadres' disposal, and she provides the best food available for them. She asked Li Hsueh-liang to ride her yak, a gentle one, but one day after finishing work at Team No. 4 and eager to get to Team No. 3 quickly, he took another yak and was thrown and severely injured on the way.

Rintso was called immediately and found Li lying unconscious by the road. She and some other Tibetan comrades carried him on a soft litter to the nearest tent. Tibetan herdsmen learning of the accident went to the tent to inquire about Li Hsueh-liang, bringing lambskin coats or buttered tea.

Rintso had never been faced with such a serious medical problem, and it was her warm feeling towards Han brothers that prompted her to nurse Li Hsueh-liang for three days and nights, giving injections and feeding him, until a commune doctor arrived.

The commune doctor said that Li had a fractured vertebra and should be taken to a large hospital as soon as possible. Rintso suggested to the brigade revolutionary committee that the quickest way was to take a shortcut over the 5,800-metre-high Bayan Seso Great Snow Mountains and then the Chinghai-Tibet Highway. The revolutionary committee agreed and assigned six strong militiamen and the commune doctor, who was of Han nationality, to carry and care for Li. Rintso insisted on going too. "Comrade Li was injured for us Tibetans," she said. "A Han doctor can go in my stead but can't convey my feeling for our Han brother on my behalf."

At dawn of the sixth day the team set out in whirling snow, Rintso up front with her kit and leading her yak.

They had crossed the mountains when night fell. The stretcher-bearers were exhausted and needed sleep, so Rintso stayed up to keep the fire going with cow-dung.

The team started off again early the next morning, with Rintso, who had not had a good rest for seven days and nights, staying with the stretcher-bearers until the sound of trucks told them the highway was not far away. Then she tucked the blanket round the patient before he was put on a truck and the convoy moved on. Rintso stood on the slope watching till they were out of sight. She was certain her Han brother would soon be well.

All for the People

It was spring 1969 when the cold wind from the far north had weakened and the Bayan Rikyid Grassland was beginning to turn green again. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was deepening and the whole Tsothri

Brigade was a scene of bustling activity. To plan for an even busier year, the brigade cadres were having a meeting in a tent near Rintso's.

Suddenly a man from Team No. 2 burst into the tent with the news that Bulu, son of the brigade's revolutionary committee chairman Sodchhug, who was ill at home, was spitting blood. The boy's mother was also in bed exhausted from caring for her son. Sodchhug said he would go home and see. As he was leaving, Rintso offered to go in his stead. "You are needed here. I'll go and look after your son."

Sodchhug protested. But Rintso was firm and, asking a neighbour to look after her new-born baby, she immediately set out on horseback to see the boy.

Rintso found Bulu to be suffering from acute pneumonia. She gave injections and some medicine by mouth, at the same time consoling the mother, Sidmo, and asking her to rest. After three days of careful nursing Bulu was better and his mother also could get up.

Before Rintso could go home, someone arrived on horseback to say she should return at once. She thought immediately of her baby son. Was something wrong with him? She said a few parting words to Sidmo, mounted her horse and was off.

Rintso found her baby in convulsions, and though she tried by giving injections to save him, she failed. An hour later her baby died in her arms.

The joys and sorrows of a devoted revolutionary are always shared by the people, and it was a happy occasion for the herdspeople when Rintso gave birth to another son in April 1970 and to a daughter the following year. Rintso's tent was filled with well-wishing visitors at both occasions.

On the second day after Rintso's son was born, Sidmo called on her, bearing her best wishes. She took the lovely baby in her arms and kissed him. She thought for a while, then called the baby *Thangthotsering* to express her wish that the baby's life be fresh and green as their pastures.

Uncle Paldan was also among Rintso's visitors after she gave birth to her daughter, and he called the baby *Tseringtso*, conveying his wish that the girl's vigour should never run dry but be vast like the sea.

Rintso's two children are today growing up happily like the other children of the Bayan Rikyid Grassland.

Now, herds of sleek horses, cattle and sheep graze on the Bayan Rikyid Grassland. Hardy herdsmen work busily: some tending cattle and sheep; others digging irrigation canals or building cattle sheds. The whole grassland presents a scene of socialist activity.

Island Militia Women

Yuan Chung-chien

Midnight on Tungshan Island off the eastern coast.

At the bugle-call for an emergency muster, the militia women, rifles in hand, rushed out of their homes towards their rendezvous. Then they fanned out to perform their tasks in close co-ordination with the People's Liberation Army garrison on the island: standing sentinel, reconnoitring, cutting off the main roads, sealing off the inlets of the sea, and keeping watch on important objects. In an instant a dragnet was spread over the island which would leave no loophole for any foe who dared to intrude.

This was one of the night training exercises the militia women's company of the Peisha People's Commune on Tungshan Island regularly undertook to keep constantly on the alert. Invariably at the head of these vigorous women in such drills or in political study was a sturdy woman in her late thirties with a cartridge-belt round her waist. She was Wang Yueh-hsia, leader of the company and a much-admired crack shot who could fire forty rounds a minute without a single miss.

Blazing a New Trail

Wang Yueh-hsia was only fourteen in 1952 when Tungshan Island was liberated. When she saw the PLA men

chasing the remnant Kuomintang bandits, she was overjoyed and went in her bare feet carrying drinking water and ammunition to our soldiers amid heavy enemy fire.

