



7

1971

CHINESE LITERATURE





Our great leader Chairman Mao with his close comrade-in-arms Vice-Chairman Lin Biao

Quotations From Chairman Mao Tsetung

The force at the core leading our cause forward
is the Chinese Communist Party.

The theoretical basis guiding our thinking is
Marxism-Leninism.

CONTENTS

On the Long March with Chairman Mao — <i>Chen Chang-feng</i>	3
POEMS	
Our Highland Postman — <i>Hung Yen</i>	55
The Old Shift Leader — <i>Chi Chen-hsi</i>	57
Night Ferry — <i>Shang Tse-chung</i>	60
STORIES	
Half the Population — <i>Yin Yi-ping</i>	62
Azure Blue — <i>Hsiao Ma</i>	69
REPORTAGE	
He Lives For Ever	81
A Heroine of the Grasslands	89
LITERARY CRITICISM AND REPUDIATION	
Hero or Renegade? — <i>Hsiao Wen</i>	96
CHRONICLE	102
PLATES	
Happy Occasion (oil painting)	54-55
During the Yenan Days (painting in the traditional style)	68-69
Studying Chairman Mao's Works (<i>gouache</i>)	80-81
Luting Bridge (painting in the traditional style)	88-89

Front Cover: Making Steel

On the Long March with Chairman Mao

I. Early Days

I was born in the village of Lingnao in Ningtu County, Kiangsi Province in the autumn of 1915. We were a very poor family. My mother died when I was eleven. My father supported the family by working for the landlords. Because of the poverty and oppression we suffered at the hands of the landlords and local despots, I have hated this rapacious class of exploiters from the bottom of my heart ever since I was a child.

In 1928 our village suddenly buzzed with talk about a "Red Army" which had appeared from nowhere and was headed for Juichin and Tapoti. The news stirred the whole village. The poor were glad. They said these troops helped the poor and suppressed landlords and local despots. They were called the Communist Party or the Red Army. I was only thirteen. I knew nothing about politics, but I agreed immediately with what the poor people said.

The author now works in the People's Liberation Army.

Several days passed. Some of the village pedlars coming back from Changting in Fukien Province gleefully recounted what they had seen. The Red Army had captured Changting, fought the local despots and overthrown the landlords. The poor were given land, now they were standing on their feet for the first time. This news made me happy and I waited impatiently for the day when these soldiers of the poor would come to our village.

That New Year's Eve our house was searched and ransacked. We owed the local despot some money, and everything we owned — from the tiny plot of land on the wild heath to the tattered quilt in my room — was taken away. It was only thanks to the neighbours who begged pity for us that we were left a single broken saucepan for cooking rice in.

Our life became harder than ever. Luckily I got jobs herding cattle for other people. But I lived worse than the animals. When an ox or a horse finishes its work, it gets its fodder, but sometimes our whole family starved with not even a drop of gruel between us.

What should I do? The idea suddenly came into my mind — join the Red Army! Just after the New Year, the night of the second day of the First Moon was pitch-black. I and a neighbour slipped out of the village without even telling our families and headed for Changting, determined to find the Red Army.

On a hill about eight kilometres from Changting we came upon two soldier sentries with red stars on their caps. The Red Army at last! We immediately went up to them and declared that we had come to join the Red Army. After questioning us in detail, they pointed to Changting and told us that if we wanted to enlist we should go there to the Red Recruiting Corps.

At Changting we found the Red Recruiting Corps stationed by a stone bridge. We were so happy that we wanted to join right away, without even listening to their explanations. We never expected that after going into our cases they would shake their heads and say "No." I was too young and could hardly shoulder a rifle, they said. Tears came to my eyes. But I wouldn't give up. "I must join the Red Army!" I cried out. "If you don't let me join, I'll stay right here where I am!" At last, seeing that I was so set,

they relented, and ever since that day I have been a member of our glorious people's army.

After I joined the Red Army, I was posted as a bugler with the headquarters of the Fourth Army of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army.

One afternoon at the end of March 1930, when the headquarters was in Paisha Village, Yungfeng County, Kiangsi, my commanding officer told me that I would be transferred.

"Where to?" I asked him.

"To the Communist Party's Front Committee as orderly for Commissar Mao," he said with a smile.

I knew the Front Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, but who Commissar Mao was, I wasn't quite clear. He must be a leading officer, I reckoned, otherwise he couldn't have an orderly. But what sort of man was he? Was he good tempered?

The Front Committee was in the same village. A tall comrade took me there. I was nervous. I kept thinking as I walked: what sort of man was the Commissar?

Commissar Mao lived in a typical Kiangsi wooden house with two rooms, one a bedroom and the other an office. We entered through the bedroom, which only had an ordinary wooden bed covered with a cotton sheet. No pillow. Apparently the Commissar lived as simply as we did.

Two men were talking together in the office. The tall comrade pointed to the man in the chair and whispered, "That's Commissar Mao." I looked at him curiously. His grey uniform was the same as ours. Talking to a man opposite him, he moved his hands a lot. His voice was gentle. After a while, his visitor stood up to go. He too stood up. It was only then that I saw how tall he was.

As soon as the visitor had gone, the tall comrade said to Commissar Mao, pointing at me, "I have found an orderly for you."

I advanced a step, saluted and said "Report!" in a loud voice. Commissar Mao looked at me and smiled warmly. That smile swept away all my reservations.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Chen Chang-feng," I replied loudly.

"Chen Chang-feng," Commissar Mao said slowly. "How old are you?"

"Fifteen." By this time my voice sounded a bit more natural.

"Why did you join the Red Army?" he asked me like a school teacher questioning a pupil.

"The Red Army is good. It fights the local despots!" I was still standing stiffly at attention.

Commissar Mao made me sit down and asked, "Are there local despots in your home village?"

"Yes," I said, "I was driven away by them."

And I told him in detail how I had lived with my family and how I had run away and joined the Red Army. He listened attentively, sometimes nodding and smiling slightly. "Well," said Commissar Mao. "Now you'll have to work and study hard." After a pause, he asked, "Can you write your name?"

I stood up. "I never went to school. I don't know how to write," I replied.

Commissar Mao smiled and stood up.

"Then you'll have to learn to write—your own name and the names of other people. You'll like that, won't you?"

"Yes," I answered in a low voice.

He turned to the tall comrade. "This is a new comrade, you must do your best to help him." Then he turned back to me, "If there is anything you're not clear about, just ask them."

As we went down the stairs, the tall comrade said, "He's a busy man. Remember not to make a noise when he's reading. Besides, he always works late into the night. You must get him his breakfast, but not too early, mind!"

"Yes," I replied. I was so happy and excited that I didn't sleep well the whole night.

The next morning when I woke up, my roommates told me I had talked and laughed in my sleep and asked what I had been dreaming about. I pulled a face at them and took a wooden bucket to fetch water which I took to be my daily routine.

The tall comrade stopped me. "What are you doing?"

"Getting water for Commissar Mao," I said confidently.

"Didn't I tell you Commissar Mao slept late?" he said impatiently. "You're not to wake him up!"

I nodded and put down the bucket.

For some days after that I would set Commissar Mao's washing water by his door early in the morning without making a sound and then sit in a small hammock near the landing waiting there for his orders. But Commissar Mao rarely called me and I sat this way for several days.

One day after washing, however, he asked me, "Chen Chang-feng, why do you always sit there without stirring?"

I held the hammock still and answered, "I am afraid if I go away you'll not find me if you want me."

He smiled as if talking to a child. "From now on you must not just sit there. When there is nothing for you to do here, go and study with the others. There isn't much for you to do here."

At that time battles were being fought every day. We were constantly on the move, seldom staying in a place for more than a month.

Commissar Mao's life was very simple and I soon got to know his habits. His personal possessions included only two blankets, one cotton sheet, two grey uniforms exactly like those we privates wore, and one grey woolen sweater. He had a broken umbrella, a bowl for eating and a knapsack with nine compartments for his maps, documents and books. When we were campaigning or on the march, he carried the knapsack and umbrella himself. I would carry the rest. When we came to our camp site, I would find two boards, put them together, spread the blankets and sheet on them and fold up his uniforms to make a pillow. This was his bed.

He slept very little. After supper he would light a small lamp, open up his knapsack and take out his maps, documents and books, papers, and writing brush and sometimes work until dawn.

I was a youngster and couldn't sit up all night without sleep. When Commissar Mao was reading or writing, I would sit beside him, but very soon I'd doze off, snoring away with my head on his desk. We would both smile when he woke me up and told me to go to bed.

On summer nights he would ask me to fetch some water. I'd take the little wooden dipper and bring some cold water. Because we didn't have a basin, he would soak the towel in the dipper and rub his face and sometimes his body to freshen up. Then he'd feel hungry, and I'd warm up the "rice sandwich" (two layers of rice with cooked vegetables in between) left in the bowl since the afternoon for him to eat.

Sometimes he couldn't finish his bowl of rice so I would cover it up with a piece of paper for him to eat at the next meal. Once I threw away the rice he had left and the next day he asked, "Chen Chang-feng, where is the rice I left yesterday?"

I told him what I had done and he criticized me. "The people struggle for every grain of rice they grow. In the future you mustn't throw away what I leave. Keep it for the next meal."

Once we were marching and fighting every day. Commissar Mao did not even have time to get a sip of hot water. I worried, so I was always trying to get a thermos bottle for him. Often we captured a place and war booty came to us, but Commissar Mao never kept anything. He would always send what he got to the soldiers or the wounded in the hospital.

In the winter of 1931, when we captured Chi-an in Kiangsi, I found a thermos bottle in the house of a local despot who had run away. I was overjoyed at this stroke of luck. With that bottle I was always able to keep some hot water ready for him.

But it was still difficult to prepare a quick meal for him. His small bowl did not hold very much rice. It was enough for a supper, but on the march it was not of much use. Often we would be on the march again immediately after a battle. Then when we took a rest and ate our meal, Commissar Mao would still have to eat his cold "sandwich."

In November 1931, the Workers' and Peasants' Democratic Central Government was founded in Juichin and he was elected Chairman of the Republic. That's when we began to call him Chairman instead of Commissar Mao.

II. A Visit Home

Whenever we captured a county seat or town, Chairman Mao would send people or personally take us to the local government office to get enemy documents and archives, and then to the local post office to buy newspapers and magazines. We would come back loaded with packages of books and magazines. In the evening, Chairman Mao would mark them with a red pencil so that we could clip and keep what was needed.

One day we came to Hsinfeng County in Kiangsi. As soon as we settled down in our billet, Chairman Mao called, "Come, Chen Chang-feng! To the post office!"

At that time I thought a post office was just a shop for buying and selling books. When we got there Chairman Mao began to browse through the piles of books and papers. Sometimes he would pick one up and hand it to me. We paid for what we wanted and when I was wrapping them I asked, "Chairman Mao, what does a post office do?"

"Oh, a lot of things," he answered. "Deliver letters and newspapers, handle telegrams and telephone calls. If you want to send a letter home, they'll send it for you."

If I wrote a letter, could they really take it all the way home for me? I wondered.

As we left the post office, this filled my mind. I thought it was a wonderful thing. I hadn't been home for some time now, I didn't know how my father was or even if he were still alive. Many questions flashed through my mind. It would be fine if I could send a letter home!

It was already dusk when we came back to our billet. I put down the books and papers and lit the lamp. Chairman Mao immediately began to read. It was time for me to get the supper but I couldn't get the post office out of my head. I stood there daydreaming.

"What's wrong?" Chairman Mao asked, noticing my worried look.

"Chairman Mao," I said, "can they really send a letter home?"

"Who?" he asked.

"The post office."

“Certainly they can. Your home is in the Soviet area.*” He understood what was on my mind. “Do you want to send a letter home?” he asked.

I nodded and said in a low voice, “I want to write a letter home, but...”

“... you still can’t write it!” Chairman Mao finished. “Come, I’ll write it for you.”

I was overjoyed. On second thought I was ill at ease because I knew he was busy and this would take up his precious time. But he went on encouragingly, “What do you want to tell your father?” As he spoke he pushed the newspapers aside and took out some letter paper.

“I...” What should I tell my father? I hadn’t the slightest idea, so I said, “Chairman Mao, you write what you think best. Anyway, all I want to say is that things are fine in the Red Army. I feel all right with you. Very, very fine. That’s all.”

He took down my father’s name and address. Then I left to get the meal. When I came back with the food, Chairman Mao was sitting deep in thought, a brush in hand. I knew it wasn’t proper to ask him to eat at that moment, so I quietly placed his rice on the table and went out.

I lay down on the soft straw bed, too overwhelmed with gratitude to sleep, turning from side to side thinking of his kindness. I, the son of an ordinary peasant, had joined our own army and was now the bodyguard of the Chairman of the Republic. (At that time I was no longer his orderly, but his bodyguard.) And Chairman Mao himself was writing a letter for me. Since I was with him he had become like a father to me, concerning himself with my daily life and training. I would never forget this kind teacher. As I thought of these things tears trickled down my cheeks. The night was very still. I went out. It grew late but the light stayed on in his room. He was still working.

The next morning when I brought breakfast in, the Chairman gave me the letter he had written for me.

*Liberated areas at that time were called Soviet areas.



"Will you see if it's all right?" he said.

In great embarrassment, I put down the food container, took the letter with both hands and mumbled, "Of course it'll be all right."

"Go to the post office and mail it," he said.

"Your breakfast is ready," I reminded him.

"Leave it here. Go quickly!"

Instinctively I saluted him and left his office, hardly knowing what I was doing.

When I returned, the Chairman looked at me. "Now, do you feel better?" he said. "Still thinking of home?"

"No," I smiled.

In the autumn of 1933, when our troops were attacking Chienchang, Chairman Mao and some other Central Committee members arrived in Kwangchang. This was quite near my home county, Ningtu, and suddenly the idea of going home popped up in my head. That very day I said to Chairman Mao, "I know Kwangchang well. If I were to go back and visit my home, I'd know how to get there."

Chairman Mao grinned. "Don't be in such a hurry. Easy does it. The farther we go, the nearer we'll be to your home."

"Really?" I exclaimed. My heart leaped.

Two or three days later we arrived at the county that I had left so long ago. When we had settled down, Chairman Mao sent for me and asked, "Want to go home?"

"Yes!"

"Good!" he replied. "I'll be attending several meetings these few days. You go home and take a look at things." He paused and looked at me quizzically. "How many days do you want?"

My face grew hot. How could I answer that question? Spreading his big hands, he asked, "Ten days? How's that?"

"Good," I said, and wanted to be off immediately. But just as I was about to go I suddenly thought: if I go, who will take care of his meals and drinking water? "No, Chairman. I won't go!" I declared.

"Why?" He looked at me curiously.

"Who'll prepare your meals?"

He smiled, put both hands on my shoulders and said kindly, "Go and see your folks and then you'll work better when you come back. Your family is in the Soviet area now." He paused and then continued, "Don't come back here. Go straight to Changting and you'll find me there."

Then I was off in great excitement. I kept thinking: home ... Chairman ... Chairman ... home. The rice fields were as beautiful as flowers under the setting sun. Home, my home was a part of the Soviet area. Was there any place better than this? Then I thought of Chairman Mao. He was indeed a great leader of the poor people.

It was already dark when I arrived at the small stream where I once used to herd cattle. Lingnao, the village where I was born, could be seen on the opposite bank.

I got into the crowded ferry boat. My army uniform and the revolver I carried attracted attention and the country people kept looking at me, whispering to each other.

"Excuse me," I spoke up, "do you know Chen Tai-hsiang (my father) in the village?"

"Yes, there's a man called Chen Tai-hsiang."

"Oh, you are..." A middle-aged man called me by my childhood name.

"Yes, yes, that's me!" I cried excitedly. Here was an old acquaintance. I would have jumped up if I had not been in a boat. The whole boat grew animated. Everybody began talking at once, eager to tell me the news, how the village went Red, how the landlords and local despots were overthrown, how the land was distributed and my father had got his share.

"Your father has been longing for you since he got your letter," the middle-aged man told me.

"So he already received my letter!" I broke in.

"Yes, he got it a few days ago."

When we reached the opposite bank, the crowd accompanied me home. That evening my house seemed like a big mass meeting. The whole village was there, including the chairman of the village Soviet. They asked me to tell them what it was like in the Red Army.

As I spoke my father sat and smiled. It was the first time I had ever seen him smile so contentedly.

When they heard that I was Chairman Mao's bodyguard, they became still more interested and insisted I tell them more about our Chairman.

"Chairman Mao is just the same as us common folk," I said.

They were not satisfied with this and insisted that I tell them more. That night we talked until the cock crowed twice.

On the ninth day I set off for Changting to find Chairman Mao.

III. First Step in the Long March

After presiding over a conference on financial and economic questions held in Shachoupa in the early summer of 1934, Chairman Mao went to investigate rural conditions in the town of Wuyang in Juichin County, Kiangsi—then a model district for production in the central Soviet area. From there he went on to Huichang County, the seat of the Kwangtung-Kiangsi Provincial Party Committee, where he stayed for some time. Then he left for Yutu. In August he returned to Kaopinao near Juichin—the place where he was working at that time. For several months, he was very busy, calling meetings of the responsible cadres in the localities he visited or making investigations in the villages.

The Kuomintang reactionaries had launched its fifth encirclement campaign and the situation was becoming critical. Enemy planes roared overhead at all hours of the day, bombing and strafing indiscriminately.

Chairman Mao was even busier. He lived in a big temple on a hillside together with Comrade Hsich Chuch-tsai. In the daytime he walked down the hill to attend meetings of the Military Council a kilometre and a half away. When he came back he stayed up late writing. Many times he sent me down late at night to deliver the things he had written to Vice-Chairman Chou En-lai and other leaders. I did not know what these manuscripts were until later

when they appeared as printed booklets. They were on questions of tactics in guerrilla warfare.

Every day many people came up the hill to see the Chairman. He was not very well. He lost a great deal of weight and we bodyguards became worried. But what could we do? Every time we suggested that he take a rest, he would point to the pile of documents on his desk and say, as though he were consulting with us, "I'll take a rest as soon as I've finished these. Will that be all right?" But there was no end to these documents, they came in a constant stream. We began to think of getting a doctor for him and raised the suggestion to the director of the General Affairs Office.

One evening after supper, when the Chairman was standing on the steps in front of the temple deep in thought, the director and the head of the Central Hospital arrived. I was overjoyed to see them and was sure that their visit had to do with getting a doctor for the Chairman.

After they had shaken hands, they began to talk. The director said, "Chairman, we've found a good doctor for you. He'll go along with you."

I almost jumped. Now something was happening! "Fine!" I burst out. "Send him to the Chairman quickly!" Then I remembered that I should not have spoken this way in the presence of superiors, and I was embarrassed.

The Chairman looked at me and then at the director and his companion. Lighting a cigarette, he began slowly, "I don't think a doctor is necessary. A nurse will do — it's just taking temperatures and giving injections...."

