

CHINESE LITERATURE



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STORIES

SUN YUNG

Generation After Generation

Where the mighty Yangtse pours into the sea, its roaring waves pound the rocky shores of an island. And on this island is the Seaside State Farm.

The door of the Party committee office flew open and out stepped a tall girl in her mid-twenties. She was dressed in a blue tunic, a Chairman Mao badge neatly pinned on her chest. Her face browned and radiant, she was the picture of health. To someone protesting against her going out she said casually, "This bit of rain is nothing!" and gently closed the door.

It was the spring of 1972. Outside, the rain was pelting down. The fields of tender wheat in front of the office were shrouded in rolling white mist.

A good shower for the crops, she thought. Before leaving the porch she put on her raincoat and looked up at the sky. Then she took a deep breath and strode into the rain. The sand-gravel road crunched under her strong elastic steps.

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The girl, Wen Sung-hua, deputy political instructor of Company Nineteen, had just been assigned a new job. She was to be the Party secretary and political instructor of the newly formed Company One.

Three and a half years ago she had come to this farm fresh from school, an outstanding Red Guard. After a period of tempering on the farm and being educated by the Party she had become a Party cadre at the grass-roots level.

She was now hurrying to her new post, regardless of the downpour and without her belongings. For the requirement of the revolutionary cause is a battle order calling for immediate action. Of course, she would never have chosen to leave Company Nineteen and her transfer had filled her old comrades-in-arms with dismay. One squad leader almost in tears had thrown herself into Wen's arms and cried: "I won't let you go, simply won't." Wen had gently disengaged herself and said, "You silly girl! It's the Party's decision. Of course I must go." But honestly speaking, she had great difficulty in suppressing her own feelings, too.

Now, as the rain pattered on her plastic raincoat, Wen's whole mind was taken up with her coming task. In her pocket was a note passed on to her by the Party secretary in his office. Short and hastily scrawled, it had staggered her. It read:

To the Party Committee,

I have nothing to say about this year's production task. Better send an efficient political instructor along to help us get these youngsters under control and teach them some discipline. They have been making trouble every day. Perhaps next year we shall be able to compete with other companies.

Lu Hsiung

Lu Hsiung was the leader of Company One set up about a month ago. Nearly all its members were new, having left school in 1970. Their dormitories had only just gone up. The political instructor, also freshly appointed, had been called away by an urgent task.

Lu had handed in this note to the Party committee instead of the pledge he was supposed to give on boosting production. No wonder that at the mobilization meeting Wen had noticed him deep in thought

while all the other company heads were eagerly challenging each other. She had been secretly amused to see Lu so unusually quiet that day. Now it was clear to her: he was having trouble. . . .

After briefing Wen on her new task the Party secretary had given her Lu's note. Fingering the pile of pledges on his desk he said: "We're waiting for one more — from your new company."

As Wen folded the note and slipped it into her pocket, she retorted: "Only in writing, a piece of paper? That's easy. I can let you have it in no time."

"You imp!" smiled the Party secretary. "When you squabble with Lu, don't come to me in tears."

"Don't worry. I've stopped shedding tears," she assured him though well aware of the magnitude of her task. As she went on she saw signs of spring everywhere — budding trees, the fresh green of young grass. . . . But her thoughts turned to a question of great importance that had recently been on her mind. At a time like today, when the Cultural Revolution has scored such great victories and the movement to criticize revisionism and rectify the style of work is gathering momentum, why is there a tendency among some people to belittle the younger generation? Lu Hsiung is like that. A few years ago he strongly supported the Red Guards and revolutionary youth, but now. . . .

Wen was not sure what the answer should be, but she believed she would find it through the sharp struggles going on in Company One.

2

While Wen was still on the way, Company One's headquarters was in a state of commotion.

Lu Hsiung, just turning thirty-six, had a quick temper. He had come from a factory ten years before and worked on the farm ever since.

"Hullo, hullo! I want a definite answer: when can we have them? . . . What? You can't say? Then what am I going to do?" Lu, bent over his desk near the door, was bellowing over the phone.

Losing patience, he snatched his old army cap off his perspiring head and flung it on to his bed.

The door squeaked open admitting a flurry of wind and raindrops. Two girls peeped in. Seeing the temper Lu was in, they said softly: "Company leader, our rooms. . . ."

"Your rooms, always your rooms. . . . Clear off!" Lu bawled, slamming the door in their faces.

"Hullo. What? Didn't I ask you a minute ago for tiles? People have just been in to complain again. What? Not for a fortnight at the earliest? A fine supply section you are — not doing your job!" Lu banged the receiver down.