In 1960, inspired by Chairman Mao's call to **organize contingents of the people's militia on a big scale**, Wang Yueh-hsia, already a Communist Party member, talked the matter over with twenty young fisherwomen, and together they formed the island's first militia women's company under the leadership of the commune Party committee.

From then on they were often seen at drill during work-breaks, either beside the fields or on the beach. It was still quite unusual on this out-of-the-way island for women to carry rifles and perform guard duty. Carping comments were made by certain people with feudal ideas when they saw the militia women bathed in sweat and crawling on their hands and knees in the mud.

"How can you make a soldier out of a woman!" one said.

"It's really going too far asking girls to crawl around on all fours!" another blustered.

Commune member Lin Hsia-nan and her sister-in-law were both militia enthusiasts. When Hsia-nan's mother-in-law, Grannie Cheng, heard these comments, she was infuriated and forbade the two young women to take part in militia activities.

Wang Yueh-hsia was well aware that the militia women's company could not grow strong without smashing the shackles of the old force of habit. She decided to call on Lin Hsia-nan and her mother-in-law. Since all three had been child-brides before liberation, a common topic was soon found to begin their conversation. Grannie Cheng's face brightened as they contrasted their

happy life in the new society with their misery in the old. At this point Wang Yueh-hsia said, "In the old days we women from poor families were at the mercy of others. We had to keep our eyes on the ground when other people were around and we dared not hit back when others beat us. Now we have stood up, and Chairman Mao and the Communist Party have given us rifles to defend our victory. Isn't it right for us to tote rifles and perform guard duty?"

"I understand it now, child," said Grannie Cheng. "What you militia women have done is right." She immediately took her grandson from her daughter-in-law and said to her, "Go ahead. I'll see to things here at home."

Lin Hsia-nan on her part did everything she could to help her mother-in-law with the household chores. This incident soon became known throughout the village and many of those with conservative ideas began to see things in a new light.

Women Can Fight Too

The militia women's company made it a point to undergo rigorous training to meet the needs of actual fighting. Wang Yueh-hsia was always out front in these exercises, the first to throw herself down if there was mud, or into puddles if need be. She and the other militia women chose stony and rough roads instead of grassy plots for drilling, and more often than not their clothes were torn and their elbows and knees skinned. Still no one of them ever complained.

Wang Yueh-hsia had set up a target on the hill-slope not far from her house and she kept her rifle in the door-

way near her cook-stove so she could practise aiming while attending to the stove. And she had climbed out of bed more than once at midnight to practise night shooting. Years of such training made her a sharpshooter, and she won honours at a county-wide militia review. Her companions in the company had done very well too, and were loudly applauded by the spectators. After that, even those sceptics in their village were convinced of their worth as women soldiers.

The militia women were faced with another severe test in 1962 when the Chiang Kai-shek gang, aided and abetted by U.S. imperialism, tried to harass the southeastern coast. The PLA fighters and the people on Tungshan Island got ready to wipe out the invaders lock, stock and barrel. At a meeting called by their company the militia women all expressed their determination to join in the fight.

A storm was raging when the militia women's company, on the order of the higher command, reached its defence sector. Wang Yueh-hsia immediately assigned the various platoons their tasks: Platoon Two to be on the alert, Platoon Three to reconnoitre along the forward position and Platoons One and Four to build second-line defence works. Eating and sleeping on the site, the militia women worked round the clock for a whole week, dug trenches totalling 1,700 metres and built thirty shelters and bunkers. Political Instructor Chen Yu-lan and Platoon Leader Lin Hsia-nan heaped stones and rocks before the trenches. "We'll keep our positions intact as long as we live," they said. "If we run out of ammunition we'll crush the enemy to a pulp with these stones and rocks."

The high morale of the women fired the people of the fishing village with enthusiasm. Of their own accord

several old grannies trudged over hill and dale to bring drinking water to them. "Go ahead, girls," one of them said. "We feel safe with you protecting our country and homes."

The militia women's company had come of age in the trials of struggle.

When the men were away fishing at sea the militia women took it upon themselves to maintain social order, stand sentinel and engage in production. They always took the lead in farming and side-occupations. Thirty squad and platoon cadres of the militia women's company were at the same time leaders or deputy leaders of the production teams. The commune members praised them as vanguards in combat and pathbreakers in production.

The Aspirations of Two Generations

These militia women were not out of the ordinary. Some were mothers of several children; others were girls in their teens. What, then, was the source of their revolutionary enthusiasm in defending the motherland and their indomitable courage in struggle? This question is answered in the speech of the old platoon leader Chang O-lan at the company general meeting in August 1973 when she asked for permission to remain in the militia unit though over-age. This was the third time she had done so.

Rifle in hand, this veteran militia woman, firmness on her weather-beaten face, began by talking about a pair of shoes.

Chang O-lan's mother, now in her seventies, had started begging at the age of seven, wandering about bare-

foot. When she grew up, she married a fisherman. But he was so poor that she still had to go barefoot, begging from village to village. Often her feet, cut by sharp shells and rugged paths, left a trail of blood where she had been.

Chang O-lan's had been a family of eight, but only her mother and herself survived hunger and disease through to the liberation. Only then did they begin to have decent meals and shoes to wear.