"Chairman," the director interrupted, "I think it's better to have a doctor, and we've already...."

"No," Chairman Mao said. "The army needs doctors. We've very few of them. How can I keep a doctor all for myself?" Then he smiled, "My health's not bad, won't a nurse do just as well?"

The director and the hospital head wanted to say something more. But knowing the Chairman's nature, they did not insist. A few days later, a young man about eighteen carrying a knapsack marked with a red cross came to us. He was Chung Fu-chang,

the medical orderly who was to accompany the Chairman all through the Long March.

About that time, we received orders from Chairman Mao to equip ourselves lightly in preparation to go to the front (we did not know that this was going to be the Long March to northern Shensi). We bodyguards felt it rather odd. Why was the order for light equipment so strict this time? Even the Chairman did not take his nine-compartment knapsack with him. His entire equipment consisted of two blankets, a cotton sheet, an oilcloth, a broken umbrella and a bundle of books.

At the end of September we left Kaopinao for Yutu with Chairman Mao.

October 18, 1934 was an unforgettable date in the history of the Chinese revolution. At a little after five that afternoon, some twenty of us left Yutu in the company of Chairman Mao. It was the first step on the Long March.

Passing the northern gate of Yutu in a westerly direction, we came to a broad river along which we made our way upstream. The muddy water foamed and roared. It sounded like bugle calls. Sunset brought cold breezes. The Chairman wore no overcoat. He was wearing only his grey uniform and Red Army cap. Taking the lead, he strode firmly ahead.

When we reached a point ten kilometres from Yutu, we heard shouting and saw the gleam of lights in the distance. Comrade Chung Fu-chang, the medical orderly, and I were at a loss.

"They're our troops," said Chairman Mao.

Our troops? We hadn't seen a single soldier when we left Yutu. How could there be so many in this place all of a sudden?

As we neared the bank, we found large numbers of Red Army men on both sides of the river. The place was in a hubbub, with thousands of torches moving to and fro, and singing, laughing and shouting from one end to the other. pontoons had been thrown across the river to make a bridge and the troops were marching across in a continuous stream.

I was delighted and rushed up to the Chairman. "How is it that we have so many troops?" I asked.

He smiled. "That's not all," he said quietly. "Many more have gone on ahead!"

We followed Chairman Mao onto the pontoon bridge. A great throng of soldiers on horseback, on foot, and carriers and country folk sending the troops off were moving across steadily. The Chairman stepped aside now and then to make way for others.

At about midnight we met a stretcher carrying a wounded soldier coming from the opposite direction. The peasants on the road were in great excitement. "Kupi and Hsintien will soon be captured!" they told us.

Chairman Mao walked up to the stretcher and pulled the coverlet up a little to cover the wounded man. "Is your wound very bad, comrade?" he asked gently.

The man on the stretcher stared at Chairman Mao under the light of a torch. He was obviously moved. "No, not too bad," he replied. "I'll be back at the front soon."

As the stretcher passed on, the Chairman stood gazing after it, absorbed in thought.

Just before daybreak, a party of peasants crossed our path, almost every one of them carrying a heavy sack.

"Where are you from?" I asked them.

"Kupi and Hsintien have been captured!" they answered in one voice.

"What have you got there?"

"Salt! It's as precious as gold!"

They were guides from the old Soviet area and were carrying salt back from Kupi and Hsintien. There was a crying need for salt in the Soviet area just then.

Chairman Mao waved to them. "This time you won't have to worry over salt, eh?" he said.

At dawn, crowds of people appeared on the road, surging back and forth. On the walls, on the trees and everywhere in the villages, posters announced the news of our victory: "Our troops have captured Kupi and Hsintien!" and "Celebrate our first great victory!"

IV. Passing the Region of the Miao People

In November 1934, having broken through the enemy's fourth blockade line, the Red Army reached a main road on the border of Kwangsi and Hunan. It was pitch-dark when our little party arrived, for we travelled mostly at night to avoid being discovered by enemy planes. At dawn we found ourselves in a tiny mountain village.

We had been marching and fighting all the way. Chairman Mao had not had a single square meal. As soon as the troops took a rest, Little Tseng, a fellow-bodyguard, and I went to look for something to eat. It was a small village and the inhabitants were very poor. The only thing we were able to buy was some ten kilograms of sweet potatoes. I had them cooked and brought in to the Chairman. He was sitting on a small stool, chatting with the bodyguards and groom around him. "The crossing of the Hsiang River was a very great success!" he was saying. Indeed, our crossing of the Hsiang River the previous night had been no mean feat.

Little Tseng and I, holding the bowls, announced that dinner was ready. We went up to Chairman Mao and said to him, "We didn't buy any grain. We just got some sweet potatoes."

Taking one, Chairman Mao began to eat. "Not bad. Very sweet," he said.

"It's like sugar," burst out Young Ting who had been talking like a gramophone all the way.

We all began to eat, some of us sitting on benches, some standing, all around the Chairman. "Why didn't we head for Kweilin along the main road last night, Chairman Mao?" Young Ting asked.

"All you know is big cities..." I said to Young Ting and stopped to listen as I noticed the Chairman was about to speak.

"We'll soon reach the region inhabited by the Miao people," said Chairman Mao.

The Miao region! This was something new. I remembered a teacher in some classes on political study once telling us that the Miao people were a national minority, backward in their culture and economy, that their customs and ways were different from ours,

and that they were even more ruthlessly persecuted by the White Army.* But what they looked like remained a mystery. It would be very interesting to see them for ourselves.

"They are like us, the Han people," the Chairman went on. "They also want to carry on a revolutionary movement against the oppression of the White Army. So they are our good brothers."

Chairman Mao told us in great detail about the oppression of the Miao people at the hands of the White Army, their customs, habits, religious beliefs, and so on. He called on us to keep to our rules of work among the masses even more strictly once we had entered the Miao region. He cautioned us against wandering about or taking things that didn't belong to us. He told us that the Miao women were also different from the women in the Soviet area, who treated the Red soldiers as brothers and, indeed, addressed them as such. The Miao women were not used to this kind of relationship. They still had feudal ideas.

Listening to the Chairman, we felt in something of a dilemma. Was this a "forbidden zone" we were going into? How were we going to get on when we put up our tents and needed to borrow things? I asked Chairman Mao if it would be all right to take down a door** for him to sleep on, as we usually did wherever we stopped for the night.

"No, it won't do!" he said firmly. Then smiling, he asked, "Didn't I warn you not to take things that do not belong to us?"

"What will you sleep on, then?"

"Anything except their doors."

That same evening we resumed our march. The November nights were bitterly cold and there was no moon in the frosty clear sky.

All night we trekked over the mountains, going up hill one moment and down dale the next. Sometimes we clambered up steep slopes and slid down the other side. When we reached the top of a peak, the sky seemed to be right over us. Then the Chairman

*The Kuomintang and warlord armies.

**It was the custom of the peasants to allow the Red Army to take down their doors to use as beds, and put them back again the next morning.

would look around and make sure everyone was there before going ahead again.

The next dawn found us coming down a mountain. Opposite us on the side of a small mountain were some strange-looking wooden houses of a type we had never seen before. They were neither one-storied nor two-storied, but like baskets hung in the air. Chairman Mao told us that we were in the Miao region.

The sun was rising when we reached the village and stopped for a rest.

The house in which the Chairman stayed was on a hillside. Its windows gave onto a large pond with many big-headed carp.

"Let's get some fish for the Chairman," suggested Little Wu, one of the Chairman's bodyguards. Of course, this was a bright idea. But how could we dare, after what the Chairman had told us the day before?

We all remained silent.

"After all, the owner of this house may be a local despot," Wu pressed his point.

"I think perhaps we'd better ask the Chairman first," said Little Tseng.

When I took some water into Chairman Mao's room, I found him about to take a rest. I put the water on a bamboo table, and stood for a while, wondering how to begin.

"Chairman," I found a way out at last, "are you hungry?"

"Is there anything to eat?"

"Oh, yes!" I said quickly.

"What is there?" The Chairman turned to look at me.

I poured out some water, and said as casually as I could, "Fish, some big fish."

"Where are you going to get them?" the Chairman asked.

"Right there." I pointed to the pond outside the window.

The Chairman walked to the window and looked. Then he turned to me. "Have you forgotten so quickly what I told you yesterday?" he said sternly.

I hung my head and said slowly, "We'll pay money."

"That won't do either."

"Just buy a little," I insisted.

When he saw what was in my mind, he came and sat down beside me, and patiently explained the characteristics of the national minorities and our policy towards them. "No matter how big their sheep or fish are, you should not touch them," he said. "They may be keeping them to use as sacrifices to their gods."

The hope of getting some fish evaporated. I picked up the water bucket and left. But as I got to the door the Chairman stopped me. "Tell all the others not to tamper with the things belonging to these people," he said to me. "We'll eat what we have."

I said I would, and went out. Little Wu was apparently waiting for the news, for I ran straight into him. He asked the result at once.

"The Chairman doesn't approve," I said bluntly.

"We'll pay money."

"Not even we pay money," I shouted. "Discipline, understand?" Then I was off.

In the afternoon, a party of about a dozen men turned up, dressed in Han clothes and carrying rifles. They asked to see the Chairman.

Hastily buttoning up my jacket, I asked them, "Where are you from?"

They were very well-mannered. "We're local people," one of them said in the Kwangsi dialect. His accent was difficult to understand.

Local people? I thought, then they must be Miaos. What do they want to see the Chairman for — and carrying rifles?

"Have you a letter of introduction?" I asked them.

"Yes, yes." A big fellow pulled a piece of paper out of his pocket.

I took it to the Chairman. He was studying a map. "Chairman, there's somebody to see you," I reported.

"Who is it?" asked he.

"Some local people," I handed him the piece of paper. "They're carrying rifles!"

Having read what was on the piece of paper, the Chairman turned to me, delight written all over his face. "Ask them to come in at once." Then he walked out to meet his guests.

I accompanied the strangers into the Chairman's room and withdrew. I was puzzled. What did they want? Why was the Chairman so friendly to them?

The strangers remained in the Chairman's room for a long time. It was nearly sunset when they left.

When I brought dinner in, the Chairman was still standing before the map which was now covered with red circles. "Will you eat your dinner now, Chairman?" I asked, putting the dishes down quietly.

He turned and laid down his pencil. "You haven't taken other people's fish, have you?" he asked with a smile.

I smiled back and shook my head.

"Chairman," I asked, "what do these people do?"

"They're Miao comrades," he said elatedly.

"The Miao people also have rifles?" I was curious.

The Chairman glanced at me. "They are Miao guerrillas — our comrades," he said.

"We have comrades among the Miao people?" I exclaimed.

"We have comrades everywhere and there are Communists everywhere!" Then his eyes twinkled. "Do you think you monopolize the revolution?" he said humorously.

I smiled.

V. New Year by the Wu River

It was the last day of 1934 when the Central Red Army reached Houchang near Huangping County, Kweichow Province. We were to camp here over the year's end.

Houchang was a town where country fairs were held. It had a busy market. It was the largest place we had come to since leaving Juichin.

As soon as we arrived, Chairman Mao went to a meeting at the headquarters of the Military Council. According to our bodyguard schedule, Little Tseng and I were on the first shift that day to ac-

company the Chairman to the meeting, while the others were to look for living quarters for him.

Before sunset, they came to relieve me so that I could go and get something to eat. They told me to come back quickly so that I could take the Chairman home early.

"Have you got everything shipshape?" I asked.

"Go and see." One of the comrades winked at me mysteriously.

I went to the troops' camping ground. It looked quite different to any of our earlier camps. Everyone was in high spirits. Some soldiers in thin army uniforms were sweeping snow on the streets, others were carrying doors to put up beds, still others were practising songs. I learned that there was going to be a New Year's party in the evening with a variety of entertainment. I was tremendously excited. The fatigue of our several days' march vanished like melting snowflakes. I quickened my steps, dragging fellow-bodyguard Little Tseng by the hand. "Let's go to see how they've fixed up things. As soon as the Chairman comes back, we'll see the New Year in and have some fun," I said.

The house provided for the Chairman was of Peking style, with rooms on four sides and a large courtyard in the centre. The brick path across the courtyard was as clean as if it had just been washed. Three spacious and bright rooms facing south were to be the Chairman's living quarters. The one in the middle was to be the sitting room, the one on the left his bedroom. One glance told us they had taken great pains to arrange everything. They had put so much straw on the bed that it was as soft as a sofa. The room on the right would be the Chairman's office. Two tables placed together made a desk on which were stationery and telephone.

"Beautiful!" Little Tseng and I exclaimed in delight as we walked round the room. Never before had the Chairman had such a good house to live in, not even in the old Soviet area, let alone during the Long March. What a treat it was to know that he had such a fine place to rest up in! It meant more to us bodyguards than anything else, especially on New Year's Eve.

Wasn't something still missing? Yes, the stools! Get them quickly! Little Tseng and I rushed out and returned with some thirty

square wooden stools which we placed round the desk. Little Tseng wanted to know why we needed so many. I told him that since this was New Year's Eve, leading comrades would certainly come to join the Chairman for the New Year celebration. What would they do if there was nothing to sit on?

Little Tseng kept nodding as he listened, apparently admiring my thoughtfulness.

Then I consulted Tseng about what food we should prepare for the Chairman. "Well, this is New Year," he said. "We should prepare the things he likes best." So I recited a list of the Chairman's favourites: beef, chili, fried bean-curd. . . .

"And don't forget sweet fermented rice," Tseng shouted at the top of his voice as if he had just hit on a wonderful idea.

It was already dark when we had everything prepared. Tseng and I went to meet the Chairman, carrying a lamp.

It was ten o'clock before the meeting of the Military Council was over. As the Chairman was putting on his overcoat, I went up with the lamp. We had walked a little way when he asked us how far it was to the place where he was to spend the night. I answered that it was about a kilometre or so.

It was snowing and the wind was sharp. The clothes the Chairman had on were not warm enough. As I walked behind him, lamp in hand, a sudden emotion seized me. It was over two months since we had left the Soviet area, and the Chairman had been so busy that he had hardly had any time for rest. During the march, he would often give his horse to the weak or sick comrades while he walked. In camp he attended meetings and would be reading telegrams, drafting documents and so on when most of the others had gone to sleep. How could he keep on like this? How splendid it would be if he could stay in a nice place like this for a few more days, pass the New Year pleasantly and enjoy a good rest!

I could not bottle it up any longer. "Chairman," I said, "this is New Year. We should take a good rest here. We've prepared everything."

The Chairman halted. He turned and faced me, straightening my

cap and said very gently, "What? You have arranged everything to pass the New Year?"

"Yes, everything's been arranged," said Little Tscng.

The Chairman looked at me, then at Tscng. He said nothing. He seemed absorbed in thought.

What was the matter? Perhaps he had not heard what we'd said. He might still be thinking of the questions discussed at the meeting.

After a long suspense, the Chairman spoke, "We can't stay here; we've much more important things to do than celebrate the New Year."

"What do we have to do?" I was puzzled.

"We have to race against time to cross the Wu River," the Chairman began, stopping to pat us on the shoulder. "We're the Red Army. What's the most important thing for the Red Army to do at present? To fight the enemy and annihilate them. To cross the barrier of the Wu River is very important. You think Houchang is a big place. No. There are many big places in China, much bigger than this one. Tsunyi for instance. And there are still bigger ones than Tsunyi. When we've crossed the Wu River and taken Tsunyi, it'll be more interesting to spend the New Year there."

He told us briefly about the general situation. Chiang Kai-shek was sending several detachments to follow us closely. We had to get across the Wu River as fast as possible to avoid contact with the enemy.

It is difficult to describe my feelings when I heard what the Chairman said. Nevertheless, the idea of racing across the Wu River was a stimulating one and my excitement began to mount.

Arriving at the house, we found it brilliantly lighted by the big lamp in the centre room. The Chairman smiled at us. "It's really like New Year!" he said. Then he turned to us and waved his hand towards the circle of stools, "Let's spend the New Year's Eve together here!"

After eating, he told us to go to bed. He took out some documents and went on with his work.

About four o'clock in the morning, information came that our vanguard unit had reached the Wu River. We set out.

VI. The Yi People Welcome Chairman Mao

It was on an evening in April 1935, I remember, that the First Front Red Army and the Central Committee staff reached the Golden Sand River. It was the first big river to face us after the crossing of the Wu River. It was in high water, with angry dragon-headed waves. The leading comrades were preoccupied with the problem of crossing, for we had only a few boats. Chairman Mao, of course, was in the thick of the discussion.

Just before dawn I crossed with him in a boat. We had hardly landed when he was off with the Chief-of-Staff Comrade Liu Po-cheng to plan the next stage of the march. I set about looking for a temporary office and living quarters for him.

It didn't look hopeful. The river bank was nothing but bare rocks, with a few holes in the cliffs, dripping with moisture, hardly big enough to be called caves. I sought in vain for planks or even straw to use for a bed. In the end I had to lay out a piece of oilcloth on the ground and put the blanket on it, feeling that that would at least give the Chairman something to lie down on — he hadn't rested at all the whole night. As a matter of fact, he hadn't rested for the last few days.

My next task was to lay out his documents, maps and papers. Usually I did it with his secretary whenever we made camp. We used to rig up some kind of a table or desk. But now there was nothing at all to use even as a make-shift, and the secretary was still on the other side of the river. How could the Chairman do his work? I tried pinning one of the maps on the wall of the cave, but it was no good — it was just sand and wouldn't hold the nail, and there wasn't room to spread the documents out. Already I had wasted time. I was expecting Chairman Mao back from his conference any minute and I hadn't even boiled the water. I knew he would need it after his night's work. I hurried out to see what I could do about the water.

It was broad daylight when Chairman Mao came back and sent for me. When I reached the cave I saw him standing there, deep in thought.

"You've come back," I said.

"M'm... everything ready?"

"I've done what I can," I said, pointing at the "bed." "There are no boards to be found, so I've made this up. Will you lie down for a bit? The water will be boiled in a minute."

I turned to go to check the water, but he called me back.

"Haven't you found me a place to work?" he asked.

"The secretary hasn't come over yet," I said without thinking. "I couldn't find anything to use as a desk — not even a small table. Will you have some water first?"

He took a step towards me, as though he had not heard what I told him, and said, very seriously, but not at all angrily, "The work's the all-important thing at a moment like this. Food or drink are trifles. Twenty to thirty thousand of our comrades are still waiting to cross the river there. It's a matter of thirty thousand lives."

I didn't know what to say, but stood there staring at him. He came right up to me. "Go on," he said, "find me a board or something to use as a desk before you do anything else."

I pulled myself together and ran off, and by hunting high and low found a small board which must have been used as a door to a cave. Chairman Mao helped me set it up, spreading out his maps and documents. Then I remembered the water, it must have boiled by now. I got up to fetch it, when the Chairman spoke again, "Chen Chang-feng, come back!"