The door creaked open again. In came Ah Kuei, stock-keeper and carpenter. "Quick, company leader!" he cried. "Go and see what those trouble-makers are up to this time!" Getting no reaction to this, Ah Kuei raised his voice and started gesticulating, "Cheng Hsiao-feng and Li Yi-ting have toppled the ox-cart into a ditch!" Then Lu hurried off with Ah Kuei.

Where the highway turned off to the dormitories, Lu saw a cart lying in a ditch. The ox, still harnessed, was panting hard in the water. Two groups of tense youngsters were confronting each other. One consisted of Cheng Hsiao-feng, leader of Squad Eight, with two girls behind her; the other of Li Yi-ting, Big Yung and Young Hu of Squad Seven. The two groups were trying to shout each other down.

Cheng, one of the newcomers, was of medium height and strongly built. She had a hot temper. In the past month or so she had had words with Lu on several occasions. Just two days before, she had quarrelled with Ah Kuei over a coil of electric wire which he had appropriated from General Headquarters while there on other business. She insisted that he must return it.

Li, a senior middle school graduate who considered himself quite able, was one of the few "old hands" who had been on the farm since 1968. But he took no interest in anything outside routine work and study. His favourite expression was: Pointless. When asked to join a criticism group he replied, "Pointless. I can write my criticism just as well alone." When his squad started some experimental

plots, he said, "Pointless. To raise our present crops well is good enough." After being transferred to Company One he had acquired two apprentices, Big Yung and Young Hu.

"Quick, give me the whip and help haul the cart out!" shouted Cheng. The two girls at her back, red with anger, clenched their fists.

"Not likely!" retorted Big Yung and Young Hu in one voice.

"Our company leader isn't in any hurry. So why should you be?" drawled Li.

"What's this? A fight? With the cart in the ditch?!" boomed Lu stepping between them. "Have you nothing better to do than make trouble for me?"

Li snorted but made no rejoinder while the other two boys glared so hard at Ah Kuei that they wiped the smug look off his face.

Meanwhile Lu rounded on Cheng, "A squad leader shouldn't fool about like the others."

"Don't sound off before you know the whole story," retorted Cheng angrily. "They were driving the cart for fun. . . ."

"See! She never admits her mistakes," put in Ah Kuei. "Let me ask you, girl: who'll be responsible if the cart gets broken or somebody gets hurt?"

"Who? *You*. You're the stock-keeper yet you don't do your job!" Cheng replied coldly.

Ah Kuei looked bleakly at Lu and threw up his hands. Ignoring him Lu said to Cheng, "From now on you'll do nothing without instructions from me."

Young Hu recited softly:

Company Leader Lu
Is strong in attack;
When he roars like a lion,
Who dares to answer back?

"What's that you're mumbling?" Lu turned and glared at the boy. Just at this moment a familiar voice cried: "Old Lu, let's get the cart out first."

Lu was stunned to see Wen Sung-hua.

"So it's you, Wen! In spite of the heavy rain. . . ."

Lu had of course been notified of her new appointment.

Ah Kuei was disappointed. He had hoped to make use of this incident to score off these youngsters, especially Cheng. They were altogether too sharp and critical for his liking, and needed to have the wind taken out of their sails. He could not help shouting in the intruder's face, "No, no! We must get this matter settled first."

The calm glance Wen cast at Ah Kuei, though far from stern, flustered him. She countered, "You mean to leave the cart there?" Without waiting for him to answer, she took off her cumbersome raincoat and jumped into the ditch, calling: "Come on, comrades."

At this challenge the two hostile groups broke up. Some of the youngsters clambered into the ditch, others pulled at the shafts of the cart.

Choking back his anger, Lu rolled up his sleeves and gave Ah Kuei a push. "Get moving. Pull the ox out."

Ah Kuei took the reins, grumbling: "What a busybody!"

"Who's a busybody?" Lu gave him a hard look. "She's our new political instructor." Ah Kuei blinked in dismay while Cheng and Li exchanged somewhat sheepish glances.

The cart was soon back on the road. Lu sprang on it and called to Wen: "Go to headquarters for a rest. I'll soon be back."

When Lu had gone Wen urged the others to go back to change, and asked Cheng: "Are you the leader of Squad Eight?" She had heard of the "prickly" girl squad leader in Company One.

"Mm."

"How did you people land the cart in the ditch?"

Cheng tensed, expecting a dressing down. But when she raised her eyes the new political instructor was smiling. The red badge on her tunic sparkled.

"Many of our rooms leak," Cheng muttered. "Ah Kuei's such a slacker, he refuses to go to fetch building materials on a rainy day. . . . I thought of going to the General Headquarters myself to get some asphalt felt. . . . but Li Yi-ting and the others were fooling about with the cart and wouldn't let me have it. So I. . . ."

