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## THE MAKING OF NEW MAN

How The Thinking of Mao Tse-tung  
Helps A Man  
Look At Himself and Change Himself

By Tuan Ping-li

### THE MAKING OF NEW MAN

The following account is written by a 46 year old soldier of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, Tuan Ping-li.

This individual's experience brings home in a down-to-earth way the process of self-revolutionization by which hundreds of millions of people in China are striving to eradicate within themselves everything that obstructs the advance toward a socialist - and eventually - a communist society.

One fourth of the world's population is, on the basis of the thinking of Mao Tse-tung radically changing itself and transforming the society in which it lives and works: over seven hundred million people becoming new people and building a genuine socialist society.

It is not adulation of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, but the people's thinking, their examination of themselves, their putting into practice what Mao has taught them about society and about themselves that characterizes the process of the great proletarian cultural revolution in China.

Tuan Ping-li's account of himself tells how the thinking of Mao Tse-tung helps a man look at himself and change himself - helps him become a builder of a socialist society.

## THE MAKING OF NEW MAN

By Tuan Ping-li

Chairman Mao says that to change one's world outlook is the biggest change. Lin Piao has told us that we should take Chairman Mao's "three good old articles"\* and use them to make this change.

I come from a petty-bourgeois family and was influenced rather deeply by the old ideas of bourgeois society. Although my thinking has changed I'm still far from my goal of thoroughly remoulding my ideology.

The influence of the old society shows itself in the conflict between the right and wrong ideas, between individualism and collectivism, and between self-interest and collective interest. I realize that if I don't use the thought of Mao Tse-tung to fight wrong ideas I will never be able to break away from "self" and develop devotion to the collective. I shall not be a "pure" man or "a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interests" as Chairman Mao said of Norman Bethune.\*\* If one can't work for the revolution like Chang Szu-teh\*\*\* who died for the revolution, or Norman Bethune who had a great sense of responsibility in his work, or the foolish old man who had the courage to scorn difficulties, then one is not much use to the revolution. If a person can't change himself and develop the qualities of these three men, then he can't be wholly devoted to the revolution, be unafraid of death, and eliminate working for fame or fortune.

I have many ideas that are individualistic and wrong. Through the study of the "three good old articles" I've been trying to change them. Let me give a few examples.

\*The "three good old articles": "Serve the People"; "In Memory of Norman Bethune"; "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains". \*\*Norman Bethune, the Canadian surgeon who came to China in 1938, worked in the Liberated areas, died of blood poisoning November 12 1939. \*\*\*Chang Szu-teh a soldier in the Guards Regiment of the Central Committee of the Chinese CP, killed by a sudden collapse of a kiln while making charcoal.

First, on the relation between individual interests and Party interests. Chairman Mao says that no revolutionary road is straight and even. It is tortuous and uneven. Man's ideas are the same. Unless one is fully armed with the thought of Mao Tse-tung, one's mind is bound to have something bad in it.

When I was due to take part in the movement for socialist education in the countryside I was suffering from some chronic ailments,\* and both my superiors and the doctors said I need not go. I worried about whether to go, thinking that it might affect my health. It was a case of putting my personal subjective interests ahead of Party interests. Turning to the "three good old articles" I read Chairman Mao's words, "All men must die, but death can vary in its significance. The ancient Chinese writer Szuma Chien said, 'Though death befalls all men alike, it may be heavier than Mt Tai or lighter than a feather.' To die for the people is heavier than Mt Tai, but to work for the fascists and die for the exploiters and oppressors is lighter than a feather," and "Wherever there is a struggle there is sacrifice."

The aim of the movement for socialist education was to arm the peasants with the thought of Chairman Mao; to break the old ideas, customs, habits and culture of the bourgeois class; to reform everything in the superstructure which is incompatible with the economic base, and to establish the new ideas, culture and habits of the proletariat. In other words, to place the ideas of Mao Tse-tung in the ascendancy in every sphere. I thought, should I consider my health? Should I retreat in the face of difficulty? I remembered Bethune who was so utterly devoted to the cause and the Foolish Old Man who scorned seemingly insuperable difficulties. How could I waver?

Finally I saw that while superficially the question was one of hardship, essentially it was one of attitude.

\*Tuan Ping-li had some hardening of the heart and blood vessels of the brain; and an enlarged liver.

Fear of hardship and exertion in work is related to one's world outlook. Hardship and heavy work might be detrimental to health, but fear of them is definitely detrimental to one's ideology. When a person faces the storm he benefits in ideology and also contributes to the work; and unless he is willing to pay the price, he will achieve nothing. To remould one's ideology demands that you temper yourself in hard struggle. A loss to one person may be a gain to the whole. If everyone worried about clinging to his personal interest, the revolution would never succeed.