I went back into the cave, standing before the "desk."

"I'll have to give you some punishment, you know," he said. The tone of his voice was mild as usual. "I want you to stay by me and keep awake."

I felt an uneasy smile come over my face and sat down opposite him.

"Right," I said.

He had spread telegrams and documents all over the desk. The field telephone rang with messages all the time and he was absolutely immersed in work. He had not allowed a minute for his own comfort. I felt sorry for wasting his time over the desk. If I had understood my job better, I would have had it ready before.

I was awfully drowsy and had a habit anyway of dropping off beside him when he was working. I knew what he meant when he said he

would "punish" me by asking me to keep awake, although he had spoken half in jest. But that day when I saw him heart and soul in his work, I had not the least desire to sleep. From time to time he looked at me with a cheerful smile. I was very uneasy. I got up, fetched the boiled water and poured some out to cool.

Time enough to eat two meals passed before Chairman Mao stopped and stood up to stretch.

"You've been with me several years now," he said. "How is it that you still don't understand what comes first? The first thing you have to do when we make a stop is to find some place for me to work. Food and rest are secondary. You must realize that work is always the most important thing under all circumstances." He stopped a minute and then rubbed his hand over my head. "Now go and get some sleep," he said. "You can hardly keep your eyes open."

After what the Chairman had just said, of course I didn't want to go. He urged me again. I was nearly in tears — I couldn't help it. It wasn't because I had been criticized. It was a mixed feeling of regret and joy, the sort of feeling you have when you have done something wrong and your parents speak seriously but not harshly to you in warning, "Child, don't do it again. Now go and play."

For three days and nights while some 30,000 troops continued crossing the Golden Sand River, Chairman Mao never left his desk.

Soon after the crossing we reached Mienning in southeast Sikang. We were about to enter the region inhabited by the Yi people.

Two days later we left Mienning. We reached the Yi region at noon. It was May. In my native Kiangsi the fields would already be gay with the golden rice. But here the land was deserted and untilled. There were no rice fields, no farm houses, only some rough low shacks in the forests.

Soon after we entered a mountainous area a group of men and women in strange clothes suddenly appeared before us. They shouted as they approached. Five tall women came out from the group, each carrying a big red cock in her arms. They approached Chairman Mao and surrounded him. They said something that we could not understand. But Chairman Mao nodded his head and, imitating

their gestures, put his hands before his breast to show his gratitude. I, Tseng and other comrades imitated him in turn to thank them.

Then Chairman Mao, closely followed by the women with the cocks, walked on. By this time there were Yi people everywhere, on the slopes, in the valley, and on the top of the mountain. Some of them raised their hands high in welcome, some bowed, others sang gaily. It was a strange and moving sight that brought tears to our eyes.

VII. From Anshunchang to the Luting Bridge

We marched about 100 kilometres with Chairman Mao through the mountains of the Yi people until we came to Anshunchang on the Tatu River. From there, we continued north along the bank. We heard we would pass through a market town called Mohsimien and proceed to Luting where we would cross a bridge to the other side.

It was a mountainous region, full of wild grass and stiff brush.

The higher we climbed up the steep path, the tougher the going became and the denser grew the vegetation. From time to time we had to stop to let the engineer units hack a trail through.

But regardless of the road, Chairman Mao walked briskly. His face showed not the slightest trace of fatigue, though we had been marching and fighting and working hard for a long time. He frequently turned around to talk with us or tell us stories.

Seeing the Chairman like this, we perked up. Our weariness vanished into the clouds. Up and up we climbed. On all sides we could see nothing but mountains. But when we reached a certain point, there below was the Tatu River, roaring at us like a writhing dragon.

At dusk we reached a mountain top. Anshunchang was far behind. The unit travelling with us stopped to rest. I talked it over with Tseng and the others, then walked up to the Chairman and asked, "Shall we rest too?"

The Chairman halted and looked at me. "Tired?"

"Oh, no. But you see, they've started cooking."

"Ah." The Chairman laughed. "Tell the others that we'll rest and eat too."

When they saw that the Chairman had stopped, the bodyguards, porters and groom all gathered around. We sat down beside a stream and ate our dry rations. The Chairman ate with us. Our fare wasn't very good and our throats were parched from the long dusty march. But we made ourselves swallow, for we knew that if we didn't eat, the next stage of the march would be even harder.

"It would be better for us to get some water to drink," a young comrade cried. His mentioning of water made us more thirsty. All of us wanted a drink.

The Chairman looked at us, smiling. "A lot of water here," he pointed at the flowing stream. He scooped up the water with his hands and took a big mouthful, saying, "Good. Very cool and sweet." We all bent down to have a good drink.

Suddenly we heard snoring. We didn't have to look to know it was Huang. He certainly fell asleep quickly. We grinned. Wu couldn't resist. He scooped some water from the stream and tiptoed over to Huang.

"He's worn out, let him rest a while." At the sound of the voice we turned to see the Chairman. He stooped down beside Huang, gently raised his head from the grassy tussock, and slipped his own folded tunic under for a pillow. Huang stirred, smiled faintly and sank back into slumber.

We stood and watched, entranced. The Chairman turned to us and smiled. "You get some rest, too. We've more marching to do tomorrow."

Without a word, we bedded down right there. I stretched out on a flat rock.

Dusk is cool in early summer. Though I was very tired, I couldn't fall asleep. Huang was sound asleep on the Chairman's tunic. The Chairman was pacing the mountain top, obviously deep in thought. I could hear the roaring of the Tatu River far below us. The last light of the setting sun turned the entire sky red, and changed Chairman Mao's uniform from grey to orange.

That night the Chairman slept with us on the mountain.

The next day we set out early in the morning. As we neared

Mohsimien we came to a broad, deep river. We couldn't wade across, and the only bridge was a mere two metres wide.

Troops were already crossing when we got there and it was crowded with men. When they saw the Chairman, they immediately cleared a way for him.

Before the Chairman could say anything, the groom led his horse onto the bridge. As it set foot on the rickety structure, the animal shied and whinnied in terror, adding to the general confusion.

The Chairman hurried to the bridge. "Don't take him over yet," he called to the groom. "Let the comrades cross first."

"He's carrying your clothes and luggage," the groom shouted back.

We knew that was the case. Unless the horse was taken over, the Chairman would have no bedding that night. So we added fuel to the flames by saying, "Let them lead him over gradually, Chairman."

"It will be awkward if we don't get him across."

The Chairman gave us a kindly and yet reproving glance. "Help the groom bring that horse back, Chen Chang-feng," he said. "Let the troops pass first."

The soldiers had been aiding the groom coax the horse along. I had to run to the middle of the bridge to bring the animal back.

When we returned him to the bank, the Chairman urged the soldiers to cross over quickly. Only when the last of them had reached the opposite shore, did we follow the Chairman across.

That night we reached Mohsimien. The Chairman said to us, "Remember, we must think of our troops, think of others, no matter where or when. If we held up the march of all those comrades just for the sake of our single horse, that would be pretty bad, wouldn't it?"

After leaving there, we went with the Chairman to Luting. The river was narrower than at Anshunchang, but the current was swifter, and both sides were lined with cliffs.

The bridge consisted of thirteen thick steel chains fixed to big iron spikes driven into the rock at either end. Chains running along each side of the bridge served as railings.

At Luting we met Comrade Lin Piao and other leaders. They took the Chairman to a place in front of a large church, where there was a good view of the surroundings. Then we went with the Chairman to the bridge.

Originally, there had been planks spread across the cables. The enemy had set fire to them and destroyed them before our advance unit captured the bridge. I walked up and looked at those cables, each as thick as a bowl, at the charred planks and the seething river below. I felt nervous.

The Chairman noticed this. He pointed his finger at me and asked, "Scared?"

"No."

He started across, with all of us right behind. I watched him carefully. He walked so lightly, so naturally. He looked up at the cliffs towering into the clouds on either shore. The roaring of the water was unable to disrupt his thoughts. Because there were so many people on the bridge, when we reached the middle it began to sway. I grabbed the chain railing and stopped. The Chairman turned his head and said something to me. But I couldn't hear a thing. The thunder of the river obliterated all other sound. Obviously he was asking whether I was having trouble. I shook my head. He halted and took my hand. Then we walked on together.

I stared downward for a moment. Huge boiling waves seemed to thrust up like long swords stabbing at the bridge. It made me dizzy. I raised my eyes and looked at my comrades on the bridge. Some were advancing cautiously step by step, some were crawling prone along the steel cables. Others were walking in a line, hand in hand, chatting and laughing.

Still leading me by the hand, the Chairman kept looking back at the men following. Sometimes he stopped and waved at them, or said a few words. At last we left the bridge behind us.

"Chairman," I said when we reached the shore, "with one squad we could hold a bridge like that indefinitely. But the enemy. . . ."

The Chairman laughed. "The enemy are the enemy. We can't compare them with an army led by our Communist Party. Right?"

"Right!" we chorused.

VIII. On the Road to Shuitzuti

We stayed a few days in Hualingping after crossing the Tatu River. Then we set out for Shuitzuti. People said we could reach it in a day's march.

We started in the morning. Chairman Mao was busy, so he didn't go with the Central Committee organizations, but travelled instead with the medical units, which left later. Comrade Hu Chang-pao, leader of guard squad, and I went with him.

When we came to a mountain which was about four and a half kilometres to the summit, three enemy planes started diving towards us. We spread out but continued marching. Hu was walking ahead of the Chairman, I behind. The Chairman marched with his eyes on the road, as if pondering some question. Only occasionally did he look up at the planes. The rest of us were very tense.

The planes swung around and went off in the direction from which we had come. Just as we were feeling a bit relieved, from above and behind us we heard two piercing whistles. I knew at once they were bombs.

"Chairman," I yelled, rushing towards him.

I had run only a few steps when a cluster of bombs exploded ahead and to one side of me. The blast knocked me down. The Chairman was engulfed in smoke. I crawled to my feet and looked towards the Chairman. He was squatting beside Hu Chang-pao, who had been hit. The Chairman hadn't been hurt. My heart, which had been in my mouth, settled back into its normal place. I automatically wiped the sweat and dust from my brow and ran over to the Chairman. He was stroking Hu's head. Hu was lying with his hands pressed against his belly. Big beads of sweat stood out on his forehead. But he wasn't uttering a sound.

I didn't know what to do. The medical orderly came hurrying towards us.

"Quick," the Chairman urged him, "take care of him."

Hu waved his hand in refusal. "Chairman, I'm finished," he said. "Keep the medicine. The rest of you still have to go on." His ruddy face had become a waxy yellow.

"It's not serious. You'll be all right," the Chairman said comfortingly. He swiftly helped the medical orderly bind Hu's wounds. Then he sat down and cradled Hu in his arms like a sleepy child. "You'll be all right. Hang on a little longer," he said softly. "We'll carry you to Shuitzuti. We'll find a doctor and have you back in shape in no time."

Hu gazed up fondly at the Chairman with dimming eyes. But he became quite upset when he heard that we were going to carry him. Labouring to get the words out, he said, "Chairman, it's no use. The blood's all flowing into my stomach. I don't mind dying. My only regret is that I can't go with you to northern Shensi and see our base there." Two glistening tears rolled from the corners of his eyes.

He gasped for breath, as though his throat were clogged. "When I die, please let my parents know, if you can," he whispered. "They live in Chi-an in Kiangsi Province."

The Chairman didn't say anything, but only held him closer.

"You'll get well," the medical orderly and I said encouragingly. "You'll go with us to northern Shensi."

Hu shook his head. "Comrade Chen," he said to me, his words coming slowly, "I can no longer protect the Chairman. You must guard him and the other Central Committee leaders well."

His voice was so low I could barely hear him. Finally, with a great effort, he raised his head and stared fixedly at the Chairman and us. His lips trembled as he forced out the words, "Victory... to... the... revolution!" Then he closed his eyes.

The medical orderly and I frantically called to him, but he was gone. Tears streamed down our faces.

Slowly the Chairman extracted his arm from beneath Hu's neck, lowered him gently to the ground and stood up. In a low voice he said to me, "Coverlet."

I handed him the coverlet I had been carrying. He opened it and covered Comrade Hu carefully.

There wasn't a breath of wind that day. The trees and grass on the mountain were motionless. They seemed to be paying their last respects to the departed hero. We wiped away our tears and buried him. Then, following the Chairman, we marched on.

IX. Snow Mountains and Marshlands

In June we came to the foot of Chiachin Mountain, a towering, snow-covered peak. The June sun had not yet set but its heat had lost its power in the face of this great icy mass.

We paused for a day at its foot. Chairman Mao had advised us to collect ginger and chili to fortify ourselves against the bitter cold as we climbed the pass over the mountain. We started the next day early in the morning.

Chiachin Mountain pierced the sky like a sword point glittering in the sunlight. At the start the snow was not so deep and we could walk on it fairly easily. But after twenty minutes or so the drifts became deeper and deeper. A single careless step could throw you into a crevasse and then it might take hours to extricate you. If you walked where the mantle of snow was lighter, it was slippery. For every step you took, you slid back three. Chairman Mao was walking ahead of us, leaning forward, climbing with difficulty. Sometimes he would slip back several steps. Then we gave him a hand, but we too had difficulty in keeping our foothold and then it was he who caught our arms in a firm grip and pulled us up. He wore no padded clothes. Soon his thin grey trousers were wet through and his black cotton shoes were shiny with frost.

The climb was taking it out of us. I clambered up to him and said, "Chairman, it's too hard for you, better let us support you." But he only answered shortly, "No, you're just as tired as I am," and went on.

Half way up the mountain a sudden, sharp wind blew up. Thick, dark clouds drifted along the top of the range. The gusts blew up the snow which swirled around us viciously.

I hurried a few steps forward and pulled at his jacket. "Snow's coming, Chairman!" I said.

He looked ahead against the wind. "Yes, it'll be on us almost at once. Let's get ready." No sooner had he spoken than hailstones, as big as small eggs, whistled and crashed down on us. Umbrellas were useless in this gusty sea of snow and ice. We held an oilskin sheet up and huddled together under it with Chairman Mao in the

centre. The storm raged around us as if the very sky were falling. All we could hear were the confused shouts of people, neighing of horses and deafening thunder claps. Then came a hoarse voice from above us.

"Comrades! Hold on! Don't give up! Persistence means victory!" I lifted my head and looked up. Red flags were flying at the top of the pass. I looked enquiringly at Chairman Mao. "Who's that shouting there?"

"Comrades from the propaganda team," the Chairman replied. "We must learn from them. They've got a stubborn spirit."

The snowstorm dropped as suddenly as it had started, and the warm sun came out again. Chairman Mao stood up on the snowy mountainside. The last snowflakes still whirled around him. "Well, how did we come out of that battle?" he asked. "Anyone wounded?"

No one reported.

As we went up higher, the going grew more difficult. When we were still at the foot of the mountain, the local people had told us, "When you get to the top of the mountain, don't talk nor laugh, otherwise the god of the mountain will choke you to death." We weren't superstitious, but there seemed to be some harsh kind of truth in what they said. I could hardly breathe. It seemed as if my chest was being pressed between two millstones. My heart was pounding and it was difficult to talk, let alone laugh. I felt as if my heart would pop out of my mouth if I opened it. Then I looked at Chairman Mao again. He was walking ahead, stepping firmly against the wind and snow. At the top of the mountain the propaganda team shouted again, "Comrades, step it up! Look forward! Keep going!"

Finally we gained the summit of the mountain pass. White snow blanketed everything. People sat in groups of three or five. Some were so exhausted that they lay down. When they saw Chairman Mao, several comrades came up, calling, "Chairman, come and take a rest!"

When Chairman Mao saw all this he said gently, "Comrades, we can't rest here. The air is too rarefied. Make another effort and we'll meet the Fourth Front Army down on the other side."

With this, our spirits rose again, and we began to scramble down the slope. I don't know whether it was because of joy for the victory of reaching the top or for some other reason, but suddenly I grew dizzy. It seemed that the mountain shook beneath my feet. I lost control of my limbs and began to shiver violently. I stumbled up to Chairman Mao, cried out, "Chairman...!" and collapsed.

But I was not wholly unconscious. I felt Chairman Mao supporting me with his arm and calling me by name. It was as if I was in some fairyland, swimming in air. I could hardly breathe and could not speak. But a sudden strong wind lashed the snowflakes in my face. It brought me to and my eyes cleared. Comrades crowded around me wondering what was the matter. I heard Chairman Mao asking me, "What's wrong? Are you all right now?" I struggled to my feet and on we went.

Chairman Mao's feet plunged deep in the snow at every step. He turned his head to look at the comrades who still hadn't made it to the top. They walked slowly and the column looked like a snake winding its way to the summit. He waved them on encouragingly.

The wind was getting stronger and dark clouds were again gathering. As if urged on by an unknown power, I rushed to the Chairman and shouted, "Chairman, you can't stop here. Please go on quickly."

Going down was easier than going up, but since there was no sunshine on this side of the mountain it was colder. We were all wearing the same thin cotton clothes, and we shivered with cold. I tied a blanket round my waist and so went walking, slipping and rolling down the snowy slopes.

Not long afterward, we met comrades of the Fourth Front Army. New strength came into our limbs. We felt like brothers who had parted long ago.

As we came down the last slopes, I turned back and looked upwards. The red flags were still fluttering on the top of the snow-covered mountain. The untiring voice of the propaganda comrades was still ringing in my ears.

We rested a few days. Then we started our march again. After crossing two big snow mountains we came to Chokechi in north-



western Szechuan Province. It was a cloudless morning when we left the village. But before we were ten kilometres out, dark clouds came over and soon a fine drizzle fell. We were passing a deserted mountain area full of strangely formed rocks. Not even a small footpath could be seen among the sharp cliffs and pits of fallen leaves. A few moments later, claps of thunder burst around us and down came the rain. Big drops and falling twigs lashed us mercilessly. The Chairman's clothes and ours were soaked through.

By four o'clock in the afternoon it was dark. The downpour continued unabated. We still were miles from any lodging place. The Chairman's lamp ran out of kerosene. As the Chairman made his way along in the pitch-dark with difficulty, looking very tired, I felt terribly uneasy. Just think — while others would fall asleep as soon as they reached a camping place, he would be busy attending meetings, reading telegrams, drafting documents, and so on! How hard he worked!

"Let's stop here, Chairman," I proposed.

He stopped. After a moment's thought, he said, "Very well, tell everybody."

But now we were on trouble. All around us were pools of water, rocks and darkness. Where could we fix up somewhere for him to sleep? But using our wits and working hard, we succeeded in improvising a hammock hung between two small trees.

Touching the wet hammock, the Chairman said humorously, "I'll be sleeping on a cooling bed!"

The Chairman's constant sense of humour cheered us up. Whenever we were beset with difficulties, a few light words from him invariably changed the atmosphere. His joking made us forget our weariness and injected us with new strength. We felt ready to face anything.