"So you tried force?" Wen couldn't help chuckling. "Your motive was good but your method was too crude. Right?"

Cheng nodded agreement.

"Why didn't you consult Old Lu first?"

"Lu Hsiung, you mean? He couldn't care less." Cheng flared up again. "He only likes people like Ah Kuei who pose as 'meek lambs'. As for us, he thinks we're a horde of 'wild horses'."

"Only likes 'meek lambs'?" No, your judgment of Lu is too sweeping. But what am I doing, keeping you out in the rain! Go back and change, quick."

Cheng shook her head. "Never mind. I'm used to getting wet." Then she noticed that Wen was soaked to the skin with her raincoat still hanging on her arm. "Why don't you come to our dormitory to change?"

"If you don't mind being wet, why should I?" rejoined Wen, smoothing the wet hair on her forehead. "I tell you what: take me to see those leaking rooms, will you?"

"Sure!" Cheng answered delightedly.

Not till after she had inspected the dormitories and changed into dry clothes did Wen go to company headquarters. There she heard Ah Kuei griping: "My dear company leader, if every one wants a say in company affairs the way Cheng Hsiao-feng does, we'll be in a mess. Those youngsters should be controlled, not allowed to run wild. It's like carpentry: all the wood I saw has to take the shape I want, whether square or round."

"But the point is why didn't you get us the asphalt felt?" demanded Lu. "I must have it by the day after tomorrow."

As Wen went in Ah Kuei was on the way out. They met face to face. Ah Kuei was about forty. He had the habit of blinking perpetually.

"Why, political instructor," he said with a smile, "you've been on the go ever since you came. On such a wet day too. Shall I make you some hot ginger soup?"

"No, thanks. Don't bother," was Wen's terse reply. Her first impression of this man was far from favourable. But as she did not like to pass judgment on anyone too quickly, she did not show her feelings.

Lu poured Wen some water and offered her a seat. "I'm so glad you've come," he said. "Your being here takes a weight off my mind."

Wen took the cup ceremoniously with both hands. "I report for duty to my former platoon leader! You must go on helping me as you always used to." She broke off to look round the room. It was simply furnished but a bit untidy. Perhaps Lu was not in the mood to put it in order. She was struck, however, by his smart, well-made desk. "I'd like to be briefed on the situation here," she said.

"What a hustler!" With a bitter smile Lu sat heavily down on the bed. "It's not easy to start a new company," he began. "I'm rushed off my feet just running after those youngsters. As you saw for yourself just now, Li Yi-ting, Big Yung and Young Hu are as bad as wild horses. Cheng Hsiao-feng's a squad leader but she's just as unruly, not so helpful as Ah Kuei. And this wet weather has made things even worse. Our dormitories are leaking, we need asphalt felt, yet the supply people don't do a thing about it. What can I do?"

Wen listened quietly. Lu was no stranger to her. Three years before they had belonged to the same company. She knew he wasn't the type to complain about the least little difficulties, far less to lose all faith in his company. No, the real problem, as the Party secretary had pointed out, was his attitude to young people. When a cadre doesn't trust the masses, he's powerless. But as Wen had as yet no clear picture of Lu's thinking, she did not like to argue with him right away. So she said, "With capital construction going ahead so fast in our farm, we have to expect a shortage of materials. It's a temporary difficulty and will soon be solved. But we can't just sit and wait. Why not urge our comrades to solve the problem themselves? Teach them the necessity of working hard to get any enterprise going."

"But this isn't like our old company where we all responded so quickly to any call. Fifteen or sixteen years ago when I started working in a factory, we apprentices did exactly as we were told. We didn't go in for unwarranted criticism, ridiculous proposals and endless trouble-making like this lot."

Wen frowned. It seemed that the way of looking at young people involved many questions of principle. There was a trend nowadays to pick fault with them, to say they weren't up to the older generation. This was a question of how to evaluate new socialist phenomena. So to refute Lu tactfully she said: "People won't respond to our call unless we guide them with Mao Tsetung Thought. If we do, I'm sure all our comrades will rally round us. This is a new feature of the young people who've been tempered in the Cultural Revolution."

"Well, with *you* here, things may work out," answered Lu, not willing to discourage Wen. He knew that she had strong principles, but still wished a more mature and experienced cadre had been sent to help him "control" the youngsters and run the new company. Because, to his mind, this was no longer the time for bold attacks on the revisionist line. What was needed was systematic and orderly work. Lu had a keen sense of discipline, however. Since the Party committee had decided on Wen, he would give her his support.

Wen rose to her feet and went over to open the window. Looking at the drizzling rain, she said firmly, "The whole farm's sizzling like a house on fire. Our company mustn't fall behind the rest. So long as we hold to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, we can get the entire company to go into action."