Chang O-lan joined the militia as soon as she turned sixteen, the required age, with the enthusiastic support of her mother. For more than ten years she had been a pace-setter in production and militia training, and become an excellent heavy machine-gunner. In the past two years the company leadership had three times tried to persuade her to give up militia work because of her occupation as a production team leader, and also because she was over-age. Each time, however, they had been moved by her determination to let her stay in.

"I owe everything to Chairman Mao, to the People's Liberation Army," Chang O-lan had said with emotion. "Only with guns can we defend our island. We shall keep our rifles ready as long as there are imperialists, revisionists and other reactionaries."

Chang O-lan's example was a great inspiration to the other militia women, especially those of the younger generation. Squad Leader Chang Yu-ying's fifteen-year-old sister, Chang Hsiao-ying, had been pestering her with the request to be accepted as a militia member, but Chang Yu-ying had never given serious thought to it because Chang Hsiao-ying was not yet sixteen and not even the height of a rifle with bayonet fixed. Chang O-lan's story excited Chang Yu-ying and set her thinking about a lot of

questions. She agreed with Chang O-lan that the people's political power must be defended with guns and the militia should be expanded constantly. So she encouraged Chang Hsiao-ying and accepted her into her squad at her sixteenth birthday, after which they usually went to the fields and training exercises together.

Soon after, at a county-wide militia target practice the two sisters challenged each other to a shooting contest in which Chang Hsiao-ying with seven rounds scored sixty-eight points out of a possible seventy, two points more than her elder sister, to the great joy of the entire company.

Later, when Chang Yu-ying married and left Tungshan, her post was filled by her deputy, and Chang Hsiao-ying was elected assistant squad leader.

In the past ten years or more the company has had many going-outs and coming-ins — involving eight hundred people all told because of over-age or marrying into this or other villages. Those who leave, however, continue to concern themselves with the militia company. The night before she married and left Tungshan, Wang Tsan, leader of Squad Ten, called a squad meeting at which she asked everyone to say frankly what they thought of her, expressed her wishes for their future progress and gave her successor a briefing about the squad. Later, whenever she visited her parents' home she invariably had heart-to-heart talks with her former colleagues and inquired of the squad leader about their progress. She earned the name "unofficial squad leader."

Army and People United as One Family

"The PLA men are our good teachers" was the comment of the militia women's company cadres and fighters when

they spoke about the enthusiastic support and help given them by the PLA garrison on Tungshan Island.

Acting on Chairman Mao's teaching, the PLA paid close attention to both army and militia building. They organized the militia's study of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and helped them with their training, so that "a thousand nets are cast at conch-call and ten thousand rifles are shouldered when the bugle sounds." A Great Wall of army-civilian joint defence was erected on this coastal outpost. On December 12, 1965, the PLA company that had fought alongside the militia women's company was designated by the Ministry of National Defence as Exemplary Company of Army-Civilian Joint Defence.

The PLA men on Tungshan Island cherish the people and the people support them.

When the island was struck by a dry spell lasting several months in 1971, the PLA cadres and soldiers carried water from the emergency storage in their tunnels to the people's doorsteps. Throughout all those days they trudged over hills and ridges, sometimes more than two hours to and fro, sweating profusely under the blazing sun.

The militia women also looked upon the PLA men as family members and often helped them build defence works and transport ammunition. Sometimes they drilled, studied and rehearsed songs, dances, etc. together with the PLA men. One day when the garrison company was under orders to leave Tungshan Island immediately to perform an urgent task, the militia women were faced with the question of what to do after the soldiers had left. Their answer was: "We'll take over immediately! There mustn't be a single moment's slackening in guarding this coastal outpost of our country." And that is just what the militia women did.

In these years too, many cadres and fighters have left both from the garrison unit and the militia company, while many new ones have arrived. Still the glorious tradition of army-civilian joint defence has been carried on from year to year. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution the army and people severely criticized Lin Piao and company's attempts to undermine the joint defence as well as their reactionary fallacy that "militia is useless." The criticism gave them a deeper understanding of Chairman Mao's concept of people's war and they became more aware of the need to put it into practice.

Not long ago, when the PLA garrison and the militia in its defence zone launched a large-scale joint manoeuvre, the gun emplacements and frontline trenches became a hive of activity as the agile, alert soldiers and militia members made their battle preparations. In the headquarters the militia women's company commander Wang Yueh-hsia's ringing voice came over the portable radio-telephone:

"Reporting. All of us of the militia women's company have taken our places in full combat readiness. Should imperialism or social-imperialism dare to spring surprise attacks on us, we shall wipe them out resolutely, thoroughly, wholly and completely!"

How I Took Up the Brush to Paint Rural Scenes

Li Feng-lan

Huhsien County of Shensi Province is known as the "home of painting." Among the more than seven hundred peasant amateur painters, women account for one-fourth, and they also head more than thirty amateur art groups at the production brigade level. These women artists serve as brigade Party branch secretaries, directors of women's work, militia company leaders, accountants, "barefoot doctors" and school teachers. Still, the majority are ordinary peasants. This situation shows that under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line the new China's working women are not only emancipated politically and economically but that they have become masters of the new socialist culture.

The paintings by the peasant women of Huhsien County reflect the fighting life of China's peasant masses in building the new, socialist countryside. The works are clear-cut in theme, bright in colour, and compact in composition.