When the Chairman had lain down, we began to look for somewhere for ourselves. It was still raining. I felt around and touched a cliff. As my hand moved along it, I found a hole. A cave, I thought delightedly. Without further thought, I dived into it. Bang, my head hit something hard! It wasn't a cave, only a small hollow. But even this was something to be grateful for. Disre-

garding the pain, I lay down on my side with my head inside the opening. But why so much water on the ground? Feeling around with my hand, I found I was lying across a small pool of water. Oh, it didn't matter. I laid my small bundle across the mouth of the pool and used the Chairman's broken umbrella to keep the rain off. I fell sound asleep.

When I woke up, the sun was out although the morning mists were still lingering in the valleys. The rain had stopped and big drops were falling from the trees. No sooner had I opened my eyes than I felt a pain in my neck. It was a strange pain, which came only when I looked down. As the water dripped onto my face, all I could do was to let it run up my nostrils if I wanted to avoid the pain. I didn't take this too seriously as I thought it was nothing to fuss about. So I didn't say anything about it.

We continued our march.

Chairman Mao was always very observant, the first to see that something was wrong. He spoke to me in jest, "What's the matter with you, Chen Chang-feng, looking up at the sky all the time? Are you looking out for planes?"

Gazing at the leaves above, I replied, "We've two skies over us here. Enemy planes can't find us no matter how clever they are."

"Then, what is it in the sky that holds so much interest for you?" was his next question.

I walked up to him. "There's something wrong with my neck," I said. "I can't look down. Each time I try to move my head I get a terrible pain."

The Chairman stopped at once. "It's nothing serious," I went on. "It'll be all right after a while." I didn't want to worry him.

Ignoring my remarks, he touched my neck gently and turned to call the medical orderly to come at once.

The orderly examined me very carefully. Then he turned to the Chairman with a smile. "I can't do anything for this patient," he said, "he must have cricked his neck last night."

The Chairman looked somewhat relieved. "Still, we have to do something for him. Little Tseng, go to the medical corps and ask doctor to come and see Chen Chang-feng."

Before I could say "Not necessary," Little Tseng was off.

To prevent me from falling while walking along with my face turned upwards, the Chairman took me by the hand like a father leading a child just learning to walk. "Don't worry," he said, trying to comfort me. "You'll be all right."

The doctor came hurrying up, asked me a lot of detailed questions, tried my neck and rubbed in some ointment. In a short time it was feeling easier.

"Are you all right now?" asked the Chairman, when he saw I could bend my head again.

I nodded and told him that I was all right, whereupon he said, "You're a wonder! For the sake of sleep, you're willing to give up your head!"

Leaving the forests and mountains behind us, we arrived in Maoerkai. Here we made a stop to complete preparations for crossing the marshlands on the Chinghai-Sikang border.

I began to suffer badly from the malaria I had contracted before we crossed Chaichin Mountain. Then I got drenched in the rain and now, exhausted by the long march, I was down with a sharp attack just as we were getting ready for one of the most difficult obstacles in our path — the marshlands with their treacherous quagmires. To be sick at such a time was not only a personal misfortune, I would be a burden and a worry to my comrades and especially to Chairman Mao. He too was weaker now and his slim figure appeared to be taller than ever.

He was attending many meetings at this time. Sometimes they lasted until late at night and then without any rest he would go on discussing problems with leading comrades until far into the small hours. Busy though he was, he often came to see me. When he saw I was in low spirits he would encourage me by explaining why we had to cross these marshlands and enliven me by recounting interesting stories.

I felt in him the love of a father, and a warm and deep gratitude arose in me.

We spent about a month at Maoerhkai. Then finally in mid-August of 1935, we started out for the great marshlands. We hadn't gone 20 kilometres before we came to a huge primeval forest. Its trees, with immensely thick trunks, towered above us. When we stopped for the night we would sling Chairman Mao's hammock between two trees, but he would rarely rest in it. He would be off to a meeting or visiting the men. So the medical orderly let me rest in it.

I was lying there one night. It was already dark and the troops had lit many fires. Probably neither bird nor animal had ever seen fire before in this ancient forest. They were frightened, made strange noises and flew or prowled around in panic. My comrades were sleeping around a nearby fire.

I had Chairman Mao's blanket over me and wore the new clothes he had given to me at Maoerhkai. But suddenly I felt a bout of uncontrollable shivering coming on. As I shivered violently, I told myself not to groan so as not to wake the others. I was especially afraid of disturbing the medical orderly, because if he knew I had a malarial attack he would immediately tell Chairman Mao who would then refuse to use his own hammock. I held my breath, doubled my knees up to my chin and kept silent. Suddenly I noticed a tall shadow in front of me. Chairman Mao had come back. I struggled to stretch out my legs but they were numbed and refused to move. I couldn't control my limbs. My teeth chattered. I was shivering like a man in a fit. The Chairman came up to the hammock and bent over me.

"What's wrong, Chen Chang-feng?" He put his hand on me and then called, "Medical orderly, Chen Chang-feng is sick again!" He didn't speak very loud, but everyone around the fire woke up and they all crowded round me. Feeling my forehead the medical orderly asked me, "Why didn't you tell me sooner?"

I knew he was sorry he hadn't found out and come to help me earlier. But how could I bother him so much when he, dead tired, needed some rest for himself?

When I saw Chairman Mao and the other comrades around me

looking at me with such concern, strength seemed to return to my body and I was able to sit up.

"Lie down," ordered the Chairman gently and used his two hands to press me back into the hammock. I struggled to sit upright, but that pair of powerful hands forced me back. I lost my strength to resist. When he saw that I was quiet again he told the orderly to give me some medicine. Then he and the other comrades went back to the fireside to sleep.

The next morning as soon as I woke up, I jumped off the hammock. I didn't know where my strength came from — perhaps from the night's good sleep or perhaps from the inspiration of the Chairman's fatherly care. The first thing I did was to run to see him.

"Are you feeling better?" he asked, putting his hands on my arms.

I couldn't speak a word. I was in tears.

We continued our march. The ancient forest was left behind and we entered the marshlands. A vast stretch of desolate marsh. Not a single human being lived here. There were no houses. Wild grasses grew everywhere in the stagnant water. There seemed to be no end to it. The sodden earth squelched monotonously "pu-chi, pu-chi" as we laboured over it. A careless step could trap your feet in a morass and send you to a fearful death in its muddy depths. Once caught in the quagmire it was difficult to pull your legs out without the help of your comrades. More than once the Chairman helped some of us with his strong hands.

The weather was cold and changeable. Now it rained, now it snowed. Sometimes it hailed. Every step was an effort. Chairman Mao was walking ahead of us. He would stop for a moment now and then, look back with great concern and call our names until we all answered him. Then he would go on. Sometimes when he saw we were tired he would tell us stories and jokes and make us burst out laughing. And we forgot our tiredness.

No one grumbled or complained. We were determined to pull through and we were confident we could do it. Indeed, we were always optimistic in the company of Chairman Mao.

X. On Liupan Mountain

At dusk in the middle of September, we arrived at a village close to Latzukou. I spread the Chairman's pallet so that he could get some rest. But when I went into the next room, he was already in conference with Lin Piao, Nieh Jung-chen, Liu Ya-lou and other leaders. The table was spread with maps.

Latzkou was known as the "Dangerous Pass." It connected the provinces of Szechuan and Kansu, and was one of the major passes we had to get through to reach northern Shensi. I was sure this was what the Chairman and the others were discussing, so I withdrew without a word. The Chairman didn't get to sleep till very late that night.

But we attacked the pass the next morning at dawn. After taking it we didn't linger, but pushed on.

At the end of September, we crossed the Weishui River blockade line and headed for Liupan Mountain.

Liupan Mountain, a spur of the Lungshan Range, is the highest peak in western Kansu. It was also the last big mountain we had to cross to reach northern Shensi.

The sky was cloudy and a cold wind blew the day we set out to climb it. Soon it started to rain. But although we were soaked by the time we reached the foothills nothing could dampen our determination.

Liupan Mountain couldn't be compared with the snow-covered Chiachin Mountain, which we had already crossed. But when we stood at its base and peered up, it looked dangerous enough. The trail twisted and turned. At the start of the climb there were small trees we could grab. But as we neared the summit, there was nothing, only clumps of withered grass. It was very tough going.

I was still weak from the malaria. The trail was about 15 kilometres to the top and very uneven. By the time we were half way up, I was gasping for breath. My heart was pumping hard and I was drenched with sweat.

Chairman Mao quickly noticed the shape I was in. Whenever we came to a difficult stretch, he extended his big strong hand and pulled me along.

As we neared the top, I couldn't go another step. My head swam, my body seemed to float and I suddenly collapsed in a heap.

I was vaguely aware of two large hands helping me to my feet, and I heard Chairman Mao's kindly voice say to Tseng, "Get the medical orderly to give him some medicine in a hurry. His malaria has come back."

Soon, someone put two bitter tablets into my mouth, and I was given a drink of water. I gradually recovered. Chairman Mao was supporting me, and Tseng and the medical orderly were watching. My heart sank. "It's not malaria, Chairman," I cried. "It's just that I have no strength. I'm afraid I'll never get to northern Shensi."

"You will, definitely. Don't worry," the Chairman said encouragingly. "There's nothing frightening about difficulties. The only thing to worry about is being afraid of them. They're pretty frightening if you are. But they're not the least bit if you don't let them scare you. Stick it out. Once we get over this mountain you'll be all right."

The Chairman's words gave me confidence. But I didn't want to be a burden to him. "You go on ahead, Chairman," I said. "I'll follow as soon as I've had a little rest."

"Nothing doing," the Chairman said firmly. "The air is very thin up here, and it's raining. You can't rest here. You've got to hold out till we get over this mountain, no matter what."

He and Tseng carried me, and continued on. The Chairman was so concerned, I wanted to walk, but I was shivering all over. I couldn't move a step.

"Are you cold?" the Chairman asked.

"Chilled to the marrow."

"Here, put this coat on and drink some more hot water. You'll feel better when you warm up a bit." The Chairman took off his overcoat.

All he had on underneath was a grey cotton army uniform which had been made for him when we were in Tsunyi. What's more, he had worked until very late the night before, and had marched for hours today in the rain. Not only I hadn't taken good care of the Chairman, in fact I had added to his burdens. How could I accept his coat?

I pushed it back. "I don't need it. I can march." I refused to put it on, and struggled to walk. But I was too weak. I took one step and collapsed in a faint.

When I opened my eyes again, I was wearing the Chairman's coat. The Chairman stood in the rain, the autumn wind ruffling his thin grey army tunic. He was still looking rather worried about me, but a smile had begun to brighten his expression.

Tseng brought me a bowl of drinking water and stood by my side.

Warmth flooded through me. My strength seemed to return. I rose to my feet and stared at the Chairman. My throat was constricted.

The Chairman was delighted. "Feeling better?"

"Fine. Let's go." There was so much I wanted to say, but this was all I could manage.

"Good. You're a real Red Army soldier." Chairman Mao fondly patted me on the shoulder. "Let's go."

By dusk we finally crossed Liupan Mountain and reached the foot of the other side. I looked back up.

"You see, you made it," said the Chairman. "That's the way to deal with difficulties."

We camped in a village at the foot of the mountain that night. I lay on my bed, thinking of all that had happened that day. "If it weren't for the Chairman's care and encouragement, I probably would have died on Liupan Mountain today," I said to myself.

I thought and thought, and tears filled my eyes. "I'll never forget what the Chairman said," I vowed. "No matter where or when, I'll remember, always."

XI. We Are Home!

After we passed Liupan Mountain, we entered the Hui region of Kansu. The Hui people were very warm to us. Wherever we went they streamed out to welcome us along the roadside, handing us bowls of hot water and saying, "You must be tired, comrades. Please drink some hot water." We were beyond words when we heard them call us "comrades." We gathered from them that our Red 25th Army, which had passed through here in July, had left them a very good impression with its rigorous discipline.

As we were getting nearer to northern Shensi, our excitement made us forget all our fatigue and ailments. We wished we could step onto the soil of Shensi at once.

One day soon after we started out from Huanhsien County in Kansu, we found ourselves on a small path skirting a mountain. Suddenly we saw five men on horseback galloping towards us. They carried Mausers on their hips and wore white towels on their heads. They were sturdy, young chaps in their twenties. When they reached the foot of the mountain, they dismounted and walked towards us. "Where's Chairman Mao?" they called.

I went to meet them and asked them what they wanted.

An older man among them, breathing heavily and with sweat all over his face, said in a warm voice, "We're sent by Old Liu to deliver a letter to Chairman Mao. Where is he?"

Old Liu! "Wasn't that Comrade Liu Chih-tan?*" I asked. "Exactly," they said in one voice. Meanwhile the older man handed me a letter. I hurried with it to the Chairman. When the Chairman read their letter he smiled and said to the newcomers, "Comrades, you've done good work!" Then they knew it was he — Chairman Mao — whom the people of northern Shensi had expected for so long. They crowded around, smiling and jostling to shake hands with him.

*One of the leaders of the Northern Shensi Revolutionary Base. During the Second Revolutionary Civil War (1927-36) he was Vice-Chairman of the Northwest Revolutionary Military Council and then Commander of the 28th Red Army. He was killed in action in April 1936.

The Chairman walked over to our resting troops. Standing in their midst, he spoke loudly, "Comrades, we are about to reach the Soviet area in northern Shensi! Our 25th and 26th Armies have defeated the enemy's second encirclement campaign and sent men to meet us."

Tumultuous cheers broke out. Everyone was shouting, laughing and flinging his arms around another. Many were crying for joy.

Never before had I seen such a moving scene!

The five comrades who had come to meet us acted as our guides, leading us into a village called Sanchachen. That evening the Chairman talked with them for a long while and wrote a letter for them. He did not even have time to eat.

The following day we stopped at a small village whose name we did not know. There was no rice to be bought, only golden-coloured millet. We bodyguards being all southerners had never seen millet before, let alone cook it. What to do? Since there were plenty of goats, we bought a big one and prepared a mutton dinner.

"Why only meat?" The Chairman wanted to know, when the leg of mutton we had reserved for him was brought in.

"We couldn't get any rice in this village nor any flour," said Little Tseng quickly. "There's only millet but we don't know how to cook it."

"Learn to do it; it isn't difficult," said the Chairman. "We have to learn new ways of living when we come to a new place. Otherwise, we'll starve to death."

We started out to cook the millet. "There's no hurry," said the Chairman. "Let's have the mutton on its own this time!"

During the 40-kilometre march between Chuchih and the dividing ridge on the Kansu-Shensi border, we fought some 18 battles with cavalry units of the Kuomintang warlord Ma Hung-kuei. But as soon as we made contact Ma's horsemen would gallop away. We laughed at them and said they didn't even measure up to "bean-curd" troops of Kweichow warlord Wang Chia-lich — they were only the refuse from the beans after making the curd!

The Chairman's wry comments on these troops tickled our sense of humour. "They don't dare fight when they learn it's the Chinese

Workers' and Peasants' Red Army," he remarked. "They're only 'expert' at running away!"

On the top of the ridge stood a large tablet which read "Dividing Ridge," marking the border between Kansu and Shensi Provinces. We sat down for a rest under a chestnut tree near the tablet.

The Chairman was reading the words on the back of the tablet. "We have crossed ten provinces," he told us in high spirits. "When we go down this mountain, we'll be in the eleventh — Shensi."

A day and a half's march from the ridge brought us to Wuchi where we stayed in cave rooms cut in the side of the loess hills. It was the first time in our lives we had seen such caves. We were now in the Soviet area.

The Chairman got busy conferring with Lin Piao, Chen Keng and other leaders on how to dispose of Ma Hung-kuei's cavalry.

Our soldiers were excited at the thought of the coming battle. "We're getting near home," they said. "Let's present the people of northern Shensi with a gift in the form of a victory!"

The big day came. We stood with the Chairman on a mountain top which was bare of all vegetation. As the battle began, our machine-guns rattled. The frightened horses bolted in all directions, neighing and attempting to escape the hail of bullets, throwing their riders and rolling down the slopes with them. Those who survived ran for their lives.

It was a real treat to watch the battle from the "grand stand." "Chairman!" we exclaimed, "we've only got two legs and they've got four, but we've made them run all over the mountain!" He joined in our burst of laughter.

While the troops were taking a rest in Wuchi, we accompanied the Chairman to Hsiashihwan, the seat of the Shensi-Kansu Provincial Party Committee and the Provincial Soviet.

Large snowflakes were falling when we set out. Although we weren't wearing enough clothes, nobody felt the cold as we trudged over the rough mountain paths. It was dusk when we reached Hsiashihwan. The setting sun reflected on the snow made it look like daybreak. We heard the beating of gongs and drums and the noise of a crowd of people. From a distance we could see a large

gathering on a spacious ground at the entrance to the village. The people were waiting to welcome the Chairman. As soon as they caught sight of him, they cheered madly. Amidst a tremendous din of gongs and drums, the crowd rushed up, waving small red and green banners bearing the words:

Welcome Chairman Mao!

Welcome the Central Red Army!

Expand the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Soviet Area!

Smash the enemy's "third encirclement campaign"!

Long live the Chinese Communist Party!

In his worn overcoat which he had brought all the way from Kiangsi, and his old cap, the Chairman smiled and waved at the crowd. Then the people cleared a way for Liu Chih-tan, Hsu Hai-tung and other leading comrades to come up and shake hands with the Chairman, Chou En-lai, Hsu Teh-li, Lin Po-chu, Tung Pi-wu and Hsieh Chueh-tsai.

"Welcome to Chairman Mao!" the crowd cheered in the snowstorm. Shouts rose from every corner, shaking the very earth.

XII. Chairman Mao Sends Me to School

We soon settled down after arriving in northern Shensi.

In the spring of 1936, the director of the Political Department of the Red Army Academy came to see Chairman Mao and talked about recruiting students for the academy. During their talk, the Chairman looked across at me meditatively and said, "There are some veterans here at headquarters. They are good comrades who passed the test of the Long March. How about sending some of them to you to study?"

The director nodded and said, "They're welcome, warmly welcome!"

One morning, a few days later, I was going out after bringing the Chairman's washing water, when he stopped me and said, "Chen Chang-feng, I'm sending you to the Red Army Academy to study, how's that?"

I didn't answer immediately. My heart beat fast. All sorts of thoughts crowded into my mind. I who had never been to school, who had herded cattle for the landlords in my childhood, was to be sent to a real school. Of course I was glad. But I had been with him about six years. Not a short time. During the most difficult days, no matter how busy he was, he always had a thought for me and taught me. He had concerned himself with my political and general education and everyday troubles, down to the trifles of life. It was under his fatherly care that I gradually learned the truth about class struggle and many other things. But what was most important was that from his own daily life and work I had learned what a real Communist was. All these thoughts crowded in my mind and I was reluctant to leave him.