Lu was silent.

3

Lu, in spite of his rough and ready ways, was not thoughtless. Although in low spirits himself he arranged a meeting to welcome the new political instructor.

It was still raining after supper but Wen was nowhere to be found. Lu decided she must be in one of the dormitories. Regardless, he blew the whistle for assembly.

This time the "wild horses" did not ignore his call. In twos and threes, carrying stools, they came to the dining hall. There Lu discovered Wen chatting with a group of girls. He could not help admiring her: she was a better mixer than he was. But was it enough for a political instructor just to be able to get close to people?...

As these thoughts crossed Lu's mind, Wen stood up to lead the crowd in singing a Red Army song *Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention*. She was a good conductor with plenty of verve. The rousing song drowned the pelting of heavy rain on the roof of the hall.

The meeting was opened by Lu, who asked Wen to take the floor. In the lamplight her plain face was ruddy, the badge on her chest shone like gold. Elated and stirred, she was wondering how to give the right lead to this company of over two hundred people.

"Comrades! . . ."

A hush fell in the hall. All hoped to learn from their new instructor's first speech what sort of person she was.

The roof directly above the platform was leaking, and a bucket had been put there to catch the drips. What was she going to say? Her heart was in a turmoil of excitement.

That afternoon she had called on various squads and chatted with them. She had sensed the enthusiasm of most of her new comrades, an enthusiasm which it was her duty to bring into play, and thereby enable Lu to see the truth. Well, here was her chance to start. Pointing at the bucket she said, "This wet weather reminds me of a stormy night three and a half years ago. Let me tell you about it."

A stir of anticipation went through the hall.

"It was shortly after our arrival at the farm. A new company was to be formed on the coast. We started rigging up some thatched huts to sleep in.

"One night a fierce storm blew up. The sea wind was stronger than any we had ever experienced. Roaring and howling it battered the roofs of our huts. The rain poured in. Two girls who had just arrived broke down and cried when they found their mosquito-nets soaked. As a newly appointed squad leader, I was frantic with worry but didn't know what to do. All of a sudden I heard yelling outside. I looked through the window. In the lightning I saw that the roof of one of the boys' huts had been blown off. I was petrified. It so happened that all the company cadres were away. Just at this moment a figure darted out of the hut and shouted: 'Comrades,

never mind your own things. This hurricane may carry off our new chicken houses. To the rescue, quick!

"The whole company immediately went into action, even the two girls who had just been crying. The call was like a battle order. Everyone in our company of more than a hundred put on raincoats and rushed out to the poultry farm where birds for export were to be reared. Two thousand chicks had just been delivered that very afternoon.

"When we reached them, the chicken houses were swaying and rocking, in danger of being blown down. We bolstered them up and strengthened them with strong ropes. The comrade who had called us out spread his raincoat over one roof. We were soaked to the skin but happy, laughing and shouting. . . ."

Wen paused. The audience remained quiet. Lu's eyes were strangely bright.

"Know who called us into action that night?" Wen raised her voice. "It was Lu Hsiung, our company leader. He was our platoon leader then."

The hall suddenly buzzed as people put their heads together. Wen's story had impressed them, but none of them had guessed who its hero was. In their eyes Lu was a fearfully grave character. But now Wen had conjured up a new picture of him.

Lu's heart was burning with feelings too deep for words. Why had Wen told that story on an occasion like this? "To remind me of those hard pioneering days?" he wondered. "Well, we certainly threw ourselves into our work then!" He remembered when he returned to the farm from home leave that year, he was told a new company had been formed of Red Guards, all newcomers. He was then deputy leader of another company. Without the slightest hesitation he took his bedding-roll straight to the new company. Someone told him that it consisted of youngsters in their early twenties; it was no place for a man over thirty like him. Lu just stared at him and flexed his sinewy arms. The management was embarrassed because he was already a leading cadre. The leaders of that new company had all been appointed, they told him. Lu laughed and asked to take a task force there. . . . So he was put in command of a platoon



of Red Guards tempered in the Cultural Revolution — one of them was Wen Sung-hua. Together they launched a new assault on a swamp overgrown with reeds. At that time their strength seemed inexhaustible. . . .

“But look at the situation now.” Lu felt his annoyance return. “Ah Kuei tells me that the only thing these youngsters of ours are good at is talking back, and they make trouble every day. He may exaggerate a bit but there’s something in what he says. Now is not the time to attack the revisionist line in farm-management; if they keep this up, how can we run the farm? Ah Kuei’s right in saying we need to re-introduce some rules and regulations, to find ways to keep these young people under ‘control’ . . .”

Someone suddenly shouted: “Learn from veteran fighters!” All took up the cry, bringing Lu back to earth with a start.