After I had thought things through this way, I was happy and firm in my decision to join the movement. In fact I went to a place where the situation was difficult and the work heavy. I deliberately chose heavy jobs and put my whole heart into them. Sharing the life and work of the peasants helped me in the political transformation of my thinking.

Here's another example. A few years ago I was transferred from my command post to be a teacher in an army college. Although I didn't raise any objection, I was worried that it would affect my future and chances of fame. I again studied the articles about Chang Szu-teh and Norman Bethune and became inspired with the spirit of service and devotion with no thought of self. I compared my own thinking with theirs and felt ashamed. I also read what Chairman Mao said about people trying to get better jobs and I saw that I lacked the spirit of whole-hearted service, the communist spirit. I decided to accept any task assigned me. If the Party wants me to work in the college for the rest of my life, I'll do so. I'll use the "three good old articles" as my guide and be a "rustless screw" in the revolution. If the imperialists and their lackeys start a war of aggression, I'll answer the call of my country and the Party. I'll take Chairman Mao's works, my gun and my knapsack and wipe out the aggressors. If I didn't have this spirit I wouldn't be worthy of the name of a communist, at least not of a pure communist.

It's easy to correct one's shortcomings and improve one's work under ordinary circumstances, but when one's own interests come in conflict with those of the

Party, it's not so easy. In fact, it is very difficult. But that's when you face the real test of whether you can correct your mistakes and make progress. The question is, are you really applying the thought of Mao Tse-tung, are you really able to break with the old and willing to remould yourself? Contradictions become sharpest in storms, for then one's selfish and wrong ideas become most apparent. It's at such times that one must stick firmly to Mao Tse-tung's thought if one is to avoid a serious mis-step. Only so can you persist in what's right and correct what's wrong in the service of the people.

The fundamental purpose in studying the thought of Mao Tse-tung is to handle correctly the relationship between self-interest and the Party's interests. It's a struggle to root out bit by bit what does not conform to Mao Tse-tung's thought. And the most important method here is criticism and self-criticism.

The characteristics of the petty-bourgeois are vanity, a sense of dignity and self-importance. A petty bourgeois sees his good points but not his shortcomings. He likes to listen to praise but not to criticism. He lacks the spirit of Mao Tse-tung who says, "If we have shortcomings we are not afraid to have them pointed out and criticised because we serve the people." One of my shortcomings was not being bold enough in criticising others. They are my comrades, I thought, I have lived and worked with them for years. It's better to live in peace, concentrate on eliminating my own defects, and not poke my finger into other people's affairs. But when I studied Chairman Mao's "Combat Liberalism" and "Serve The People" I saw that what lay behind my fear of criticising others was worry about personal loss or gain and fear of giving offense. Yet the more I refrained from criticising others, the worse our relations became. It affected our unity. My fear of giving offense made comrades complain that I was not treating them correctly. So I came to see that a man can be fearless only when he is selfless. Only by putting the interests of the people and the revolution first is it possible to stand up and struggle against everything wrong. I concluded that a communist should make the interests of the revol-

ution the primary objective in his life, and should stick to principle always and everywhere. Without this it is impossible to form a thorough proletarian world outlook.

It's a law that once a contradiction is resolved, new ones appear. As I became bolder in criticising others, I developed another fault. In my criticisms I failed to concentrate on the important aspect, and to take all the circumstances into account. I failed to help comrades see their errors through a process of reasoning. My demands on them were too high. This again damaged unity among the comrades. Once more, the underlying reason was my selfishness. I wanted to avoid being criticised for my liberal tendency not to criticise. Impatiently, I wanted the comrades I criticised to overcome their shortcomings overnight. I wanted to get quick results and possibly a citation from the leaders for quick victories. During the later rectification campaign I was criticised for this. Also, I read Chairman Mao's works. Thus I came to see that all this, too, sprang from selfishness.

How was I to become good at criticism and self-criticism? Thinking things over I realized that one shouldn't just strive to excel in work and skill - one should strive to excel in self-remoulding. In remoulding one's ideology there is no such thing as "once-and-for-all". Nor can you alternate sudden spurts and relaxation. The moment you relax, bourgeois ideas flood in. Ideological remoulding is like sailing upstream. If you don't make headway you fall back. If you take your ideological remoulding seriously, you must study ceaselessly and set a high and strict standard for yourself. You mustn't let any wrong idea slip by, however small. You must grab it as the root of bigger errors in the future. It's not a bad thing to exaggerate your own errors. For example, I might have explained my error of setting too high a standard for others as a mere fault in my method. But to be really strict I would have to see it as subjectivism and one-sidedness at the base of my own thinking.