Seeing my hesitation, the Chairman asked me again, "Have you made up your mind?"

"I ... I don't think I should go, Chairman."

"Why?"

"Nothing, except that I don't want to leave you. Besides, won't it be just as good to learn from you?"

The Chairman came close to me, put his hand on my shoulder and told me to sit down. Seating himself beside me, he began in a soft tone, "Chen Chang-feng, you should understand that our revolutionary base is expanding day by day. We need cadres to do all kinds of work — cadres loyal to the Party, loyal to the people. You've been with me about six years now. You haven't had much opportunity to study. Now you should go to a school where you can study systematically. When you've finished your studies, you'll be able to work better for the Party, and I'll be very happy. What do you say?"

He looked at me with great affection.

"But, if I'm gone, who'll look after you?" I asked.

"You don't have to worry about that," he said, smiling. "When you're gone, someone else will be sent here to take your place."

So the question of my going to school was settled. I spent a sleepless night before I left the Chairman, thinking of my coming school

life, my future and the Chairman. "Who will take my place? How will the new comrade get to know the Chairman's habits and will he take good care of him?" The very thought set my mind in a turmoil again. I jumped out of bed and walked out. It was very late. The light was still burning in the Chairman's room. I decided to make a last request to stay with him. But when I approached the window and saw him writing, my courage evaporated. I knew if I went in, he would talk with me. Years of experience told me that I should not interrupt his work. What was my small problem compared with his work which had to do with the whole country, the whole Party? I tiptoed back to my quarters.

I got up very early the next morning. As usual I went to the Chairman's office to clean and sweep and straighten things up — the job I knew so well. But now I was parting with all these things.

The Chairman came in holding some paper pads and pencils. "You'll soon be going," he said. "Never mind the room, take a rest." Handing me the pads and pencils, he continued, "These are for you to use in school. Study well. Come and see me when you've time."

I took over the Chairman's gifts. Gazing at him, I felt my throat tightening up and my eyes filling.

Chairman Mao went to the front soon after I entered the Red Army Academy. I studied there altogether forty days and was then transferred to the Northwest Security Bureau as instructor to a security detachment. In August that same year Chairman Mao returned from the Shansi front and I went to visit him. The moment I entered the room his first question to me was about my studies.

"I'm not studying any longer, I'm working now," I replied.

"What kind of work?" the Chairman asked me, lighting a cigarette and settling down for a talk. I told him.

"Fine!"

He stopped a moment and then asked, "Are you getting on well at your job? As an instructor have you learned how to stand at attention and at ease?"

Remembering that as young fellows in the service of the Chairman we had made a poor showing when we stood at attention or at ease — that was what the Chairman had in mind — I replied with a smile, "Yes, I've learned. But I still can't make a speech, especially at roll call in the evening."

He then said seriously, "Now that you're a cadre you must be alert. When you're talking, make things clear. Don't gabble, don't put on airs, don't act!" Then he asked, "Are your men learning to read and write?"

I answered, "Yes," and when he asked me who taught them I answered, "I."

"So you're the teacher!" he exclaimed. "How can you teach others when you know so few characters yourself?"

"I'm teaching and learning at the same time," I explained. "When there's a word I don't know I look it up in the dictionary."

When the Chairman heard this he encouraged me. "That's good. Work hard and overcome difficulties. You remember when we were in Kiangsi how Hsieh Chueh-tsai, Hsu Teh-li, Chen Yun and Tso Chuan taught you to read and write?"

I nodded. I remembered the Kiangsi days when Chairman Mao, busy as he was, would help our studies whenever he had a moment to spare.

At that time, as later, wherever the Red Army went, it would post up slogans. Chairman Mao would help us learn the characters in these slogans and later examine us. It was he who guided my hand and taught me to write my own name. He taught us all sorts of other things as well. When we were in Lungyen in Fukien, a coal-mining centre, he told us how coal was formed underground. When we came to a hot-spring, he explained the reason for them. When there was thunder and lightning he told us what they were.

When we were in Juichin, Kiangsi, the Chairman had the same monthly food allowance as all of us. He had no cook. Little Wu and I took turns buying and cooking his food. When I returned from the market, I would put the names of the vegetables in my notebook. One day he saw these lists and asked me, "Are these your accounts?"

"No," I replied, "they are words I am learning."

“That’s a good way to learn characters,” he commented. “Does Little Wu do this, too?”

When I answered “No,” he said, “That’s too bad. Tell him to come here.”

I called Wu and the Chairman told him, “From now on when you buy vegetables, be sure to write down the accounts and report to me.”

That got Little Wu reading and writing seriously.

This was the kind of deep interest Chairman Mao took in our education.

XIII. I Bid Chairman Mao Goodbye

In 1946 after the War of Resistance Against Japan was concluded in our victory, the Party sent a large number of cadres to the newly recovered areas where the people were awaiting us to carry out new tasks. I was called by the Party’s Central Organization Department for a discussion about a new job. It was decided that I should go to Shantung to work.

In the past when I was transferred to a new job, I had never felt so uneasy as I was now. This time I was leaving Yen-an for a place far away and probably I would not be able to see the Chairman for a long while. When I came back home my first thought was to see him and to say goodbye to him. I phoned him and he gave me an appointment the next morning.

The following day immediately after breakfast I set off accompanied by my wife and year-old baby. When we arrived in Wangchiaping, where he lived, his bodyguard Comrade Ho Ching-hua told us, “Chairman Mao has been waiting for you in his office since early morning.”

We followed him into the courtyard. Comrade Chiang Ching came out to welcome us. She shook hands with us and took the baby in her arms. The Chairman was soon with us. In a loose-fitting uniform, he looked a bit stouter now. I saluted him as in

Chairman Mao's autograph in Chen Chang-feng's notebook:

To Comrade Chen Chang-feng,

Work hard! Be loyal to the Party and to the people! I wish you every success!

Mao Tsetung

May 17, 1946

the old days. He invited us into his room and when we were seated, asked me, "Where are you going?"

I told him I was going to Shantung.

"So you're leaving northern Shensi. Do you have any problems?"

"No."

Then he asked me if my wife and baby were accompanying me and if we expected any difficulties on the way. When I had answered his questions, Chairman Mao admonished me to take good care of them.

Then he talked with my wife. He was pleased to know that we had a happy home life.

He played with the baby and asked us all about her. He talked about my transfer to Shantung, saying that when one went to work in a new place, one was bound to meet difficulties. "It's up to you to find ways to overcome them," he said and told me again "to keep close contact with the masses." As he talked he called his bodyguard who brought in two packets of home-made biscuits and some preserved beef. Handing them to me, he said, "Now you are leaving. I've nothing nice to give you but here is something for the child on the journey."

On my part, I took out a small notebook and asked him, "Chairman Mao, I'm leaving you, will you write something in my notebook for me?"

He immediately wrote the following lines: "Work hard! Be loyal to the Party and to the people! I wish you every success!" He gave me a photograph of himself.

As I understood from his bodyguard that the Chairman was about to go to a meeting, my wife and I got ready to leave.

"No hurry," said the Chairman. "Stay here for lunch while I go to the meeting." He told his bodyguard to prepare the lunch and let me select some dishes.

We said that as we had to get ready for the journey, we couldn't stay for lunch.

The Chairman walked out with us, telling me again and again to work well and take good care of myself. As he stretched out his hand I gripped it hard. I could not say a word.

I left Yen-an on May 18, 1946. Over the many years that have passed since then, whether fighting in the front lines or working for peaceful construction, I always feel I'm still with the Chairman. My strength and confidence increase whenever I think of him. I will always do as he said — put my best efforts into my work and remain loyal to the Party and the people.

Illustrated by Tung Chen-sheng

Happy Occasion (oil painting) ►
by the art workers of the Navy of the
Chinese People's Liberation Army



Hung Yen

Our Highland Postman

Splashes of sunlight on snowy peaks
Break into prisms of dazzling colour.
Against this glowing scene, the intense green
Of pines stands out in sharp relief.
But I'll not waste words upon such beauty.
I'd rather sing about our postman
Whose route lies through this lovely land.

Your heart far outshines the sun's beams;
Your green uniform is more dear to us than pines.
Mail-bag on back, you are the link that binds us all.
To spread Mao Tsetung Thought you wade streams
And climb peaks that soar among the clouds.

Hung Yen is a worker.

To tiny hamlet and small mountain village
You bring us Chairman Mao's directives.
Former poor and lower-middle peasants
Regard you as their kith and kin.
No blizzard, no treacherous glacier
Ever stops you postman, comrade dear,
From reaching every door-step like a ray of light.

When you reach factories with your heavy load
Welcoming workers round you mill.
The Party newspaper you bring is the lamp
That guides us through all storms.

Braving spring winds you reach the camp.
Soldiers' faces are bright like flowers,
When they see their letters from home.
Every word our fighters read aloud
Is like gurgling water under Chinshui Bridge.

Some liken you to a devoted husbandman
Planting sunflower seeds wherever you go.
Others say you're like a soaring bird
Singing tirelessly high in the sky,
And cheering all of us with your good news.

You've tramped through every drift of highland snow,
And crossed each bank of highland grass.
The red sun lights up your heart
For, each route you travel, leads
To the same great goal of communism.

The Old Shift Leader

Flames from the furnace flare and flicker
Just like fluttering battle flags.
The crash of striking hammer
Is the thunder of our epoch.

Our old shift leader, a giant,
With tongs in hand, releases the glowing steel
Onto the anvil. His hammer strikes
Amid a shower of flying sparks.

Working for sixty years amid flames and smoke
Has darkened his toil-worn face,
And left his hair snow-white.
But it has built in him a stubborn strength.

In the old days of strikes and struggles
He was always in the lead.
Challenging the scabs, he'd curse them,
Fearless, scorning even death.

Liberation brought new life to him.
Now he is his own proud master,
Wielding a hammer for the revolution.
Our motherland is like a racing steed,
Speeding production — preparing against war.

Though old he never feels fatigue.
His heart, like an ancient fire renewed.
Without the sound of beat on anvil,
Even in his dreams he'd shout,
“Hand me the hammer!”

Using the tongs,
Swinging the hammer,
Feeding the furnace,
Clearing the slag,
His energy is like a dynamo in the shop,
He moistens the air with his sweat.
Each day he starts while stars still shine,
And goes home bathed in moonlight.
For scores of years he's known no respite.

Concerned for him, our comrades said,
“Don't you think it's time to retire?”
With lifted chin, voice deep with emotion,

Every word a note of determination,
“A revolutionary's life belongs to the Party.
What has age to do with it?” he thundered.
“I'll follow Chairman Mao — make revolution,
Never will I leave the ranks!”

Old leader of the shift,
You yourself are a revolutionary anvil,
Strong, without a flaw, always in good shape.
Old leader of the shift,
You yourself are a revolutionary hammer.
Keeping the whole world in mind,
You'll keep striking through all stress and storm.

Shang Tse-chung

Night Ferry

Above, the night sky ablaze with stars;
Below, the mist-enshrouded Yellow River.
In his log-cabin on the bank, an old man
Is lulled to sleep by the rippling water.

Two gleaming golden eyes pierce the night;
The throb of a truck-engine beats on the door.
The old man wakes and, flinging on his sheepskin coat,
He runs out, ready for an urgent task.

An oily hand grips a callused one.
"Glad to meet you," shouts the ferryman.
He sees the precious load of chemical fertilizer;
It welds both hearts in a common cause.

"Prepare seed, fertilizer..."

The ferryman quotes from Chairman Mao.
In the restless roar of the river's rippling water
He hears drums beating for bumper harvest crops.

The light of the hurricane lamp reveals
His smiling face but no sign of fatigue.
With a dig in the ribs to wake his young helper,
He gives the order to ready the boat,
"Support agriculture. Haul up the anchor!"

Through the spume and spray of the rushing river,
Through the mist and darkness of night, the boat
Carries its precious load of fertilizer.
Bronzed by the glimmering lantern light
At the bow the old man wields his oar.

Yin Yi-ping

Half the Population

When we started putting up the poles for the power lines, all the sections complained they were short of labour. Since I was in charge of personnel, that put me on the spot. Socialist construction, inspired by Mao Tsetung Thought, was sweeping the land. Industry and agriculture were as busy as they could be. Where in the world was I going to find people not already working? I sat down and started writing a report to the project leadership, asking them to solve it.

Suddenly, I heard voices whispering outside my door.

"You go in."

"Not me. You'd be much better."

"Go, I tell you!"

I looked up. Oh! There, in the doorway were a bunch of girls. What did they want, anyway? "It's all right," one of them said. "Here comes the chairman." I heard the thud of sturdy footsteps.

"What are you standing there for like a gang of ninnies? What is he, a tiger?"

Yin Yi-ping is a worker.



I recognized the forceful tones of Chen Ta-chu. The families of the men working on the project had their own organization and she was chairman. She ploughed a path through the girls and strode up to my desk. The little red book in her right hand, chest high, she stood in silence.

"What . . . do you want?" I stammered.

"Work," she snapped.

"Work?"

"Why not?"

Why not, indeed? We very much needed people to transport concrete poles and to dig holes for them. But every pole weighed more than a ton. If women tried to tote them they'd be squashed flat. And the holes had to be dug through rocky ground, high in the mountains. That meant swinging a sledge hammer or holding a steel spike. How could I give such heavy labour to women?

"What kind of work would you like to do?" I asked cautiously.
"Unloading trucks." The lady chairman's reply was confident.
"Unloading concrete poles? Don't be funny."

"Think we can't handle it, eh?"

"To be perfectly frank — that's correct! Do you know how much one of those poles weighs? A ton and a half to two tons." I said this very emphatically to show how absurd the whole idea was.

"Never mind about that. Do we get the job or not?"

Ai! What could I say? I needed people badly enough, but this was no job for women. I scratched my head.

"It's really awfully hard work —"

"Cut the cackle! Yes or no?" She slapped her hand down on my desk. You'd think I was deliberately making trouble for her.

"No. You women can't handle this job, no matter what you say."

"Ha," she laughed coldly. "A fine way to have faith in the masses."

"It isn't a question of faith. It's —"

"We women are half the population. Can we stand idle?" She waved her arm vigorously, sweeping my words away. "The Foolish Old Man could remove whole mountains. You mean to say we can't unload concrete poles from a truck? Is a pole heavier than a mountain? Piffle! Agree or not, that's up to you. We're taking the job." She turned to the excitedly talking girls. "Come on, 'Half the Population,' we'll see the secretary of the Party committee."

Like an army responding to its general, the women swarmed out after her.

I wanted to laugh. Of course the leadership would never approve. Why, even the men had difficulty in shifting those poles. Besides, if you broke one you could kiss three hundred yuan goodbye.

I finished writing my report and hurried out. At the door I ran into the Party secretary.

"Hear you're short of labour, Comrade Wen," he said casually.

"We sure are. Every section is complaining."

"We ought to try some untapped sources."

"Untapped sources? Where are we going to find them?"

"What about the workers' families? They have plenty of able-bodied people."

"*Aiya*, secretary, those wives and daughters must have been working on you. We need people to move concrete poles and others to dig holes. How can women do such heavy jobs?"

"Come with me." The secretary took me by the arm and led me to the door of the dining hall. He pointed inside and said: "Listen to that."

"... Comrade Wen doesn't really understand us," the lady chairman was saying. "Of course, he means well. He's afraid we'll mess up and damage the materials. Some of us are discouraged and want to drop our demand. But all over China industry and agriculture are developing like mad. People are urgently needed, and we want to do our bit for socialist construction. If the Party secretary works on him a little, he'll give in. We've got to prove ourselves to him, too. Chairman Mao says: '**What is work? Work is struggle.**' I've been thinking about that. We're struggling against nature, but we've also got to struggle against people's backward ideas."

I was quite moved.

"See what I mean?" asked the Party secretary, indicating the dining hall with pursed lips.

"But if they drop one of those poles, the cost —" I couldn't help worrying.

"Chairman Mao teaches us: '**China's women are a vast reserve of labour power. This reserve should be tapped in the struggle to build a great socialist country.**'" The Party secretary patted me on the shoulder. "What do you say to that, young fellow?"

I thought a moment. He was right. I'd give them a crack at the job. Besides, if they found it too tough, naturally they'd quit. I said: "All right. We'll let them try."

II

I worked late in the office the next day, writing up some material. It was dark by the time I finished. As I stepped out the door I met the girls, just coming back from the job. They were chattering merrily like a bunch of magpies. But the lady chairman was very quiet. Something obviously was troubling her.

"Well, 'Half the Population,' how goes it?" I walked up to her and quipped.

"You've heard?"

"I didn't have to. One look at you and I know the whole story. I tried to tell you, madam chairman. Heavy work is heavy work. What you need is this." I flexed my biceps under her nose. "Muscle, see?"

"Humph. Muscle? You're just blowing. Chairman Mao says it's a person's thinking and political awareness that counts."

"No matter how you put it, you simply haven't got the stuff," I taunted.

"What! Haven't got the stuff?" She waved her arm at the girls. "Come on, 'Half the Population,' let's show this joker a thing or two."

They began closing in on me, their eyes gleaming.

It didn't look so good. I dashed out of the encirclement. "You haven't got the stuff," I teased, "not by a long shot."

"We let you go and immediately you start acting up again," exclaimed the girls. They made as if to come after me.

"Leave him alone." The lady chairman stopped them with a wave of her hand. "You look at people squint-eyed," she snapped at me. "No wonder you get a distorted view."

That night on the way to the bath house I passed the dining hall and heard her reading *On Contradiction* to the girls. I had my bath, washed a few clothes and headed back to my quarters. In the dining hall, the girls were still at it, arguing hotly about which was the main contradiction and what its main aspect was. They were trying to connect this with unloading the concrete poles.

For several nights the discussions continued. The lady chairman and the girls always looked thoughtful when they returned from work at the end of the day. But they perked up and argued enthusiastically the moment the sessions in the dining hall began.

I had been sure they were going to back down, but there wasn't a sign of that. And I hadn't the slightest idea what kind of medicine they were cooking up, either.

III

A few days later they came back, bubbling over with high spirits, very delighted about something. When I asked them what it was, they said it was a "secret."

A fine rain had begun to fall. It was nearly dusk. So I rode with them on the truck to make sure no one got hurt.

All they had by way of equipment was a few crowbars, a thick rope and several thick bundles of straw. How could they unload the poles with that?

"Hey, madam chairman, what are those crowbars for?" I queried.

"Don't ask questions. You'll see when the time comes," was the cool reply.

It was still drizzling when we reached the work site. The girls uncoiled the rope and jumped down.

"What are you all getting off for?" I demanded. "These poles aren't going to sprout wings."

"Don't worry so much. Come on down." The lady chairman waved her arm.

"How are you going to unload with nobody up here?" I was a bit agitated.

"You sure talk a lot. Just come down like a good fellow and stand out of the way." She was very definite, wouldn't take "No" for an answer. I had no choice but to do what she said.