Someone else proposed that the whole company should spend the following day repairing the dormitories. This proposal won unanimous approval.

Now, the crux of the problem was whether Ah Kuei could supply the necessary materials for the work. Ah Kuei had to stand up and say something. Having looked first at Wen then at Lu, scratching his head and blinking he sighed. “Can’t be done! Where am I to get so much asphalt felt and lime? Tomorrow is a day off for all, and the supply department. . . .”

Such a tumult broke out that Ah Kuei had to stop.

“Why didn’t you get these things ready before?” Big Yung challenged.

“Why are you always loafing around during working hours?” Young Hu shouted.

Ah Kuei’s face turned livid.

“Mr. Stock-keeper, there’s no need to trouble you now,” came a ringing voice from the entrance. There stood Cheng Hsiao-feng and two more girls, all soaking wet, big rolls of asphalt felt under their arms. The three of them had pushed a small cart over twenty *li* to General Headquarters and back to fetch the materials needed for repairs.

The whole hall reverberated with applause. Lu was dumbfounded, but he couldn't help admiring the three girls. He could have kicked himself now for having complained that Cheng was not as helpful as Ah Kuei. He stole a look at Wen, who was asking the head of the mess squad to brew a ginger drink for the wet girls.

Meantime Cheng announced: "This afternoon it was my fault that landed the cart in the ditch. I should criticize myself. But what we girls lack in the way of experience we make up in enthusiasm. We do hope our political instructor and company leader will help us do better work."

A fresh round of applause broke out. Even Li joined in the clapping. Ah Kuei sat down dejectedly while Wen asked Lu to say something. Taken aback at first, finally he stood up and said briefly, "Since you're all so determined, let's make an early start tomorrow."

4

A week passed. The company underwent quite a few changes.

When night fell, the lighted dormitories seethed with activity. Some squads used the time for political study. They held heated discussions in the course of which people turned red in the face and thumped their desks, breaking into hearty laughter when the question was finally settled. Other squads learned to sing revolutionary songs. Their spirited voices floating through the windows were wafted far away in the moonlight.

There was a change in the attitude to work, too. Previously it had been a headache to Lu every time he blew his whistle to find how slowly the youngsters came to work. Now, even before the whistle sounded, some hurried to the tool shed.

All these changes Lu knew very well were due to Wen's efforts. Every evening since her arrival she had chatted with the squad leaders and members of the company. Every day she had worked with various squads by turns. Lu could not but admire her drive. She should really be able to help him get the company under "control". He also believed that they saw eye to eye now that he had overcome his prejudice against Cheng.

Now Lu, too, worked harder than ever. As soon as darkness fell he shut himself up in his office to write, sometimes pausing for minutes at a time to think, tapping his head with his pencil. He even declined Wen's invitation to join the squads in their political studies. He thought he was writing something more important for the future of the company.

One evening after making her rounds of the squads, Wen went to the Party committee to report on her work. She did not return to her room until very late. As she turned on the light she was amazed to see a new desk by her bed, much more stylish even than Lu's. Tapping its glossy surface, she couldn't help laughing. No wonder Lu had been taken in by Ah Kuei: the fellow was really smart.

Gazing at the lit windows of the dormitories beyond, Wen did some serious thinking. In her mind's eye were three types of people: the first, those like Ah Kuei, outwardly so docile and obsequious to leading cadres, who had been the favourites of the capitalist-roaders in power before the Cultural Revolution. Had not Ah Kuei taken advantage of his boss' trust to harm state interests? How could Lu forget this? The second type were young people like Li Yi-ting who had some failings but were basically sound. Under the revisionist line they had been subjected to restrictions and pressure. Was it right to go on treating them that way? No, absolutely not. The third type were young militants like Cheng Hsiao-feng who dared to think and speak out. Firm in their stand and full of fight, they had learned from the spirit of the Cultural Revolution. Not only should these youngsters not be suppressed, they should be given strong support. . . . It was on how to view these three types of people that there existed a sharp difference between her and Lu. At bottom the question was how to look at the youngsters who had grown up during the Cultural Revolution. There were bound to be more struggles over this in the days to come, and they would help her to clarify her thinking. . . .

"Political instructor!" someone called. It was Ah Kuei who had entered without her knowledge. Seeing Wen standing before the desk, he asked eagerly, "How do you like it?"

Wen brushed aside his question but demanded, "Whose idea was it?"

"My own," replied Ah Kuei smugly. "I do my best to supply our company cadres. . . ."

"You're the carpenter of the whole company," Wen cut in. "You should think in terms of the needs of our entire unit. There's a lot of equipment we need — why haven't you made it? What about that drug cabinet for the clinic? Take this tomorrow and make it into a cabinet." Wen tapped the polished desk.