Take another example. Sometimes I worked extra hours, which was a good thing to do. But when I thought this might hurt my health or keep me from my family, my sense of service to the people faded. This could have developed into a much more serious problem, such as the asking for special privileges... I tried to infuse Mao Tse-tung's thought into my teaching and to think up various aids for the students. This too was good. But there was another side - deep down in my mind was the thought of earning a citation, and of being well spoken of. In his "In Memory of Norman Bethune" Chairman Mao criticises the show-offs, who "when they make some small contribution, swell with pride and brag about it, for fear that others will not know." Applying this to myself, I frankly exposed my thinking to the comrades. I saw that I must use the "three good old articles" well and excel in remoulding. I learned that with every achievement I must probe for shortcomings and bear in mind the principle that "modesty helps one to make progress," and that only so is it possible to work hard at creative study and the remoulding of one's thinking.

If a person is to study the "three good old articles" properly, he must do it with a profound class feeling and political consciousness. Mao Tse-tung's writings are revolutionary works, serving the working class. One must study them with working class feeling. If you are burdened with old ideas and unwilling to break with them, you will find it impossible to link your study with practice and solve concrete problems. And since you won't be able to solve problems, you will soon lose interest in your studies as well. One must stand on the side of the working class and regard the sufferings of all the working people as one's own. Only then can a person study Mao Tse-tung's works with enthusiasm and see that such a study is as essential as food and water. And if one is to study with working class feeling one must have a determined desire to remould oneself. One must also have the courage to wage a resolute struggle with the word "I".

To be a revolutionary only in words does no good. One must link theory with practice; study with problems in mind, and apply what one studies. One must develop one's class feeling. One must understand and firmly

believe that Mao Tse-tung's thinking is Marxism-Leninism at its highest peak. It is Mao Tse-tung's ideas that unite 700 million Chinese people. When you stress application in your studies, there's no problem that can't be solved, no difficulty that can't be overcome. Mao Tse-tung's thought is the essence of being revolutionary. It is the first need in a true revolutionary's life.

To apply Mao Tse-tung's teachings you must have political consciousness and the determination and perseverance to make such application a life-long task. You must develop a class feeling for Mao Tse-tung's works. The purpose is to remould one's thinking, to improve one's work for the revolution. By deepening your class feeling you raise your political consciousness. The result is growing enthusiasm for the revolution. It is necessary to "focus your eyes on the big things and set your hands to the small things." "Big things" means the general orientation and "small things" the problems of every day life. Quality expresses itself in quantity. Without quantity there can be no quality. The qualitative change comes through acting correctly on many small concrete problems. After I thought these things over I saw that I must study Mao Tse-tung's works conscientiously, be strict with myself and never overlook small errors. I came to know that I must expose my every error mercilessly, criticise it resolutely, struggle against it courageously and correct it thoroughly, until I bring my ideas into complete conformity with the thinking of Mao Tse-tung.

I also learned that I must concentrate my energy on a limited number of Chairman Mao's articles and study them thoroughly. One has to fight battles of annihilation, first breaking with the words "I" and "self" and fostering a sense of collective interest. Chairman Mao used the concept of battles of annihilation in directly military struggles. Comrade Lin Piao also believes in concentration. He said, not long ago, "Select a number of important points to concentrate on. Don't spread your energy thin because dispersal is not in conformity with dialectics." You must stress the

practical effects and avoid formalism. When your study of Mao Tse-tung's works is related to practical problems it becomes easier to study, to remember and to apply. In studying an article, or a passage, or even one sentence in it we try to link our own thinking with it and ask ourselves such questions as these: Where am I right in relation to this point? What wrong ideas do I still have? What's the reason for them? What shall I do about it?

Often in reading a book I thought I understood it, but I found that I soon forgot what I had read. I studied regularly, but I didn't concentrate on application. So I was just fooling myself. I felt my study was not very useful in solving practical problems, yet I failed to concentrate on a few selected points. Later I learned to grasp the principal contradiction and tried to solve it, and concentrate on those articles that could help solve that contradiction. I studied because I found it useful in helping me break with "self" and to foster devotion to the collective interest. I began to recognize my weaknesses more profoundly and to come to real grips with them.

Among my faults was subjectiveness and one-sidedness, conceit and complacency. My subjectiveness and one-sidedness was seen in the tendency to make big demands on others to progress. I tended to over-emphasize serious shortcomings and raise them to the level of shortcomings of principle; yet I failed to convince these comrades of their defects through reasoning. Of course to place high demands on comrades and to hope that they would quickly correct weaknesses had its good side. But the comrades criticised me for being unrealistic. They said I wasn't applying the principle of "one divides into two", and lacked the method of differentiation. Chairman Mao tells us that ideological remoulding is a long, protracted and arduous process. It takes perseverance and careful handling. You can't expect a comrade to correct overnight what has accumulated in his consciousness over decades. You can't do it by reading him a few lectures. You can't force comrades to accept criticisms; you have to reason things out with them. Otherwise they may seem to accept your criticism but they won't really accept it in their hearts. Of comrades who have made mistakes, Chairman Mao says, "Wait! Give them time. Give them time to correct their errors."