New creative works by these peasant women have been shown at the annual national art exhibition for several years now. The more outstanding among them are exhibited in other parts of the country and appear in national newspapers and magazines. Some have been displayed at international fairs.

How did these peasant women, who are building the new, socialist countryside with their own hands, take up the brush to paint its beauty? How did they get started in creative art? Li Feng-lan, skilled cotton cultivator and Huhsien County's first peasant woman artist who began painting in 1958, answers this question from her own experience. — Ed.

I am an ordinary peasant woman. In 1958 I started to paint in my spare time and have done more than three hundred pictures. It was a great encouragement to me when, in 1973, my *Spring Hoeing*, *Our Fertilizer Factory Goes into Production* and *Racing Against Time in Sowing* were shown in Peking at the Exhibition of Peasant Paintings from Huhsien County, Shensi Province.

Before liberation, no one would ever dream of a peasant woman like me going in for art work. As a child I loved to draw and make paper cut-outs, with which we used to decorate our windows at the Spring Festival. Each year my mother would cut out these "window flowers" and I would sit beside her and learn to make them too. Sometimes I made my own, designing, cutting out and pasting them on the windows myself. The neighbours said I had the knack and deft hands for it.

But in those days I had no chance to go to school. Our family was very poor and there were many younger brothers and sisters. From the time I was very small I had plenty of household chores to do. During the day I went out to gather firewood. In the evenings I had to help mother spin and weave.

When liberation came in 1949 I was already fifteen but couldn't read or write a single character. Then a short-

term literacy class was organized in our village. This was my first opportunity to study and I began learning to read and write.

In 1958, with the Big Leap Forward in industry and agriculture, our Huhsien County started building a reservoir. To liven up cultural life and heighten the enthusiasm of the reservoir builders, the county Party committee decided to run an amateur art class at the work-site.

When I heard that each commune had been asked to recommend one or two members for the class, I immediately volunteered and my commune Party committee approved. It was in that class that I first studied Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art* and understood why we should paint for the workers, peasants and soldiers. During the busy construction work some professional artists helped me to paint a poster which we titled *Heroes Taming the Water-Controlling Dragon* to illustrate the heroic spirit of the commune members in conquering nature. This was my first step in the field of art.

It was not easy for a working woman like me to take up artistic creation. I worked in the fields all the year round and had family responsibilities at home. My time for painting was limited to rest-breaks. Moreover, people with old conservative ideas looked askance at a village woman painting, and they made chilling, sarcastic remarks. But I thought of Chairman Mao's teaching: "**If socialism does not occupy the rural front, capitalism assuredly will.**" And I recalled how, after liberation, the class struggle in the cultural field continued to rage in our countryside. Among the means the overthrown landlord class still used to corrupt people were old paintings loaded with feudal superstition, and we had to wage a

tit-for-tat struggle against this. We poor and lower-middle peasants must certainly occupy the cultural field in the countryside and never allow the reactionary classes to exercise dictatorship over us again. With Chairman Mao backing us and pointing the way, we were determined to paint and would never retreat. And so, over all these years, I've overcome all kinds of difficulties and kept on painting.

With low educational level and little basic training in painting, I sometimes tried very hard but still did badly. Once I did a picture of militia at drill, but when the young people saw it they said the figures were short and pudgy like the plump sister-in-law in an old folk tale. I decided to make a special effort to grasp the essentials of painting, and started learning to sketch. Usually I tried to remember scenes I encountered, which I would later draw at home. I also took a drawing pad with me to the fields or to meetings and sketched during rest periods. Even while cooking a meal I would sometimes suddenly think of a good scene and do an outline sketch right away. As time went on, people who saw my work began to commend my progress, saying, "Now what you paint looks real." Gradually I turned out quite a lot of papercuts, wall paintings, posters, serial pictures, lantern slides and paintings for stage setting.

In the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, I plunged into the fierce struggle with my brush as weapon and angrily repudiated Liu Shao-chi's counter-revolutionary revisionist line with my murals and lantern slides. When the struggle was very sharp, a landlord and some other bad persons in our village started to make trouble underhandedly, trying to sow discord among commune members. I decided to expose these class enemies

through paintings. I did a series of family histories showing how the poor and lower-middle peasants had been exploited and oppressed by these very same characters before liberation. These pictures, which we put on show in the village, were like bullets hitting at the class enemies, and their heads began to droop. Some young people who had not seen through these enemies before did so after looking at the picture. Seeing how they had deflated the enemy, no few poor and lower-middle peasants said happily: "Right, that's just the way to fix those bad eggs!"

Since the Cultural Revolution began there's been a fresh breeze in our village. People often ask me to do paintings on new themes, like heroes and heroines from the model revolutionary theatrical works. I've taught a spare-time art class in the village primary school and helped paint posters on walls along the village streets. I keep trying harder to reflect what is new in our socialist countryside.

In autumn 1971 our Kuangming Commune was ready to get an excellent cotton harvest. The bolls burst their silver pompons. During that rush season we women worked happily from dawn to dusk. We picked cotton in the fields and drove waggons or pulled carts to deliver and sell cotton to the state. Our laughter and songs could be heard everywhere. I was moved deeply by the scene and I wanted very much to paint it. So, right after work one evening I began *Happy Harvest of Cotton*. But it didn't come out right the first time. It was just an ordinary picture of women picking cotton. When other commune members saw it one of them said: "Feng-lan, the bolls look real all right and the women have on new clothes, but there's not the revolutionary spirit of us commune members."