"Sister Chang, tie the rope to that tree." She pointed to a big cedar. "Wrap it around a couple of extra times. It's liable to slip in this rainy weather. Sister Li and Sister Chao will set the bales in place. Be careful, you two. The rest of you be ready to lend a hand wherever necessary." She was strict and methodical, like an experienced field commander.

But what about me? There wasn't a thing for me to do. I simply had to stand out of the way, as ordered.

The lady chairman tied the other end of the rope securely to one of the concrete poles. She told Sister Chang to pull the rope taut around the tree. Then she ordered the driver to start the truck.

Slowly the vehicle moved forward. The pole was gradually pulled out from the rear.

"Hold it!" yelled the lady chairman. All but the tip of the pole was off the van. The truck stopped.

"Bales. Quick." She waved her arm. The two girls, Li and Chao, swiftly lined up bales of straw under the suspended pole. When they were safely out of the way, she shouted to the driver: "Roll!"

The truck inched forward. Then the pole plumped down on the waiting bales, settling softly without a quiver.

"Crowbars!" Again the lady chairman waved her arm. "Half the Population" swarmed around and pried the concrete pole to the side of the road.

I gaped. How efficient the lady chairman was. How smoothly the girls co-ordinated. In less than five minutes they had safely and easily unloaded a massive concrete pole. Their process certainly was neat.

I was quite excited. On the way back I asked the lady chairman: "Who suggested this method?"

"Chairman Mao."

"What!"

"Of course. You can find it in his writings."

Amazing. An ordinary housewife, a child bride in the old society, today she stood so high and saw so far. What better proof could you want of the power of Mao Tsetung Thought? It was Mao Tsetung Thought which gave these women their wisdom and their strength.

"Comrade Wen," said the lady chairman, "we'll soon finish unloading these poles. We've all talked it over and we'd like to go up in the mountains and dig holes. How about it?"

"If you want to be revolutionaries, nobody can stop you," I replied promptly.

What else could I say? "Half the Population" were very convincing. No doubt they'd run into a lot of problems on the job. Digging holes, they'd meet rock. Then they'd have to swing twelve-pound sledge hammers and hold steel spikes whose vibrations, when they were struck, numbed the hands. But, armed with Mao Tsetung Thought, they'd win every battle.

The next day a truck laden with construction material wound up the mountain road. Seated on the equipment, the women sang, their fresh voices ringing through the valley.



Azure Blue

Autumn, 1951. Korea.

I was accompanying the chief of staff of a unit of the Chinese People's Volunteers. The sun was already in the west when we came to a mountain village.

In something over a year of warfare, the Korean People's Army and our Chinese fighters had driven the wildly attacking enemy back to the 38th parallel. We were now in the process of organizing a further counter-offensive. Our jeep wound its way through long lines of trucks, tanks and civilian stretcher-bearers. In spite of the heavy bombing of highways and bridges by American planes, traffic had been quickly restored. A spirited army was pushing south against the invaders.

The jeep wasn't functioning right. We decided to stop in a village and have it repaired. Small, nestled in a pine forest north of a mountain, the village must have been a quiet little place in peacetime. Now it was a traffic centre. Every villager was involved in supporting the front. They supplied the motor vehicles with gasoline, and the soldiers and civilian auxiliaries with drinking water. Several hun-

dred cases of ammunition were piled in a hollow outside the village awaiting transport.

Though extremely busy, the leader of the village committee looked after us personally. She was thirty-five or six. Her hair was bound up casually in a bun in the back. A network of fatigue wrinkles marked the corners of her eyes. She was responsible for all traffic flowing through the village.

She led us to the Support the Front Office. It was in a crude shelter. With empty oil drums and thick pine logs they had simply walled and roofed over a big bomb crater in the side of a hill.

After sending a man to repair our jeep the village leader brought us basins of water to wash with and bowls of steaming rice. We didn't stand on ceremony. We cleaned up a bit and tucked in. Both the basins and bowls were of brass. They were polished so bright, you could see the reflections of the people outside hustling ammo crates on to trucks.

It was still light. The village leader courteously kept us company. Threads of various colours were draped over one arm. As she chatted with us, she embroidered an azure blue scarf. She said they couldn't finish repairing our jeep today. We could sleep in the office. If we were still here the next day, she hoped we would attend their first wedding since the war began. She indicated the silk scarf, as if apologizing for working on this gift for the bride while talking with her guests!

Now that she mentioned the wedding I recalled seeing, as we entered the village, a number of women cutting maple leaves and pine boughs and decorating one of the relatively intact houses. A few were plastering the walls, spreading floor mats and repairing the ceiling.

She pointed to some women loading ammunition. "Most of our men are at the front," she said. "Mainly women and children are left. But there isn't one of them who can't deliver two cases apiece to our fighters. Tomorrow, when they get all decked out for the wedding, you won't recognize them."

And she added: "The U.S. imperialists think they can crush us with their war. Not a chance!"

Some mud-spattered women, laughing and loudly bantering, came barging in. They weren't the least shy in the presence of their Chinese visitors, but shook out their skirts of pastel red and yellow and green. Chuckling and gesturing, they argued animatedly about something before the village leader. I couldn't understand very much of what they said. But it was plain from their merry laughter that all the bombs in the U.S. arsenal could never stop the swirling of the skirts and ribbons of these gay people who sang and danced so talentedly.

The women left. Two children came in — a girl of twelve or thirteen and a boy of seven or eight, their arms full of wild flowers, strips of coloured paper hanging from their school bags. The village committee leader laughingly introduced them. They were her daughter and son. The girl was called Kim Jwi, the boy Little Kil. They were old friends of our Volunteers, and were completely at ease with us. Leaning against our liaison man, Little Kil counted the cartridges in the chief of staff's ammunition belt. Kim Jwi took the silk scarf from her mother's hands and went on with the embroidering.

By then it was quite dark. Mother and children departed. As they faded into the night, I heard the kids chattering: "See, *amani*, no stars, not a single one. . . . What do you say, *amani*, will tomorrow be clear?"

They were hoping it would be cloudy. Then the American planes wouldn't come.

Sure enough, the next day the sky was overcast. The village leader's daughter arrived at the shelter early in the morning. She put a basket of apples on the table and leaned to whisper in the liaison man's ear: "Over there. That's the bride, fetching water."

We looked where she was pointing. Along the path a very pretty Korean girl was approaching. Wearing a long pale skirt, she glided by so gracefully with the jug of water swaying rhythmically on her head that she seemed to be dancing rather than walking. As she disappeared into the newly refurbished house, the women putting on the finishing touches serenaded her with a saucy song. Our liaison man couldn't refrain from beating out an accompaniment on his brass wash basin.

The village committee leader called on us several times. She wore a silk skirt of golden yellow, topped by a milky white tunic. She looked years younger. While continuing to direct the loading of the ammunition, she never stopped embroidering the azure blue scarf. The designs in the four corners were done. All that it lacked was a few flowers in the centre.

She plied the needle so urgently, so earnestly that our conversation naturally channelled itself into the embroidery. Everyone offered suggestions as to what the centre should look like.

"According to Chinese custom it ought to be two lotuses with stems intertwined," the chief of staff said with a smile. He pencilled a sketch of his idea on a piece of paper. I was surprised that a man accustomed to drawing military maps of tiny scientific precision could create such a bold vivid design.

The liaison man had a cute idea — leave the last few stitches of the filaments of the lotus flowers undone, and let the bride and groom finish them at the wedding, each doing a stitch in turn.

They told us the boy was a lumberjack. When we thought of those big hands which usually guided an electric saw trying to manipulate a delicate embroidery needle, we all laughed.

Though the weather was dull, we were surrounded by brightness. Wherever we went, we saw the committee leader, carrying that azure scarf. It was like a shaft of pure blue bursting through the dark clouds and spreading to every corner of the mountain village.

We were eager to attend the wedding, but our mission couldn't wait. Our jeep was repaired. We left just as the guests were starting to sing the congratulatory songs in the newly-weds' house.

The committee leader saw us off, presenting us with a box of rice cake. Only two strands of red silk thread remained on her wrist. She had finished the azure blue scarf in time, after all, except, as the liaison man had proposed, for the tips of lotus filaments, which would be stitched in by the bride and groom.

We rolled off. Through the haze of dust behind us we could see the azure scarf, waving. Pink beams of the setting sun seeped through cracks in the purple clouds. It had been a peaceful day.

In the jeep, none of us spoke. I glanced at my watch, and looked back at the disappearing village. I hoped that nothing would disturb the joyous wedding. Our driver evidently felt the same way. As our jeep sped smoothly along, he never once blew the horn, as if reluctant to sound a raucous note in the festive music. Actually, it was long since out of earshot.

We rounded a bend. Suddenly, the chief of staff shouted for the driver to stop. From the clouds we heard an ominous droning.

"Black Widow," warned the chief of staff.

A dark twin-fuselaged American plane slipped out of the clouds. The stealthy night-raider circled, then went into a long dive towards the village we had just left. Its engines screaming, it swept by overhead. Two heavy explosions followed.

Our driver didn't wait for orders. He swung our jeep around and we raced back.

Nearby, anti-aircraft guns were barking. The pilot of that plane which specialized in making women widows wove his craft in and out among the clouds. Then its wings trembled violently, and it plummeted earthward.

Criminal beast! For ten minutes it had bombed and strafed. About sixty cases of ammunition were still out in the open. The committee leader was courageously directing their removal when an American shell fragment pierced her chest.

Stretcher-bearers carried her into the newly-weds' house and laid her down on the straw matting. People gathered anxiously around the rapidly working doctor. The staunch Korean woman uttered only a single faint moan.

Children rushed in from the village school, her own two youngsters among them. Kim Jwi and Little Kil pushed through the crowd, the boy clutching the edge of his sister's tunic.

"*Amani! Amani!*"

The mother opened her eyes and regarded her children calmly.

"Don't cry, dears. Are we going to let that flying Yankee gangsters up there see our tears? Never!"

"*Amani...*" Kim Jwi pressed her quivering lips together. "Our People's Army shot it down. It crashed in the valley."

"Good." The mother smiled. "Shoot them down — a hundred, a thousand, shoot the gangsters down. Smash them all... children... smash..." Her voice faded. She closed her eyes.

Little Kil turned away, flung his arms around the chief of staff's leg and buried his face in the chief's big hands.

"No," Kim Jwi mumbled. "*Amani* won't die, she can't..."

In the eyes of the chief of staff, gleaming angrily beneath his bushy brows, the azure blue of the scarf became a tempered steel lance, piercing the starless night sky. He clenched his fists into balls of iron, a thing he only did when from hundreds of big guns the covers were being removed.

II

The following spring we won a big battle and were preparing an even larger offensive, to hit the enemy before they could catch their breath.

Again we drove down that familiar road. In the bouncing jeep, the chief of staff stirred from a fitful doze, perhaps still stimulated by the big attack just concluded. It certainly was a memorable clash. Thousands of artillery pieces of the Korean People's Army and the Chinese People's Volunteers opened up thunderously from three sides, long spears of flame stabbing the inky night. We demolished two airfields and three strongholds in the heights.

The Yanks fled in panic, abandoning arms and equipment. They dispatched a huge fleet of planes, hoping to stop us with their much vaunted "air superiority." But we had long since burst this little dream bubble of theirs. Our airforce and anti-aircraft knocked down thirty-two of their planes, including B-29's, "Mustangs" and "Black Widows." In his knapsack the chief of staff had one bit from each of those American planes. Every time an enemy aircraft was downed our men sent him a piece.

But it seemed more likely to me that he was thinking of something which had occurred in some companies at the front a few days previously. Many fighters were suffering from night-blindness due to a lack of vitamin A. Although this was the season of edible herbs, the moun-

tain top where these companies were entrenched had been blasted bare. You had to cross three mountains and slip through two areas under constant enemy artillery barrage before you could find any vegetation.

The company cooks frowned all day. If only they could add a bit of green to the men's diet!

Then, miraculously, the much needed green — fresh wild herbs — appeared in the fare. According to reports reaching headquarters, someone had left the herbs in a trench entrance one morning. Attached to each bundle was a note written in wobbly Chinese characters: "Volunteer Uncles, may you have the brightest of eyes, so that you can aim straight at the American gangsters' heads!"

The chief of staff leaned out of the jeep and looked. "We're here," he said. There was no need for his announcement, for the driver was already slowing down.

Again we stopped in the village in the valley. The road had become a two-lane highway, along which armoured cars, tanks and big guns were trundling towards the front. Although the village was quite near to the fighting, the Americans didn't dare to bomb in daylight, but raided only at night.

We climbed out of the jeep and headed for the Support the Front Office. The shelter of empty oil drums and pine logs was now extended into a shallow trench in the rocks.

At the door we were greeted by a Korean girl, the bride of the autumn before. She recognized us, too.

"Ever since that day," she said, "I've been doing the work of the committee leader."

She invited us to be seated. The office was exactly the same. On the crude table of fragrant pine stood the gleaming brass bowls and basins, still reflecting the sky outside. Only today it wasn't dull, but limpidly clear.

The chief of staff asked who was delivering the edible herbs to the Chinese companies. He urged the new village committee leader to tell them to stop.

"I can't," she said with a grave smile. "I wouldn't if I could. Whatever the Volunteers need, we see to it that they get it."

"Ah." The chief of staff thought a moment. "The herbs are part of your job, too?"

She laughed and stood up. She led us from the shelter to a mountain hollow. In an air-raid spotter's birch-log booth were bundles of fresh green herbs. Some were wrapped in paper, others were bound with vines.

Our eyes were caught by a familiar object. Tied to a pole by two ends was the azure blue scarf. Its embroidered flowers all seemed to be in bloom.

"The children's Support the Front Team use it as their flag," explained the leader of the village committee. "Their team leader is Kim Jwi. So you see . . . how can I stop them? The hearts of all the Korean people, including the children, are burning with flames of hatred kindled by the American gangsters, flames that are going to consume every one of the invaders. I . . . I can't stop those kids."

We knew now how the herbs had reached our trench.

At that very moment Kim Jwi and her team was out with another batch, crossing three mountains and two zones of enemy artillery fire. We waited anxiously.

The children returned at dusk. They threw themselves happily on the chief of staff. Then they gazed at him, wide-eyed, as if embarrassed that their secret had been discovered. He didn't say anything, but drew from his knapsack a heavy bundle. In it were pieces from the thirty-two downed American planes. Black and yellow and aluminum bits, some with the letters "U.S.A." still discernible.

We told the children we were preparing to smash the enemy. The front was going to be a very dangerous place. They simply mustn't deliver any more herbs to the Volunteers.

Kim Jwi didn't reply. She sat with her head bent over a garment she was sewing. Little Kil also was silent. He was vigorously sharpening a bomb fragment on the side of a rock.

Shortly before daybreak, we heard Little Kil whisper: "Sister, the sky is full of stars."

"Sssh."

"Sister, wouldn't it be fine if all the Volunteer uncles had eyes as bright as stars and could see everything in the night?"

"Will you be quiet?"

A few minutes later, a door creaked open on its hinges.

The chief of staff nudged me. I jumped up and rushed outside. Small footprints were embedded in the dew-soaked ground.

In the moonlight, the hills and dales became a children's fairyland. The azure scarf hanging from the pole on Kim Jwi's thin shoulder was like a blue cloud drifting softly among the pines.

Kim Jwi quietly opened the gate and went out, followed by a troupe of basket-bearing children. They dug fresh herbs along the banks of the stream, the moonlight painting their shadows in dark blue.

I watched from behind a boulder. I wanted to stop them, but I hated to disturb this lovely, still world. Gradually, jade green herbs, glistening with dew, filled the baskets. The kids really wanted to pluck the stars from the sky and give them to us Volunteers. They hoped our fighters would have eyes like stars which could pierce the black night.

When the moonlight had lengthened the children's shadows and grey tinged the eastern horizon, the enemy opened up with their big guns.

They fired blindly. U.S. artillery shells landed on mountain slopes devoid of military value. The children weren't a bit afraid. They continued digging. The herbs they had gathered were piled up in a small green mound.

Kim Jwi waved their azure blue flag, summoning the kids to move towards the stream. In the lush grass along the banks the herbs grew in abundance. I heard the whistle of an approaching shell. The children were walking straight into the path of its trajectory. I rushed towards them.

"Down," I yelled.

There was an ear-splitting blast. Someone threw herself upon me amid a shower of earth and stones. A small voice whispered in my ear:

"We're all right, uncle. How do you feel?" Kim Jwi was squatting beside me.

Our artillery returned the fire in a thunderous barrage that silenced the enemy guns.



The kids cheered. A shell fragment had torn a hole in their azure blue flag, rippling in the smoke-laden breeze.

III

Another spring, after victory. Our Volunteers were on their way home. Again we travelled that familiar road through the mountains.

Where it neared the village, it was full of people. Women in colourful skirts were dancing joyously. I caught a glimpse of an azure blue scarf. Kim Jwi was taller now. She danced solo, then at the head of a group, twirling, flying, the scarf over her shoulders rising and falling with the beat of the orchestra and her long drum. That swath of azure silk was like a pure blue flame which, having tempered the steely spirit of a heroic people, was forging an unbreakable friendship.

Villagers surrounded our cavalcade. The Korean and Chinese people, fighting side by side for several years, had defeated the world's biggest imperialist power. A smashing victory. How could this small mountain valley encompass our enormous happiness?

We hated to leave. We consoled ourselves with the thought that we were not so much leaving as extending to every corner of China the fabulous vitality of the little Korean valley.

The new leader of the village committee was dressed as colourfully as on the day she married. She walked with dancing grace among our soldiers, a basket on her head, handing out apples.

Kim Jwi and Little Kil saw us and came rushing up. We shook their small warm hands — hands which had taken over the battle tasks from their mother. How much they had done, far in excess of what one could expect of children of their age, to defeat the cruel foe. In the most painful moments, they had kept themselves under strict control. They had never let the enemy pilots see their tears.

But Kim Jwi's eyes were wet now, as we bid the children farewell. What was that moisture? Joy or sorrow? Spring freshets washing away the ice of winter, or dewdrops reflecting the sunlight?

I couldn't say. I knew only that a staunch young girl's eyes were damp. She took our hands and led us up the sunny slope to a green grave amid a profusion of scarlet and white wild flowers. The newly carved tombstone was draped with an unusual decoration. Bits of the dozens of downed U.S. planes had been strung together in a wreath. They were already rusting.

We removed our caps and bowed to the eternally sleeping heroic Korean mother. That was the only ceremony. "Your daughter's

deeds," said the chief of staff, "are proving her words: 'My mother has not died.'" That was the closest we came to a funeral oration.

We had to go. The new village leader and Kim Jwi hurried up as we were getting into our jeep. Kim Jwi tied the azure blue scarf around the chief of staff's neck.