My over-simplified placing of high demands on people, and tendency to raise all questions to the level of principle just to draw their attention to them was not in conformity with Mao Tse-tung's teachings.

What was the root of these defects of mine? Chairman Mao says, "When a person sets his hands to a problem he must understand the real situation, its nature and its relation to other things. Otherwise, he can't find the law governing that thing, or do it well." Study of this passage showed me that I had failed to analyse the roots of my comrades' short-comings. I had failed to make a concrete analysis of the circumstances in which the wrong thinking existed but made the same demands on everyone, and so failed to solve those problems. I would not have made this mistake if I had studied well Chairman Mao's statement, "Idealism and metaphysics are the easiest things in the world because people can talk as much nonsense as they like without basing it on objective reality or having it tested against reality. Unless one makes the effort one is liable to slip into idealism and metaphysics."

My error was precisely a metaphysical one. I failed to look at problems objectively from the materialist-dialectical point of view, and to take an all around view of them. I thus failed to understand the different aspects of each contradiction and was subjective and one-sided. Also, some ideas of "self" still persisted in my mind. After finding the cause I studied the works of Mao Tse-tung which criticize subjectiveness and one-sidedness. In doing this I first raised the level of my understanding, then got rid of some more of my own short-comings. But this problem, too, was not solved all at once.

Chairman Mao says that anyone who detects his own subjectiveness and one-sidedness and fails to look at things in an objective and all-around way, must try to get rid of the airs of an officials and must go among the masses and investigate. With this in mind I studied Mao's work "Methods of Investigation", "On Practice," "Where Do Correct Ideas Come From". These gave me the

methods theoretically. Then I went among the comrades, investigated, and tried to see things from different angles.

In summing up I drew up four points for overcoming subjectivity and one-sidedness.

One. Use the view-point and method of Mao Tse-tung to understand and analyse questions. Guard against basing yourself on personal feeling instead of policy, against relying only on your intelligence and making absolute affirmative or negative conclusions. Go among the masses, become one with them and raise questions and ponder on them in order to size up the situation. For this, great effort must be put into the study of Mao Tse-tung's thought and of every problem. Problems must be put to the masses and studied with the masses. And the solutions must be found together with the masses. If you don't understand something, never be ashamed to admit it. You must be ready to learn from anyone, even from some one in a much lower position than yourself.

Two. Investigation and study. Always remember Mao Tse-tung's words, "No investigation, no right to speak", and "Know the enemy and know yourself and you can fight a hundred battles with no danger of defeat." Chairman Mao quotes the adage, "Listen to both sides and you will be enlightened. Heed only one side and you will be benighted." And he cites Confucius who "always asked about everything." You must ask what gives rise to a problem before making a judgement.

Three. Have a correct evaluation of yourself. Don't rate yourself too highly. Don't regard the masses as inferior to yourself. Don't stick to your own ideas at all costs. Place yourself among the masses and feel that there are things that you lack, and that you are not as good as the masses, and this will safeguard you against conceit and complacency.

Four. Relations between your own subjective desires and objective reality. The level of the masses is not always the same. The hastier or higher the demand

you place on comrades who lag behind, the less you help, and the worse the effect. If you are divorced from reality, you are bound to be subjective. On this, Chairman Mao says, "There are two principles here. One is the actual needs of the masses rather than what we fancy they need, and the other is the wishes of the masses who must make up their own minds instead of our making up their minds for them. We must work according to these two principles."

To achieve thorough transformation of one's world outlook, to break with "self" and develop collective interest, it is not enough to read Chairman Mao's works in the ordinary way. You must imprint the ideas of Mao Tse-tung's thought in your mind, infuse them into your very blood cells and apply them in action. You must concentrate your forces for battles of annihilation and find the way to concentrate intensely on a few selected items at a time.....By making the study of the "three good old articles" the key, by making them the main link between study and work, I've come to see that remoulding one's world outlook is a long-term process of serious struggle to eradicate bourgeois characteristics and to develop proletarian ones - a class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie within the person, a struggle that runs through everything, through ideology, work and action. The question that arises in all these fields is: are you for yourself or for the collective interest? Are you for the 700 million people of China and the 3,000 million people in the world, or just for yourself? .....

Chairman Mao in his famous poem to Comrade Kuo Mo-jo wrote:

So many deeds cry out to be done,  
And always urgently.  
The world rolls on,  
Time presses,  
Ten thousand years are too long,  
Seize the day, seize the hour..

Both our times and the revolution demand that we study and apply the thought of Mao Tse-tung - in the spirit of "seize the day, seize the hour" and that we study with high political consciousness.

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