After collecting everybody's opinions I made a second sketch. It had a large field of unpicked cotton as background, a group of women picking, and one patch finished. In the foreground were seven women each pulling a handcart brimming over with new cotton. They were hurrying along as if racing with a young man driving a waggon laden with cotton. Although this second version still had its shortcomings, everybody said it was much better than the first. I understood now what was wrong with my first picture. Its main defect was that it didn't show the commune members' tremendous drive and revolutionary enthusiasm in building socialism.

Our part of Shensi Province, the Kuanchung area, is wheat country. When the winter wheat turns green again in spring we women do the hoeing. The countryside is especially beautiful then. Garden-like wheat fields of tender green contrast with pink, full-blown peach blossoms. Going to work at this time I can hardly tear my eyes away from the scenes. And I never cease wanting to paint them to show the moving beauty of the new, socialist countryside and how enthusiastic we women commune members are in building it. So, while hoeing, I began to observe carefully the people working around me and to sketch them during rest-breaks. It was in this way that I started, revised and finally finalized *Spring Hoeing*. The painting shows sixteen peasants each of whom I had previously sketched. The middle-aged woman in the blue jacket in front is done from sketches of the woman in charge of organizing the women's labour force in our brigade.

I started *Spring Hoeing* in 1972, collecting opinions and making many changes. The painting exhibited in Peking in 1973 was the fourth version and shows some improvement in portraying my characters.

With support from the brigade Party branch, five of our young village women and I have organized an amateur art group. The county cultural centre often sends professional artists to help us and we've learned a good deal from them. There can be no end to painting for the workers, peasants and soldiers, and our new, socialist countryside has so much that needs to be painted. I am determined to continue along Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in literature and art and paint more and better pictures reflecting our new era.

New Life of a Woman Acrobat

Hsin Han

"A poor girl in the old society, wandering about to show acrobatics for a living and being trampled on at the very bottom of society, I now have the right to take part in the management of state affairs. This is something I never dreamed of in the dark days."

These are the words of Comrade Hsia Chu-hua, a well-known woman artist who has performed on China's acrobatic stage for thirty years. From her own experience she told us about the changes that have taken place in the political and social positions of Chinese women acrobats since liberation.

The thirty-seven-year-old Hsia Chu-hua is a deputy head of the Wuhan Cultural Bureau in Hupeh Province and vice-director of the provincial women's association. In January 1975 she was elected to the Standing Committee of the Fourth National People's Congress, China's highest organ of state power under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Of the Fourth Congress Standing Committee's 167 members, forty-two are women. Many are working women who suffered every sort of oppression in the old society and became masters of their country after liberation.

Hsia Chu-hua was born in a poor peasant family. Her father did seasonal jobs for landlords. Later, he worked

as a groom in a circus, but he still couldn't keep his family, so Chu-hua had to go begging with her mother and grandmother. When she was five, her father tearfully "pawned" her to the feudal boss of the circus as security for a loan. She was forced to leave her dear ones and deprived of all personal freedom. At seven she was driven by the beatings of the boss into the arena. Using the little girl to make money for himself, the boss made her perform his most dangerous and painful act: "Hanging in the Air by the Pigtail." A rope attached to her hair, she was suspended by it and made to swing high off the ground. Another act required her to move about on a ladder metres above the ground and hang upside-down with no safety belt or net. Such grim items pulled her hair out in bunches, and she was unconscious many times after falling from heights. Still she had to go on with her performance as soon as she came to her senses. She also saw a lot of other little girls like herself injured in such acts and becoming disabled. They dared not even cry out loud. "Are we fated to such a life?" Chu-hua kept asking herself.

In 1949, China achieved her liberation. The People's Government helped Chu-hua and other child-acrobats like herself to rid themselves of the feudal bosses' oppression and exploitation, and brought them their personal freedom. They became members of the acrobatic troupes set up by the state, where men and women are equal. In addition to guaranteed salary, the state supplies special clothing and subsidy for extra nutrition. The troupe has its own doctors, and all members enjoy free medical care. Aging acrobats may retire on state pensions.

There have been profound changes in Chu-hua's life. At her first appearance on the people's stage she was inspired by the warm applause of her worker-peasant-soldier au-

dience. When she attended her first meeting, an entirely new thing to her, she was encouraged to state her opinions on important matters, for instance on the question of how to run the troupe well. Then she learned to write her name stroke by stroke at evening school. . . . "All this," says Chu-hua, "is a matter of course for acrobats today, but for me, then just emancipated, it was unimaginable!"

Her experience in the two different societies has helped her to see why the poor were oppressed and exploited, and why acrobats were discriminated against in the old days. It also points up the significance of her work today. "The socialist system opens up the path for women's emancipation," she said. "Without the Chinese Communist Party leading the working people to wage revolutionary struggle, overthrow imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism weighing down on the Chinese people and to establish the socialist new China, there would be none of my happiness today."

In the new China, acrobatic troupes have rejected terror and obscenity in their performances, encouraging the acrobats to create new, wholesome items which delight the eye as well. Thus the Chinese acrobatic art, stemming from the life of the labouring people, has developed with renewed vigour. Measures are required by the state to ensure acrobats' safety during training and performances.