He hung it on the wall of the sleeping compartment of the train taking us home. The bridge over the Yalu came in sight. We gazed at the smoke from the kitchen chimneys and the white clouds enveloping both banks. Then we were crossing. We could see the waves tumbling below.

"The Yalu used to be a gosling yellow," said the chief of staff. "But the sky above the Chinese and Korean people has turned it green!"

Illustrated by Tung Chen-sbeng

Studying Chairman Mao's Works (gouache) ►
by the art workers of the Navy of the
Chinese People's Liberation Army



He Lives For Ever

The name of Wang Yu-chen is famed far and wide in the Tienshan Mountains of Sinkiang. Before his death he was an assistant regimental commander of the People's Liberation Army. Completely devoted to the people and Chairman Mao, he affectionately led his young soldiers in accordance with Chairman Mao's proletarian line in military affairs.

He began absorbing the glorious tradition of rapport between the men and their commanders in a people's army from the day he joined the PLA in 1947. The first study session he attended when assigned to a company was a discussion of Chairman Mao's article: *Serve the People*. The words "**Our cadres must show concern for every soldier**" made a deep impression on him. On marches cadres often carried his pack or his rifle when he grew tired. When they made camp a cadre might bring him water for washing his feet and puncture his blisters.

Once they were pursuing the foe and Wang's shoes wore through. The platoon leader gave him a new pair of his own. To help him

“learn warfare through warfare” quickly the company commander and political instructor assigned two experienced soldiers to be his mentors. They themselves studied with him Chairman Mao’s article *Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society*, and explained how the old social system and the reactionaries were the root cause of the sufferings of the poor. Wang soon realized that social problems had to be viewed from a class standpoint. At a mass meeting excoriating the cruelties of the ruling class in the old society, Wang wrote “Defend Chairman Mao” on the butt of his rifle, as a sign of his determination to follow Chairman Mao and wage revolution all his life.

The years passed. Wang became the commander of a company of engineers. Like his own old company commander and political instructor, he too kept a sensitive finger on the ideological pulse of every man in his unit. He was completely familiar with each soldier’s habits, nature, likes and dislikes.

Wang made a meticulous check of all fuses and explosives whenever the company went out on an assignment. “Being responsible to my men is being responsible to the revolution,” he said.

During a big manoeuvre it was the job of the engineering company to simulate artillery bursts. They had to operate amid thousands of such burst-points. Every man had to set off between two and three hundred explosions.

Chairman Mao teaches us to have a **“boundless warm-heartedness towards all comrades and the people.”** Wang hardly ate or slept. Politically and technically, he helped each soldier until the task was accomplished.

Because Wang treated his men like class brothers and worked with them diligently, the engineering company was commended by the Sinkiang Command of the PLA as a model of safe operations.

Wang became, successively, regimental chief of staff and assistant regimental commander. The higher he rose in rank the more solicitous he grew about his men. He often said, “Chairman Mao teaches us that **‘the army is the chief component of state power’** and that **‘soldiers are the foundation of an army.’** To love our soldiers is to love our proletarian political power.”

He would go out in the pouring rain, leaning on a staff, and climb winding muddy trails to deliver raincoats to soldiers felling timber deep in the mountains. On nights when deep snow blocked the doorways, he would tramp through the drifts in the freezing cold and visit every squad to make sure the men were warm enough. Sometimes he would take over guard duty for a man to let him see a film being shown by a travelling projection team.

On his day off he would go to the men’s quarters. While lending a hand with their sewing and mending, he would help them solve their ideological problems. All year round Wang worked with the regiment in the wilds. On the rare occasions when he got home leave, he always had a look at the men in the infirmary before departing.

One night, long after the bugle blew “lights out,” Wang lay on his bed, weary from a hard day’s work, but too excited to sleep. He listened to the moan of a sand-laden wind and thought of the energetic manner the boys under his command had thrown themselves into the job that day. They were so wet with perspiration they looked as though they had just been fished out of the river. But not one of them uttered a word of complaint. The only thought in their mind was “revolution.” Truly good soldiers of Chairman Mao!

Wang quietly got out of bed. The wind was still howling. He made sure the windows were shut tight and all the sleeping men properly covered. Only then did he return to his own bed and lie down.

Another day, he returned from the work site at dusk. He was told that two soldiers doing a job in the mountains had not come back. Concern for their safety flamed in his heart. Not even pausing to have his supper, he forgot his fatigue and set out immediately with three men.

It was dark, the wind was cold and piercing, and the mountain trail was pitted and uneven. They climbed slopes, scaled bluffs. They searched all that night and all the next day, but there was no sign of the missing men.

By the following night, Wang and his three soldiers were exhausted. He lit a torch and encouraged them by reciting passages from Chairman Mao’s teachings on revolutionary heroism. At the end of two

full days they still hadn't found their vanished comrades. Wang had eaten only a small steamed muffin in all that time. He had given the rest of his ration to the other men in the search party. Though his throat was burning with thirst, he gave them the entire contents of his canteen.

The men were moved to tears. "For the sake of us soldiers, the commander endures every suffering," they said.

Thanks to Wang's dauntless will and nobility of class feeling, he was able to lead the party in a thorough search of the neighbouring hills until, at last, they found the missing fighters and brought them home.

Once Wang was going up the mountain in a truck. On the road they caught up with a soldier carrying tins of oil on a shoulder pole. Wang told the driver to stop and called out, "Climb aboard, young fellow. We'll give you a lift."

The boy was embarrassed. "I'm a new soldier, assistant regimental commander," he said. "It's better if I temper myself with some hardship."

This simple reply moved Wang. "Well put, 'new soldier,'" he thought. "There's nothing like tempering. I too should always remain a 'new soldier' in the revolution."

Wang never missed an opportunity to be close to the rank and file and to learn from them. Now he jumped down from the truck and instructed the driver to go on without him. Walking over to the boy, he said, "We'll each carry one tin apiece. How about that?" He took an oil container from him and swung it up on his shoulder. Then he strode along with the lad up the slope.

"Always remain a new soldier and never stop in the revolution." This was fresh political nourishment, absorbed from a simple young fighter. That night, on the mountain, Wang opened his little red book of *Quotations From Chairman Mao Tsetung* to the section on "Communists" and read, "**At all times they should be pupils of the masses as well as their teachers.**"

He read it again and again and underlined it in red pencil. He understood. "You have to go to the masses to revolutionize your thinking."

From then on he more than ever cherished his soldiers, humbly learned from the masses and continued to revolutionize his ideas.

On the job, whenever danger occurred Wang always thought first of the safety of his men. Once they were working in a tunnel and he noticed a crack in an overhead boulder. The roof was about to fall.

"Danger," he shouted. "Everyone clear out!"

He seized a log and propped up the boulder as stones showered down on his safety helmet. His face never blanching, he leaned hard, holding the log in place. The accident was averted.

Another time, one of the men was removing rubble from the tunnel when a projecting timber knocked him from the dump cart he was riding. The cart, laden with rock, rolled, out of control, towards a gang of men repairing a section of track. The noise of a compressor engine blotted out the sound of the rumbling cart. None of the men noticed its approach.

Wang, who happened to be in the tunnel on a safety check, saw it bearing down. "Get out of the way," he yelled. He leaped in front of the cart like a tiger and tried to hold it back. But the moving two-ton cart advanced implacably. By then Wang's hands were lacerated and bleeding. Leaping on to the cart, he jammed down hard on the foot brake. The vehicle skidded to a halt a short distance from the repair gang.

Time and again this excellent Communist risked his life for the sake of his men.

He was just as solicitous of the cadres under his command. A platoon leader, a graduate of their engineering school, was now teaching there. With much effort he produced a teaching syllabus. He brought the thick, closely-written folio to Wang for his approval.

"What really matters in a course of training is the instructor's class love for his students and his sense of responsibility towards them," Wang explained. "To lead soldiers well, you must love them, cherish them. You must roll and crawl over the same ground. Only in this way will you develop fighters who can conquer any foe."

To help the platoon leader, Wang also took part in the training. Making strict demands in accordance with conditions of actual warfare, he led the trainees in a crawling advance through bushes of thistles. Though both his hands were pricked by the sharp barbs, he deviated not an inch, setting an example of staunch determination.

The platoon leader, deeply impressed by what he learned from Wang, was able to improve his training methods considerably.

June 25, 1969. It was a dark night in the mountain valley. Only Wang's oil lamp gleamed in the quiet living quarters. The following day he was to sum up the work of a Party consolidation which the transport company was conducting. Open before him were the *Quotations From Chairman Mao Tsetung* and the new Party Constitution. Concentrating on his outline, he wrote in a neat hand:

"We must respond to the Party's great call. We vow, as members of the Chinese Communist Party, to devote our lives to the struggle for communism, to be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory. . . . Forward, for communism, with head high. . . ."

Wang wrote and wrote. The old wound in his left arm began to ache. That meant the weather was going to change.

Thunder rumbled. Lightning flashed. A violent storm broke.

Wang grabbed a flashlight and dashed out in his undershirt. He ran to the river. Muddy water was boiling through the cliff-lined pass. Experience of many years taught that a torrent was on its way. Had the tools and equipment at the work site been moved to a place of safety? Were the comrades in any danger?

He hurried back to the office, intending to check by phone. As he entered the door, the telephone rang. It was Seventh Company. "A torrent. A torrent," a man's voice shouted, very excited. Then the wind snapped the line and the phone went dead.

A torrent demanded immediate action. Wang's sense of responsibility to the Party and to his men was of the highest. He threw down the receiver and rushed at flying speed towards where Seventh Company was working.

It was nearly dawn. The storm grew fiercer. Thick streams of water cascading down the mountain sides rolled large boulders before them. The bridgehead which had been erected on the opposite shore was in danger of being wrecked. All of Seventh Company's tools and equipment were there at the foot of the cliff, within reach of the rising water.

The men were hastily building a temporary suspension bridge. Tung Chun-ming, a new soldier, working on the bridgehead, suddenly fell into the river when the section on which he was standing collapsed. Tung seized a protruding branch and clung to it, buffeted by the waves. He was in danger of being swept away.

At this crucial moment, Wang with a group of soldiers arrived. He picked up a wooden window frame for buoyancy and started towards the river. The soldiers closed in around him and pleaded: "You can't, commander. The current's too swift."

"Let me go," Wang shouted. "To rescue a class brother, I'd climb a mountain of knives or swim a sea of flames."

"You're not young any more, commander. We'll go. You can direct the rescue work from here."

Wang and the men knew each other's hearts. They were linked by the loftiest proletarian love and emotions.

To save time, Wang sent one group to climb round through the mountains and try to reach Tung further down. He told another group to build a raft quickly.

As soon as the raft was ready and launched, Wang was the first to jump aboard. "I'll take only two more men, good swimmers," he said sharply.

The raft rose and fell wildly in the waves of the racing current. It was impossible to control it. A ten foot wave spun the frail craft around and drove it in a glancing blow against the cliff. Three of the nine logs forming the raft were snapped off. Wang commanding in the fore part was injured. But he continued directing operations in spite of the pain, while holding to the edge of the raft.

It sped towards Tung like an arrow. They were fast approaching the beleaguered fighter. With a happy smile Wang stood up and extended both his hands for Tung to grasp. But just then a rush

of water carrying rocks with it knocked the raft down to the bottom of the river. Wang and the two men were thrown into the torrent.

The hearts of the watchers on the bank seethed like the tempestuous waves.

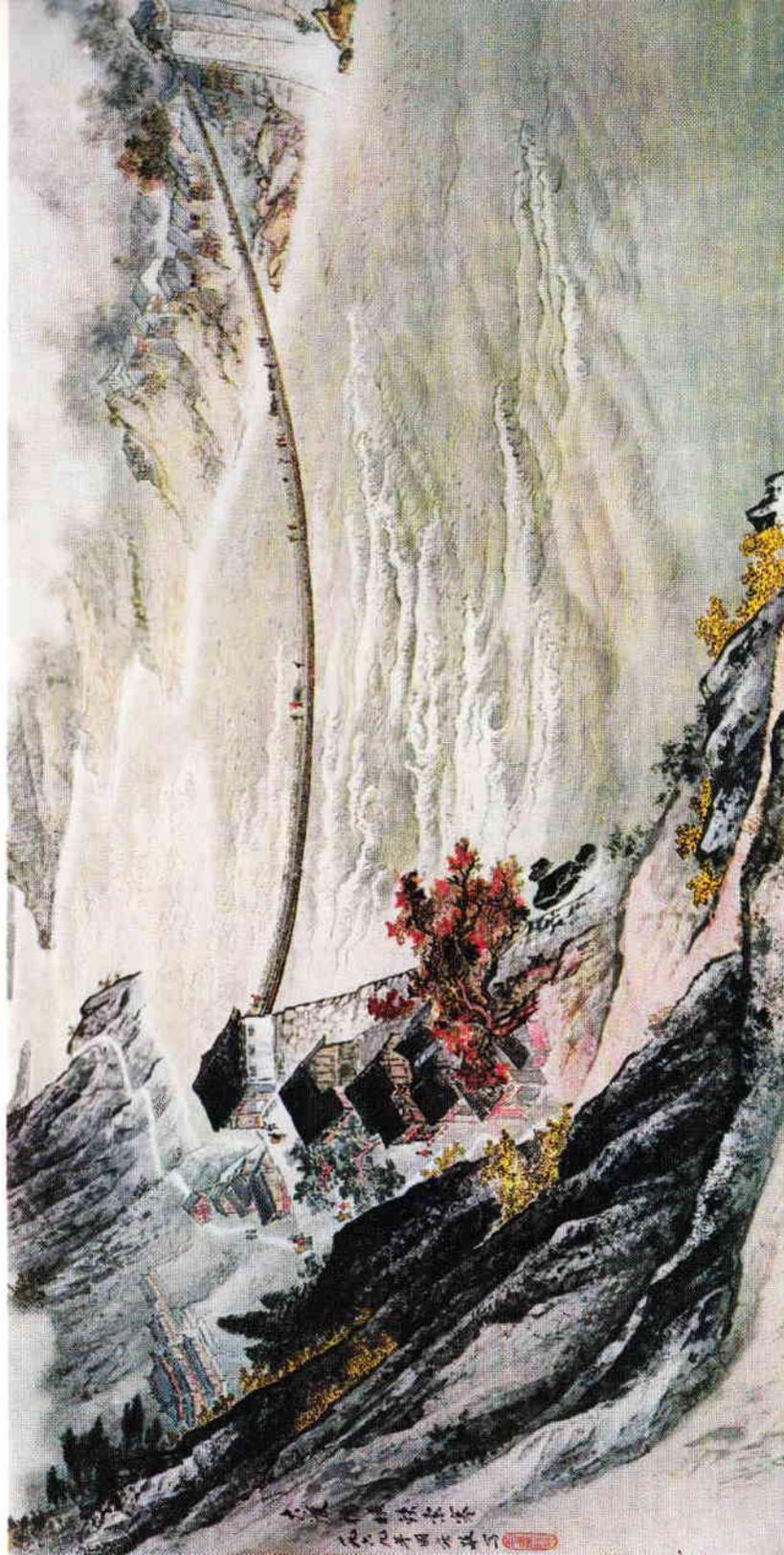
Tung and the other two rescuers were finally saved. But Wang, with his life's blood, wrote another page in the annals of love and respect between commanders and soldiers in a people's army.

Wang's quarters stand near the clear-flowing river at the foot of snow-capped mountains. Outside his door the sunflowers he planted are thriving. His companions often go there and gaze at them. They say with deep emotion: "He has left us his fervent loyalty to Chairman Mao."

Wang will live for ever in the hearts of his men.

Luting Bridge (painting in the traditional style) ▶

This is one of the perilous bridges the Chinese Red Army crossed during the Long March. See page 30.



A Heroine of the Grasslands

Among the inspiring stories coming from the vast Ulate Grasslands of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region these days is one about Mengkenhua, a thirteen-year-old girl, who herded the commune's flock of sheep all alone for two days and a night during a terrible blizzard.

Mengkenhua belongs to a family of former poor herdsmen. From the many tales repeated about the evil old society, and stories of past misery told by her mother, the girl developed a deep hatred for those who were responsible for it. Fortunately, she grew up and shared her family's new-found happiness after Liberation under the leadership of Chairman Mao and the Communist Party. When she was quite young she learned to say "Long live Chairman Mao." The first song she sang was *The East Is Red* and she understood very well that the people's communes and socialism were good.

When Mengkenhua was eight, the year the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was started, she began to help her mother herd a flock of sheep. PLA men, directed by Chairman Mao, went to live in her commune to support the revolutionary herdsmen. Together

with the people they studied and applied Mao Tsetung Thought, so that even this young girl understood Chairman Mao's teaching, **"Grasp revolution and promote production and other work and preparedness against war,"** and tried to put it into practice. She was praised by the commune members because of the great care she took to see that no ewe lost its lamb. The Chairman Mao badge she wore, given to her by a PLA uncle, always seemed to renew and increase her strength and determination.

One morning at the end of January this year the dawn was clear and there was a fine sunrise. After warming up with some hot tea Mengkenhua, a bag across her shoulder, set off by herself with a flock, driving them towards the east to good pasture. But weather on the Inner Mongolian prairies is fickle. During the morning a wind came up from the northwest and by noon it had gathered force and the sky was completely clouded over. The young herder recognized these storm signs. The sheep were eating quietly enough but with her long crook she rounded them up and headed them back towards their fold.

Quite suddenly the wind became a howling gale and the air was filled with icy snowflakes driving straight from the direction in which they were going. Sheep would never face such a blizzard. The leading ram immediately turned his back to the storm and, the whole flock following, went towards the southeast. Mengkenhua realized the danger. Waving her crook she ran swiftly to the leading ram to turn him towards the west once more in the direction of the fold.

The girl's one thought was to protect her sheep and keep them from scattering. It was almost impossible for her to keep her eyes open against the strong wind and swirling snow. But over and over to herself she kept repeating Chairman Mao's teaching **"Fear neither hardship nor death."** Pictures of heroes like Huang Chi-kuang, who flung himself on an enemy machine-gun so that his comrades could take the enemy position, and the heroic sisters Lungmei and Yujung who had saved their flock in a similar blizzard, flashed through her mind. Even though she must face that terrible gale, Mengkenhua was determined to drive her sheep home safely.

With such thoughts to steady her and without any panic this brave girl succeeded once more in heading the flock in the right direction. But not for long. Unable to face the icy blast the sheep scattered into small groups and streamed past her like an avalanche towards the southeast again. All that day through the blinding snow Mengkenhua kept the flock together and prevented them from straying. As she stumbled through the snow she kept repeating to herself, **"Be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory."**

By clambering up hillsides and down into deep gullies she managed to control the flock and finally had them all gathered together in Ahtehua Valley. In the month of January night falls early on the grasslands. Feeling her way hour after hour she circled the sheep, stumbling, slipping and often falling onto the uneven snow-blanketed earth. The only sound in that lonely valley was the wild howl of the gale. The girl's breath froze on her eyebrows and hair, riming the front of her fur hat and the sides of her collar.