This was a head-on blow to Ah Kuei. Blinking, he protested: "I made a desk for Old Lu. If you refuse this, he will be. . . ."

Wen spun round to confront this fellow who was stealing a glance at her. Under her penetrating eyes, he regretted having provoked her.

Instead of flaring up Wen said very gravely, "Are you trying to present me with a *fait accompli* so that you can lead me by the nose? You should know that a Communist will never compromise with anyone who does things dishonestly." In a higher voice she added, "And don't try to drive a wedge between Old Lu and me."

"No, indeed. No such idea ever crossed my mind." Ah Kuei was perspiring profusely. He had in fact come in the hope of currying favour with the political instructor, to counteract what she must be hearing about him from Cheng and other activists. Instead, he had simply put his foot in it. . . .

Several years ago, if she had met someone like Ah Kuei, Wen would straightway have given him a good dressing-down and put all her cards on the table — all the discreditable things she had learned about his past. Now, however, she coolly considered all sides of a question. The main thing at the moment was to inform Lu of this incident so that he could have the initiative in his hands in dealing with Ah Kuei later. Wen therefore choked down her anger and continued calmly: "I've been told that you don't like young people and want to restore the old way of farm-management. Let me tell you: at present an important task of ours on the ideological front is to launch criticism against revisionism. Your way is a dead end. The broad masses and the young people won't stand for it!"

Nodding dejectedly and mumbling assent, Ah Kuei backed towards the door. He nearly bumped into Lu who was entering. As Lu stared in surprise, Ah Kuei slipped out.

Lu said, frowning: "Young Wen, I think you're taking this trifle too seriously. Do you want me to give up my new desk, too?"

"There's nothing wrong with a cadre having a desk," said Wen, shaking her head with a smile. "The point is that the clinic needs a cabinet even more urgently. All that's necessary is to put in glass shelves on top. Besides, Ah-Kuei shouldn't have. . . ."

"Well, let's discuss this first." Lu handed her a sheaf of papers.

Wen read them in silence. She knew Lu had been drafting new rules and regulations for the company, but was surprised to find there were as many as forty-nine in all. The first was: "Rising bell at six a.m. It is the duty of each squad leader to see that everybody in his squad is up on time." In a word, Lu had laid down many "Dos" and "Don'ts" regarding daily life, political study and work. Wen knew that some rules were indispensable, but what principles had Lu followed here? — that was the question.

When Wen kept silent, Lu urged: "Well? What do you think?"

"Let all the squads discuss them."

Lu was somewhat disappointed. But since Wen's opinion could hardly be refuted, he had to agree. As he reached out to take the draft, she pointed at the last regulation and asked, "Did Ah Kuei suggest this one?" The regulation was: The store-room may not be entered without permission.

"Yes," Lu said casually. "I thought it reasonable, so I put it down."

"No. He has ulterior motives. Ah Kuei wants to make the store-room his own kingdom!" Wen rose to her feet indignantly. "I've found out that Ah Kuei's up to his old tricks. He's taking the company's timber for his private use."

Lu stared in amazement. "I'd no idea. Are you sure?"

"You have to look below the surface, Old Lu."

Fuming, Lu pushed his cap to the back of his head, took out his pen and crossed out Rule Forty-nine. The remaining forty-eight rules were sent to the squads for discussion.

The following afternoon Wen and Lu were talking over the reactions to the forty-eight rules when Cheng and Li burst in, hotly disputing.

This was a continuation of their old feud. The shed where Li's squad kept their tools was separated from that of Cheng's by a thin bamboo partition. Li, Big Yung and Young Hu had just been to fetch tools. Finding none, Li listened to make sure that nobody was around, then he broke a hole in the partition and climbed into the girls' shed.

"This isn't right surely?" asked Young Hu nervously.

"Why not? Since we're short of tools, they should be willing to share," answered Li from the other side. "We're just borrowing a tool and can explain afterwards."

Li was thrusting a rake through the gap to Big Yung when the door flung open and in strode Cheng. Li was in a tight corner, his retreat cut off. His apprentices took to their heels.

After hearing this, Lu exploded. He bellowed at Li: "A fine high school graduate you are!" Li looked at him sullenly, then turned away as if he couldn't care less.

"Leader of Squad Eight," Lu turned to Cheng to ask, "didn't you oppose those forty-eight rules? You labelled them 'controls, curbs and compulsion'. Now look at this. If there's no strict control, we get chaos." After saying this, he eyed Wen significantly.

"Comrade Company Leader," Cheng protested. "Don't forget that this happened on the very day you sent your forty-eight rules down to the squads."

Smarting from this thrust, Lu rounded on Li, demanding: "How did your squad come to be short of tools?"