Hsia Chu-hua told us: "Today, acrobatic performing no longer means making money for the bosses. Our art has ceased to be a diversion for the rich or a source of thrills for them, nor is it our means of livelihood only. Acrobatics have become a component part of revolutionary culture and serves the people. I came to see this truth and made up my mind to serve the people better by improving my skill. The leadership of our troupe helped me to do this by

appointing veteran acrobats to teach me from their rich experience."

Pagoda of Bowls is one of the excellent items created by Hsia Chu-hua. Before liberation it was performed only by men, and the movements were crude. Chu-hua improved it so that now, with a dozen smooth porcelain bowls balanced on her head, she can execute various movements calling for high skill. In this way she displays on stage the great sculptural beauty of resourcefulness and firmness. In three months of practice she tried first balancing a bowl of sand on her head, then added a brick at a time until she had no trouble balancing twelve bowls. She trained hard, her clothing often wet with sweat, but nothing could stop her, determined as she was to develop China's acrobatic art.

Her continuous progress in political and ideological consciousness and her professional achievement led to her being elected many times as a model worker and her subsequent reception by Chairman Mao in Peking. In 1957 she joined the Chinese Communist Party. Reviewing her past life, she said: "It is the Party and the people's education and inspiration that have made me what I am."

Once while performing in the open a strong wind arose, but Chu-hua kept on through the last act. No one in the audience left either, but applauded her warmly at the end. Backstage, she was immediately helped into a warm coat which the troupe leaders and comrades had seen to it was ready for her. Chu-hua thought how different this was from the past! Then, while performing *Moving on a Ladder*, she had fallen from a height and broken her collar bone yet the boss had refused her so much as one dose of medicine and left her lying alone in her pain in a ramshackle temple. . . . Thinking of the miserable life in the

old days, she felt more than ever the warmth of the thick coat in which her comrades wrapped her today. With the bitterness of the past still fresh in her memory, Chu-hua was moved to tears by the Party's concern and class solidarity.

When she tried the new item *Picking Up the Bowls with the Feet* on the stage for the first time, she had three failures and broke some bowls. But the audience sat quietly till she succeeded at her fourth try and then applauded her especially enthusiastically. The next day she received a letter from someone in the audience. It read: "Last evening when you failed the third time we were worried. Still we felt sure you would see the act through, and that's what you did. I must learn from your strong will. I wish you still greater success!"

For more than twenty years Hsia Chu-hua has followed the road pointed out by Chairman Mao in his *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art* and served the people with her art. Not only does the troupe perform in city theatres. It goes also to factories to perform for the workers, to remote mountain villages for peasant audiences, and to the coastal frontiers and islands, to airfields and gunboats, performing for the soldiers of the People's Liberation Army. She has been to more than twenty other countries in Asia, Europe and Latin America on friendly visits or to perform, contributing to the friendship between the peoples of China and these countries.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution gave Hsia Chu-hua still more opportunity to become politically mature and make greater progress in her art. She has trained an increasing number of young acrobats, teaching them all she knows. "Art is by no means one's private property. It belongs to the people," she says. "We must do well in

training more and better acrobats who will serve the people heart and soul. The Party and people have entrusted me with a leading post. I will make great effort in studying Marxism and work still harder to consolidate our proletarian dictatorship and support the just struggles of the people of the world."

Women Took Part in the Conquest of Qomolangma Feng

Hsin Hua-chu

With its natural grandeur, Qomolangma Feng (Mount Jolmo Lungma) dominated the blue skyline. The sun shone on its ridges, ringed by wisps of clouds. On May 27, 1975, at 2:30 p.m., Peking time, a Tibetan woman climber, Phanthog, deputy leader of the Chinese Mountaineering Expedition, triumphantly reached the summit of Qomolangma, together with eight men climbers. She became the first woman mountaineer in the world to reach the top of the world's highest peak from its north slope. This great achievement is a further example of how nature can be conquered.

Of the women members of the expedition, the following ascended the mountain to various altitudes: Three Tibetans, Chamco, Gunsang and Zhasang, climbed to 8,600 m.; three others, Cering Balzhon, Wangmo and Gaylo, to 8,200 m.; another two, Pasang and Balzhan, to 7,800 m.; while Cedan Zhoma and Cering Yangjan (Tibetan), Chou Huai-mei and Hsing Ling-ling (Han), and Migma Zhoma, Dasang and Zhogar (Tibetan) all achieved 7,600 m.

The heroic part played by the Chinese women mountaineers in conquering Qomolangma clearly demonstrated

the new outlook of Chinese women as a result of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius. It is convincing proof of their revolutionary spirit with which they can scale the greatest heights and overcome the most formidable obstacles.

Setting Out

In March 1975, the Base Camp at Rongbuk Monastery was reached by the Chinese Mountaineering Expedition, thirty-six of whose members were women. The camp was situated 5,000 m. above sea level, in Rongbuk Valley north of Qomolangma.

Mountaineering among Chinese women first began in 1958. Before their 1975 expedition the women mountaineers had ascended the 7,546-m. Mount Muztagh Ata and the 7,595-m. Mount Kongur Tiubie Tagh, twice breaking the women's world alpine record.