She remembered that these precious sheep belonged to the commune. In the wretched past such fine flocks of sheep and herds of cattle had all belonged to the few wealthy livestock owners. Poor herdsmen owned absolutely nothing, not even the skins of the animals. Her own mother had begun to work when she was barely six years old and lived as a slave herding flocks belonging to a temple.

But finally, led by Chairman Mao and the Communist Party, these desperate slaves and serfs liberated themselves, and became masters of their rich grasslands, free to travel the bright road of socialism.

Many times during that bitter night Mengkenhua felt for the badge she wore and found strength flow from it. Several hours after dark, probably about midnight, the girl discovered two ewes had dropped their lambs. With great care she picked up the tiny still-wet creatures and put them in her bag, though her hands were numb with cold. How happy she was that they were born and in her safe keeping!

Towards dawn the cold increased till the thermometer dropped many degrees below zero. Ignoring her own distress Mengkenhua patiently held the young lambs to their mother's warm bodies till the ewes allowed them to suckle. But in the grey light of early day, driven by cold and hunger, the flock began to scatter to find feed,



for it was then nearly twenty-four hours since they had eaten. Once more the girl placed the lambs back in her bag and leaving it in a sheltered spot she hurried after the sheep to round them up. Having crouched so long beside the lambs while they were suckled, her legs had become stiff and numb. To walk was difficult; each step needed an effort. It was her badge again which spread its warmth within her, helping her to defy all difficulties and overcome pain and hunger.

As she scrambled up and down the steep-sided gullies after the flock she felt neither cold nor fatigue, but her footprints in the snow no longer showed the long firm stride of the previous day. Finally in the fifth gully she was able to stop the flock and there she saw immediately another ewe was dropping a lamb, a tiny black fellow this time. She no longer had her bag but quickly she unbuttoned her coat and tucked the shivering little creature inside.

It seemed quite impossible to drive the flock back to the valley where they had sheltered during the night, so leaving them in the gully, she returned with the black lamb to get her bag with the other two lambs which she had left there. As she stumbled back along her

own trail she heard their plaintive bleating and was just in time to see a dog fox and a vixen blinking greedily behind some bushes.

"You cunning beasts," she shouted at them. "You robbers! You're just as greedy as the old livestock owners used to be." She picked up some stones and, flinging them at the foxes, drove them away. Then with the two lambs held safely in the bag over her shoulder, she retraced her steps to catch up with the flock again.

The previous evening there had been grave concern among the older herdsmen as they waited for Mengkenhua to return through the storm. At last, several members of her own family and some former poor and lower-middle herdsmen, brigade cadres and militiamen started out to search for her. But besides the darkness they were blinded by the swirling snowflakes and their shouts were lost in the howling wind.

It was not until the afternoon of the following day, when the blizzard had blown itself out, that one of them on horseback high on a ridge saw through his telescope a small figure trudging along slowly beside a flock of sheep, its back bent beneath a heavy bag.

"Here's Mengkenhua," he shouted in his excitement.

Setting his horse at the gallop he reached the girl's side in a few minutes. One look at her told him that she needed immediate help.

"Come," he said, "I'll take you to Grandpa Yang Pao. His yurt is close by."

"I can't leave my sheep."

"But I'll come back and take care of them."

"No. I can't leave them."

Fortunately, at that moment Yang Pao appeared, also out searching for the girl. He saw the signs of frost-bite on Mengkenhua's face and grabbing her hands he began to try and rub some warmth back into them.

"Now listen, child," Yang Pao said. "I'm going to take you home." He took the heavy bag from her and, still urging her to leave her flock to the care of the other herdsman, he helped her along. Concern for the sheep was still first in the girl's mind and she turned back to look at them several times. For two days and a night, completely alone, this young girl had struggled against fearful odds to

protect her flock, the collective property of her commune. Of the three hundred and forty-five sheep she had not lost even one, but instead had returned with three new lambs to add to their number. What a victory she had got!

In the yurt Granny Yang tried to loosen and pull off Mengkenhua's felt boots. When the woman saw how the thick soles were worn through in places she had difficulty in holding back her tears. Snow had seeped into them and mixed with blood from the cracked skin of the girl's legs. Gently they pried the boots loose and began to rub her legs with cold water and wine, seeing that her legs and feet were frost-bitten. The girl was quite unconscious by this time, but by carefully feeding her with some warm butter tea she began to revive.

Her first words still showed her concern for her flock as she asked, "My sheep. Where are they?"

Yang Pao gently stroked her hair, and bending over her he whispered, "They're all back in the fold, Mengkenhua. Don't worry about them any more." But as fatigue closed her eyes once more she still managed to say, "The black lamb belongs to White Nose. It should suckle again soon."

The news of Mengkenhua's rescue and return spread around the commune like wildfire. The leading PLA comrades stationed there together with the commune revolutionary committees and the people's own military department arranged for her to be rushed to the hospital where she received treatment and the greatest care. She suffered a slight convulsion during the night, but after a saline drip had reduced her high temperature she recovered consciousness. She was obviously in great pain but she never uttered a single groan.

In the morning as the early sun streamed into the ward the doctors declared her out of danger. As Mengkenhua opened her eyes she smiled at them and, seeing a picture of Chairman Mao on the wall, the first words she said were "Long live Chairman Mao!"

After five days of unremitting treatment and care, Mengkenhua was able to walk alone a little. She had many visitors, her family, many commune members from various brigades, students, PLA men and herdsmen. Letters began to arrive from all parts of the country.

The name of Mengkenhua now added to those of Lungmei and Yujung who also protected their flock during a blizzard is known all over the vast Ulate Grasslands. She becomes another fine example from whom others can learn.

This brave girl is now quite recovered. She studies Mao Tsetung Thought in a living way even more conscientiously and is continuing to herd her flock for the commune and revolution more devotedly than before.



Hsiao Wen

Hero or Renegade?

— On “*The Death of Li Hsiu-cheng*”

A number of articles have appeared recently in the Chinese press criticizing the historical drama *The Death of Li Hsiu-cheng*. Who was Li Hsiu-cheng and why is this play about him so widely condemned?

Li Hsiu-cheng was one of the generals of Hung Hsiu-chuan who led a peasant revolution against the Ching Dynasty in the middle of the 19th century. Supported by the large masses of peasantry, the revolutionary army swept over the country, and in 1851 a Taiping Tien Kuo (Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace) was proclaimed. But, a landlord army, organized by Tseng Kuo-fan in Hunan Province and aided by imperialist powers, finally defeated the Taipings. Li Hsiu-cheng was taken prisoner. During his captivity he gave in to the enemy and betrayed the revolution.

The play first appeared in 1937, soon after the commencement of the War of Resistance Against Japan. It was frequently staged between then and the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949. The author, Yang Han-sheng, although denounced in the thirties as a “villain”

by the revolutionary writer Lu Hsun, managed to attain a leading position in the arts in liberated China, and became one of more prominent spokesmen for the revisionist line.

What was Yang Han-sheng's appraisal of traitor Li Hsiu-cheng? In the play he describes Li Hsiu-cheng as “boundlessly loyal to the cause,” a “pillar” of the Taiping revolution, “the hope of the people and the army.” A “saviour” descended to earth, no less!

Yang Han-sheng gives him a “heroic death” in the play. After he has been captured by Tseng Kuo-fan, commander of the landlord army in the service of the Ching rulers, Li Hsiu-cheng is demanded by his captor that he order the Taiping troops massed along the Yangtse River to surrender. He indignantly refuses. “You shameless scoundrel,” Yang Han-sheng has him cry. “How dare you ask me that!” Li Hsiu-cheng kills himself rather than be used against the cause of the Heavenly Kingdom.

But the beautiful mask can never shield the ugly features of a renegade. What actually happened? While in prison in 1864, Li Hsiu-cheng wrote a shameless “confession,” slandering the Taiping revolutionary movement, and drew up “ten measures to induce the Taiping troops to surrender.” He said he did this “in order to repay the favour bestowed on me by the emperor of the Ching Dynasty, to atone for my crimes” and to aid the rulers “pacify the country with mercy as the sword.” His captors executed him anyhow, and promptly published his confession.

This very historical fact completely demolishes the “heroic figure” sculptured by Yang Han-sheng.

Nevertheless, Yang Han-sheng succeeded in having the play revived in Peking in 1962. He had the strong support of Chou Yang, who had usurped the position as second in command in the former Ministry of Propaganda of the Communist Party's Central Committee and one of the leaders in the cultural field. When historians pointed out that Li Hsiu-cheng was a traitor, they both sprang to his defence.

“Li Hsiu-cheng occupies a place on the Monument to the People's Heroes at Tien An Men Square,” said Chou Yang. “His confession was only a tactic to win freedom, so that he could carry on for the cause,” echoed Yang Han-sheng.

"*The Death of Li Hsiu-cheng* certainly should be performed," said Chou Yang. "It's a very good play."

Of course the condoning of treachery on the excuse that it is a "tactic" to enable "carrying on for the cause" is a key tenet in the philosophy of survival preached by the arch-renegade Liu Shao-chi.

Behaviour on battlefields, in prisons and on execution grounds is what distinguishes the heroes from the cowards. Our great leader Chairman Mao says, **"We Chinese Communists, who base all our actions on the highest interests of the broadest masses of the Chinese people and who are fully convinced of the justice of our cause, never balk at any personal sacrifice and are ready at all times to give our lives for the cause."**

Many Chinese revolutionaries, both Communists and non-Communists, inspired by this teaching, have displayed the utmost courage in the fight to emancipate the people of China, springing to fill the ranks of their fallen comrades on the battlefield, standing with heads high on the execution grounds, preferring death to surrender.

How different from the cravens who betray the revolution to save their skins!

Why were Chou Yang, Yang Han-sheng and their clique so keen on prettifying Li Hsiu-cheng? "We are his descendants," said Chou Yang. "It would do us a lot of harm if he were discredited." What is the reason for this statement?

Chou Yang supplies the answer himself. After confessing that the debate over Li Hsiu-cheng was "not scholastic but political," he said the question it posed was "how to appraise proletarians who waver momentarily in their loyalty but eventually either return to the ranks of the revolutionaries or are killed by the enemy."

We know now that Chou Yang and Yang Han-sheng, like their master Liu Shao-chi, many years ago wormed their way into the ranks of the proletarian revolutionaries, then "wavered" and deserted to the enemy. Later, they returned and secretly attacked the Party from within.

That is why, in the sixties, men like Chou Yang and Yang Han-sheng were so upset when Li Hsiu-cheng was being stripped of his camouflage. Their aim in pleading his cause was, as Karl Marx put

it, to **"legitimize the vileness of today by the vileness of yesterday."** They used the case of Li Hsiu-cheng as a façade to conceal their own treachery, so that they could go on building a gang of renegades like themselves who would try to create public opinion in support of a restoration of capitalism in socialist China.

Right from the middle thirties, when *The Death of Li Hsiu-cheng* was written, the play was used to encourage surrender to class enemies. Japanese invaders had then launched a full-scale war. The people of China were fighting back, in response to Chairman Mao's call to build an anti-Japanese national united front, in which particular stress was laid on the independence and leadership of the proletariat.

"Is the proletariat to follow the bourgeoisie, or is the bourgeoisie to follow the proletariat?" Chairman Mao demanded. **"This question of responsibility for leadership in the Chinese revolution is the linchpin upon which the success or failure of the revolution depends."**

Wang Ming and Liu Shao-chi, who had then usurped the leading positions in the Party, pursued an opportunist line of capitulation and advocated "integration" of the Communist military forces into the army of Chiang Kai-shek. They said that "everything" should be "done through" and be "subservient to" the united front. This meant, in effect, that the Communist Party would become subservient to the Kuomintang, become a mere appendage of the bourgeoisie.

Chou Yang, who headed the League of Left-Wing Writers, implemented this line in literature and art, touting what he called "national defence literature." According to him the Party should relinquish its leading role in this field, which was to be dominated by the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat were to put themselves under their leadership.

The Death of Li Hsiu-cheng is a specimen of the so-called "national defence literature." Reflecting the bourgeois stand, it attacks the revolutionaries and praises their foes through historical allegory. When the Hunan troops of the landlord class besieged Nanking, then the capital of the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace, Li Hsiu-cheng, a Taiping general, commends and "admires" the reactionary enemy

as "men of courage and high calibre," as "brothers from the same Han stock" from whom much could be expected.

In the play, Li Hsiu-cheng claims that if the Taipings and the landlord troops would unite, they could defeat the rulers of the Ching Dynasty. For this purpose, he is quite willing to sell out the Taiping revolution. "We would come to terms with them on any conditions," he says.

Why did this play appear when it did? What was the situation at that time? In face of the national crisis and popular demand for resistance against the enemy, Chiang Kai-shek was forced to agree to a national united front with the Chinese Communist Party to fight the Japanese invaders. But, hating the Communists more than the aggressors, he continued his anti-Communist activities. Consequently it was only the Communist-led forces that actually were fighting the enemy. They had liberated large areas and had set up many resistance bases behind the enemy line. These were thorns in Chiang Kai-shek's side, for they made it more difficult for him to oppress the people and capitulate to the foreign aggressors. In the name of placing "the nation above all," he demanded that the Communists "end class struggle," turn the leadership of their troops over to the Kuomintang, and abolish the resistance bases.

The play, appealing for capitulationism, was actually a polemic in defence of Chiang Kai-shek's dictatorial rule and his anti-Communist policy. This was also the essence of the "national defence literature" of Chou Yang. Its aim was to confuse the people and make easier for Chiang Kai-shek to bend the knee before the invaders.

Naturally, the Kuomintang reactionaries lauded *The Death of Li Hsiu-cheng* to the skies. It was staged everywhere. A special performance of it was given at a military conference convened by Chiang Kai-shek to discuss how to attack the Communists and betray the country. Chiang Kai-shek himself warmly commended the play.

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution the truth about the playwright Yang Han-sheng was unearthed. After his arrest by the Kuomintang reactionaries in 1935, he sold out to them completely. From then on, he wrote according to their instructions. Li Hsiu-cheng had done the same and written his confession in his captivity

in the manner his captor directed. One of the aims of Yang Han-sheng in writing *The Death of Li Hsiu-cheng* was to whitewash this despicable type of conduct.

Chou Yang, through his position of dominance in the literary and art circles, saw to it that the play continued to be performed, even after the People's Republic was established. But with the advent of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, people all over China have been excoriating its treacherous philosophy and exposing Chou Yang and Yang Han-sheng as vicious counter-revolutionaries. A necessary measure, this has become a major event in the Chinese literary world today.

“Samdech Sihanouk Visits South China” on Show

The colour documentary *Samdech Sihanouk Visits South China*, companion piece of *Samdech Sihanouk Visits Northwest China*, recently released in Peking, has been exhibited in various parts of the country since May first.

The film is a vivid record of the visits by Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Head of the State of Cambodia and Chairman of the National United Front of Cambodia, Madame Sihanouk, and other distinguished Cambodian guests to Hangchow, Shanghai, Suchow, Wuhsi and Nanking in the spring of 1971. It shows how Chinese workers, peasants, PLA commanders and fighters and other revolutionary people on the coast of East China Sea and by the Yangtze River accorded the distinguished Cambodian guests a grand reception and warmly hailed the brilliant victories won by the heroic Cambodian armed forces and people in their war against U.S. aggression and for national salvation.

Large audiences of various nationalities throughout China heartily welcomed this film which reflects the profound friendship between the Chinese and Cambodian peoples.

“Palestine International Week” Photo Exhibition

A photo exhibition was jointly sponsored by the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Peking

Municipal Revolutionary Committee to mark the “Palestine International Week” held in Peking from May 3 to 8 in support of the just struggle of the Palestinian and Arab peoples against U.S. imperialism and Israeli Zionism. It shows how the Israeli Zionists, with the backing of U.S. imperialism, launched repeated attacks against the Arab countries and bloodily suppressed the Palestinian people, how the Jordanian reactionaries, abetted by U.S. imperialism, attempted to crush the Palestinian guerrillas, and how the Palestinian people, with bitter hatred for the U.S.-Israeli aggressors, have won tremendous victories in their fight against the enemy.

The Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Peking Municipal Revolutionary Committee also gave a film reception during the “Palestine International Week” showing documentaries about the struggle waged by the people of Palestine and the other Arab countries against the U.S.-Israeli aggressors as well as the firm support given them by the Chinese people.

Feature Film from DPRK

Invisible Frontline, a Korean feature film dubbed in Chinese by the Changchun Film Studio, has been on show throughout China since the middle of April. It describes how the U.S. imperialists and their lackeys the Pak Jung Hi clique send a secret agent into the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to sabotage the socialist revolution and socialist construction which the Korean people, under the leadership of their great leader Premier Kim Il Sung, are carrying out in full swing. The rogue is immediately discovered by the broad masses. A driver, a peasant and a waitress notify the Security Department and keep close watch on him themselves. With the clues and help provided by the people, the Security Department not only quickly locates the spy but also roots out the handful U.S.-puppet agents hidden in the country.

Greatly impressed by the political consciousness and high vigilance of the Korean people in defending their proletarian dictatorship, the Chinese audience warmly applauded the film.

Outstanding Proletarian Fighters

(In English)

The stories in this booklet present a large variety of characters — rural cadres at grass-root level, a veteran worker, a young teacher, an emancipated serf in China's minority area and a People's Liberation Army man doing political work among the masses. They have, however, this in common: they all study and apply Chairman Mao's works in a living way, resolved to carry on the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat to the end, scorning hardship and death, and devoted to the people. Together they make a picture of what China's proletarian fighters on various fronts are like today.

100 pages

18.5 × 13 cm.

Paper cover

Also available in French, Japanese, Thai and Vietnamese

Published by: **FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS**, Peking, China

Distributed by: **GUOZI SHUDIAN** (China Publications Centre), Peking, China

Send your order to your local dealer or write direct to the **Mail Order Dept.,
GUOZI SHUDIAN, P.O. Box 399, Peking, China**

Published by Foreign Languages Press
Yu Chou Hung, Peking (37), China
Printed in the People's Republic of China

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA

*Adopted by the Ninth National Congress of the
Communist Party of China on April 14, 1969*

Available in Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, Burmese, English, French, German, Hausa, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lao, Mongolian, Pashto, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tamil, Thai, Turkish, Urdu, Vietnamese and Esperanto

44 pages

10.5 × 7.3 cm.

Red plastic cover

Published by: **FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS**, Peking, China

Distributed by: **GUOZI SHUDIAN** (China Publications Centre), Peking

Order from your local dealer or write direct to the **Mail Order Dept.**,
GUOZI SHUDIAN, P.O. Box 399, Peking, China

中国文学

英文月刊 1971 年第 7 期

本刊代号 2—916