"Ask Ah Kuei," Li retorted.

"Ah Kuei! He's never given us enough tools of any kind," Cheng cut in. On this point she shared Li's feelings.

"Whatever excuses you make, my forty-eight regulations strictly prohibit any form of stealing. You're a high school graduate, surely you can read!"

Given this opening, Li argued hotly: "Your forty-eight regulations also stipulate that everything must be done to ensure the supply of necessary tools, don't they?" With a triumphant glance at Lu, he muttered, "You keep contradicting yourself."

"What rubbish!" In exasperation, Lu flung his cap on the desk.

"Li Yi-ting!" warned Wen. "That's no way to behave to your company leader. As a young revolutionary, you should have the courage to admit your mistakes."

Li hung his head. But Cheng's face was still grim as she clutched the rake — her "evidence" of theft.

"We're all comrades, we don't have to fight this out," Wen told her. She urged Li, "Go and talk it over with Big Yung and Young Hu and see whether you were wrong or right. We'll check up in the store-room to see whether we can give your squad more tools. If not, you can borrow some. Are you ready to help, Little Cheng?"

Cheng hesitated a second then said, "Yes, but we don't allow. . . ." She bit back the word "stealing".

As Li started slowly for the door Wen stopped him. "Li Yi-ting, there's another matter I want to discuss with you. Your squad leader will be away on sick leave for some time. We talked this over yesterday at headquarters and decided to make you the acting squad leader. How about it?"

There was silence in the office.

Wen resumed, "I've talked it over with most of your squad. They agree that you're keen on the group and capable enough to do the job. They just hope you'll do your best to overcome your shortcomings in the struggles ahead."

Li was surprised by this unexpected assignment. He was tempted to answer: "Pointless. I'd rather work hard as one of the rank and file." But somehow these words stuck in his throat. He could hardly put on airs before the grave, kindly political instructor whose prestige here had grown so fast. He chose to answer casually, "All right. It's only a stop-gap arrangement."

After Li and Cheng had gone, Lu demurred: "Is it right to announce our decision so soon after Li's mistake?"

"I've consulted several comrades," answered Wen. "We all believe Li is by and large a good comrade. His main trouble is complacency. Giving him responsibility and guidance ought to speed up his progress."

Lu nodded. "All right. But now I must go over the forty-eight rules carefully again so that they can't find any more loop-holes in them."



“Old Lu, it’s not a question of rules,” rejoined Wen earnestly. “Regulations such as ‘no smoking’ and open censure for being late to work can’t really solve any problems. What’s important is our ideological approach. The views voiced by Cheng and the others may grate on our ears, but it does us good to hear them. Your trouble is that you won’t listen to them. You don’t really believe that these youngsters are eager to make revolution. That’s what’s wrong with your forty-eight rules — your point of departure.”

“No, this is a necessary measure.” Lu paced the room. “A few years ago when you Red Guards attacked the revisionist line in farm-management, didn’t I support you? But now the situation has changed. We need to settle down and devote ourselves to production.”

“I’ve been thinking about this too, but reached a different conclusion. Cheng is right when she says your forty-eight rules reflect



the struggle between two lines: progress versus retrogression.”

“What lines? Why, the revisionist line in running the farm was smashed a long time ago!”

“The struggle between two lines is a protracted one. The poisonous influence of the revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao has not been completely done away with. You said that when you were an apprentice you did as you were told. But we ask more than this of the young people nowadays. They have Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line as their guide and dare to think, speak out and make revolution. What’s wrong with that? Of course, the younger generation must be allowed time to mature, but there are some people who seize on their least little failings and declare they’re no good at all. My view is just the opposite. Whenever I visit the

harbour and see the magnificent Yangtse flowing east, I think of our revolutionary cause. Like mighty waves impelling each other on, each generation will outstrip the last.”

“Impelling each other on? How? Impelling ox-carts into ditches!” Lu growled and sat heavily down on a stool. “To spur an ox on you’ve got to know how to shout, to ride a horse you must use the reins — that’s all I know.”

“Shout? Reins?” Wen raised her eyebrows. “Is that the way to treat youngsters?”

“All right, let’s assume that all you say is correct.” Aware of his blunder Lu reached up to tug at his cap, but since he had already hurled it away he sheepishly lowered his hand. “But can you say that the whole younger generation is all that good?”

“You should see their general tendency,” Wen shot back, for she never compromised on questions of principle. “It’s precisely to

bring up trustworthy revolutionary successors through revolutionary practice that Chairman Mao has called on young people to go to the mountainous areas and countryside. What grounds have *we* to lack faith in these young people?"

"All right." Lu snatched up his cap from the desk and rammed it on his head. "But I hope you'll convince me with facts." He turned to leave. At the door he stopped and added, "I'll reserve my opinion. I mean to try out my forty-eight rules on Squad Seven."