Among the women climbers who took part in the present expedition were workers, commune members, People's Liberation Army fighters, cadres and students of Tibetan, Hui, Owenke and Han nationalities. Most were on their very first expedition.

On the morning of March 19, the area around Qomolangma was covered with ice and snow. The women's team prepared for their first acclimatization march led by their leader Gunsang. They carried with them essentials such as food and light eiderdown sleeping bags. After three days' march, they reached Camp Three at an altitude of 6,500 m. To the south rose the snow-covered summit and opposite it the satellite North Peak. Linking

these was the saddle-like North Col of ice and snow, the only pass to the summit and therefore known as the gate to Qomolangma.

Helped by their male comrades, the new women climbers Wangmo, Dasang, Zhogar, Chou Huai-mei and Hsing Ling-ling began attacking North Col in two groups on March 22 and 23 respectively. At first they had to cross the névé and crevasses before climbing the steep ice wall of the col. They inched their way forward along a route marked out by small red flags, grasping a red nylon rope fixed on to the ice by the scouting group, and with the help of ice-axes. Chou Huai-mei and Hsing Ling-ling suffered from mountain sickness. Every step was a tremendous effort, but they encouraged each other by calling out, "Come on, forward means victory!" They struggled on until finally, after six hours, they arrived at the top of North Col, 7,007 m. above sea level. For all these five women this was their very first climb. They had never reached such an altitude before, nor received any special training in climbing through ice and snow. Nevertheless, they had, in a mere four days, conquered the gate to the summit on their first acclimatization march.

On the Way

The difficulties the expedition encountered were increased by Qomolangma's ultra-high altitude and peculiar geographical location and environment. The terrain was perilous and the weather unpredictable and variable.

In order to hasten the process of acclimatization, the women climbers set out on their second acclimatization march on April 5. Three days later, Chamco, Gunsang,

Zhasang and six other Tibetan women again ascended North Col along with some men climbers. They levelled out a clearing in the ice and snow with ice-axes to pitch a dozen tents for the night.

About midnight a high wind arose at a velocity of over twenty m. per second, which drove menacing clouds and granules of snow the size of beans towards North Col along the west ridge. Awakened, the women climbers took steps to secure the tents in case of an emergency. By dawn the strength of the blizzard had increased, threatening to blow away the tents, which were straining at their ropes. Cedan Zhoma's tent suddenly collapsed, followed by those of Chamco, Gunsang and Zhasang. The women bravely rushed to pitch the collapsed tents with the help of the men. Later in one of the tents, they sat around and lit the gas camp stove to make tea and cook a meal, laughing and joking. When the wind buffeted the tent, ice from the condensed steam dropped on to them, reminding the group of the lines from Chairman Mao's famous poem *Swimming*:

**Let the wind blow and waves beat,
Better far than idly strolling in a courtyard.**

The wind continued for three days, frequently toppling the tents, which the women would pitch again. It could blow down the tents but it could never destroy the firm resolve of the women to conquer Qomolangma. Led by Wu Tsung-yueh, deputy political commissar of the expedition and Party branch secretary of the first echelon, they studied Chairman Mao's important instructions on the theory of the proletarian dictatorship. Instructors also told them stories about past expeditions overcoming dangers and difficulties in blizzard conditions.

When the wind began to weaken, they left their tents to study the terrain and plan a route. Having fought the blizzard for four days and nights atop North Col, they brought their second acclimatization march to fruition.

Indefatigable and undaunted, the women began their fourth acclimatization march on April 24. On May 3, Chamco, Gunsang, Zhasang and two other Tibetan women climbers, led by Wu Tsung-yueh, set out from North Col for a height of 7,600 m. This stretch was hazardous because of high winds, steep, slippery slopes, and liability to frostbite. The women were well aware of the difficulties but these only stiffened their resolve to drive ahead. Roped together with the men, they trudged up the slopes. On their left was an ice wall topped with ominous protruding ice and on their right an almost vertical rock slope, while a wind of over gale force seven from the direction of the west ridge threatened to choke them and blow them over. But they picked their way up, drawing courage and strength by recalling the Red Army's indomitable spirit when crossing the snow-covered mountains and grasslands during its historic Long March. Further up from the height of 7,450 m., the borderline of snow and rocks, the gale force wind prevented the snow from falling, so that the rock surface was bare. The summit was not far off, and the climbers' spirit rose and their strength was renewed.

The women climbers were also active in helping the supply team during the acclimatization marches. Together with the men, they carried the supplies of food, oxygen, tents, gas for cooking and other equipment to the different camps. Han women climbers Tsan Yu-ying, Fan Yung-ning, Yang Chiu-ping and others travelled several times between the camps at 6,000 and 6,500 m. to transport

equipment and supplies. Cedan Zhoma remained at the 7,007-m. North Col camp to cook meals at all hours for her comrades carrying supplies. The women climbers also assisted the scientists in carrying out surveying work. By their actions they upheld their conviction: "Strong-willed, we Chinese women can overcome all difficulties. We will ascend the world's highest peak and fulfil our role of holding up half the sky."

Final Assault

In mid-May the decision was taken by the expedition's Party committee to attempt the assault on the summit. On the 18th, Phanthog, Chamco and Gunsang joined the second assault group and left Base Camp. When the first two reached the 7,600-m. camp on the 21st, the weather worsened. It began snowing and the wind rose to gale force seven or eight, with a sudden drop in temperature. For three days and nights they were forced to remain in the camp, but on the 25th conditions improved, so that Phanthog and Chamco reached the 8,300-m. camp along with the men climbers.

On the following day, however, a strong wind of gale force ten developed above the height of 8,000 m. That afternoon, at 3 o'clock, the expedition's Party committee radioed its message that the second assault group should make a forced march to the last camp at 8,680 m. that very night so as to make the final assault with the first group on the 27th.

Now Phanthog was the only woman climber remaining for the final assault. She was inspired by the call of the

Party and the hope of the people. In good spirits, she and the four men comrades in her group bravely set out for the last camp in the midst of the gale.

From 8,300 m. to 8,500 m. on the north side of Qomolangma was a strip running from east to west, known as the Yellow Band, where the rock surface had eroded badly, causing difficulties due to loose rocks and steep slopes. In such a strong wind, any carelessness or mistake would result in an accident. It was as night fell, at about 9 p.m., that Phanthog and her comrades arrived at the camp at 8,680 m., thus successfully uniting the two assault groups, nine members all told.

At 11 p.m. Sodnam Norbu, Party branch secretary of the assault team, called a Party meeting also attended by non-Party comrades, at which thirty-seven-year-old Phanthog recounted the tragic story of her early family life. She had been born into a serf's family in Chiangda County of Tibet. Her father died while she was very young. The family having neither an inch of land nor a home of their own, her mother had to spin and weave woolen cloth for the serf-owner. Even though she worked long hours, she was unable to feed all the family because of the cruel oppression and exploitation of the feudal serf system.

One day her mother ran away, taking little Phanthog with her. They lived as beggars, wandering from place to place, until they arrived finally at Shigatse. Here they eked out an existence, surviving on whatever Phanthog's mother could earn from casual employment. When her mother died of fatigue and starvation, Phanthog made her way to Lhasa, where her life became even more miserable.

When liberation came, it brought a new life for Phanthog. She entered the "July 1" State Farm in 1958, becoming one of the first generation of Tibetan workers. In 1959, she joined the Chinese Mountaineering Expedition. Her hard life in the old society had developed in Phanthog a strong will to overcome any difficulty. She disciplined and drove herself to master the skills of mountaineering in order to win honour for the motherland. With the help of her instructors, plus her own determination, she quickly became a very fine climber. On her first expedition in 1959, she ascended the 7,546-m. Muztagh Ata, breaking the world women's altitude record. Two years later she improved her own record by reaching the top of M. Kongur Tiubie Tagh, at 7,595 m.

Educated by the Party, she joined the Communist Youth League and was sent by the Party in 1963 to the Central Institute for Nationalities in Peking, where she studied political and cultural subjects. Her political consciousness developed to a higher level. During the present conquest of Qomolangma, she was gloriously accepted into the Chinese Communist Party and appointed deputy leader of the Chinese Mountaineering Expedition and instructor of its women's team. When she compared the past to the present, she said with deep feeling: "As a new Party member I'm determined to fulfil the task assigned by the Party to conquer Qomolangma."

Helping each other with their packs, Phanthog and her comrades began the ascent to the summit at 8 a.m. on the 27th. The day was unusually fine with a wind force of only three or four, and the towering Qomolangma stood majestic in the morning light. Phanthog was filled with excitement and revolutionary spirit as she set out to conquer the peak.

At 9:10 a.m. Phanthog and the four men comrades in the second group reached the foot of a rock face called Second Step, the last dangerous stretch. Following the nylon protective rope and the metal ladder fixed there by Sodnam Norbu and others of the first assault group, they successfully arrived at the top of Second Step. Here the wind rose to force eight or nine, but they continued to push forward. Their way was soon blocked by a big and almost perpendicular ice slope in the shape of a triangle. Having climbed three-fifths of this slope, where the gradient was sixty to seventy degrees, Phanthog and her comrades had to stop until a detour was made to the north across a rock slope and they once again headed for the summit.

Though exhausted from the exertion of nine days' climbing, Phanthog insisted on carrying a cylinder of oxygen but did not take more of it herself than the others. Her indomitable spirit drove her forward until finally she and her comrades stepped on to the top of Qomolangma together.

The summit was a long, narrow strip measuring more than ten metres long and about one metre wide and lying southeast-northwest. On its south side was a concave-shaped cliff from which ice and snow protruded, while on the north there was a rock slope. Below them were mountains surrounded by clouds. Phanthog listened excitedly as Hou Sheng-fu, a Han comrade, radioed the stirring news of their victory to Base Camp. Feeling no weariness at all, she started to carry out the various assignments with her comrades. In order to have her electrocardiogram taken by a radio-controlled apparatus, Phanthog lay down in the snow.

The descent from the summit began at 3:40 p.m., Peking time. The climbers were jubilant and proud. Phanthog could hardly contain her happiness, and thought to herself: With the concern of Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee and supported by all the people in China, I reached the top of the highest peak in the world. This is a victory shared by us thirty-six women climbers in this expedition, and also one of which all Chinese women can be proud. But in China's socialist revolution and construction, there will be more towering peaks for Chinese women to conquer and innumerable difficulties to overcome. . . .

为社会主义而斗争的中国妇女

李 本 编

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