The door banged behind him.

Wen shook her head. She had no intention of stopping Lu from making this "test". It would give her a better chance to help change his thinking.

5

It was nearly time to plant the early rice. Some of the paddy fields had already been well watered. All the squad members were active in their own plots. Red flags floated in the breeze, work chants rose on every side. The wind-breaks were now belts of dense green, the earth was blooming with life. People's visions of the future broadened out, vast as the blue sky and the ocean.

In accordance with the Party committee's instructions Wen Sung-hua kept up her political and ideological work and did her best to mobilize the whole company, to fire the youngsters with enthusiasm. The squads challenged each other to work contests and prepared stage items for the next assembly at which they would pledge themselves to "grasp revolution and promote production".

The only exception was Squad Seven under Li Yi-ting. The reason was self-evident: This was the squad where Lu had been putting his forty-eight rules into practice. Lu was determined to get dazzling results from his "supervision and control" of this squad, and indeed he had spared no efforts. At a squad meeting he had carefully explained his forty-eight regulations one by one. Every morning he saw to it that they had their physical drill. During the day he led them in field work, in the evening he inspected their dormitory. But the result was the reverse of his wishes: Squad Seven was behind

all the other squads in every way. Its young members were disgusted by Lu's style of work, the way he kept "giving commands". So much so that even the acting squad leader Li frequently ignored his orders.

Take, for instance, the business of building a canal. To expand the area to be planted with early rice company headquarters called on the squads to build a canal in two days. At the end of the first day all the squads except Squad Seven had overfulfilled their quota. Squad Seven had dawdled, leaving the day's task unfinished. Lu kept the squad on the work-site for a talk and, his face grim, angrily demanded how they meant to make it up. For a long while none of them spoke. To end the deadlock, Big Yung proposed allotting each member a section the following day which he would have to finish before leaving. Li supplemented half-jokingly: "Yes, it's stipulated in the forty-eight rules that everybody has to finish his task." Although Lu knew that this was no way to handle the business, under the circumstances he gave his consent.

The next day Squad Seven completed its quota, but many people criticized Lu for "allotting work on an individual basis". . . .

There was yet another event to make Lu lose face. The date for the company assembly had been set. All the squads were supposed to put on an item. Squad Seven, Lu's testing ground, was no exception. Yet when Lu broached the matter to Li, Big Yung and Young Hu, they flatly refused to take part. Their answer was "Pointless". Putting on items was not laid down in his forty-eight rules, they argued. Lu was flabbergasted.

"If people have energy to spare, let them put it into field work," said Li sarcastically. "Why disturb other people's rest? I'd rather listen to the radio than their singing." When Big Yung and Young Hu spread talk of this kind through the company, it caused general indignation.

Wen sensed that the situation was ripe. The time had come to help Lu see his mistake and Li's squad catch up with the rest of the company.

That same evening Wen asked Lu to discuss Squad Seven's item with her. She invited Cheng to join them too since she was organizing the whole programme.

As soon as Wen made this proposal, Cheng flared up. "Let them do as they please. The programme can do without them."

"Do you mean to leave them out?" Wen asked her seriously. "To run a state farm well, is it better to have more people or less?"

Cheng flushed. She tweaked her braids and kept silent. Wen had told her many times that to have verve was fine but she must pay more attention to uniting as many people as possible. She must take the right attitude and give more help to youngsters who for the time being were backward. . . .

Lu did not say anything, just took off his cap and played with it, putting it on and taking it off again. . . . He was waiting for Wen to bring up his forty-eight regulations. In the past few days he had come to realize that her political and ideological work was more effective than his rules and regulations, for it was undeniable that the other squads were better than Squad Seven. Lu was not too pig-headed to admit his mistakes, but he still had certain questions in his mind. So he would wait and see.

"Some people may think I'm making a mountain out of a molehill. They may say: What does it matter whether Li's squad performs or not?" Wen continued, eyes fired with enthusiasm. "Our answer is 'No!' The stage should serve proletarian politics and promote political and ideological work. We should take the offensive against any thinking that holds up our company's progress."

"Right!" Cheng was on the point of flaring up again. "Company Leader Lu, it seems to me your lack of faith in us youngsters is one of the things that holds up our progress."

Lu's face twitched but he kept his temper. Recent events had taught him that though Cheng's criticisms grated on his ears they did him more good than Ah Kuei's honeyed words.

Wen slowly produced the note Lu had written to the Party committee and said, "Old Lu, we are in charge of youth work. If we doubt the youngsters' magnificent revolutionary fervour, refuse to give them the lead, and instead try to put them under 'control', our work will suffer and it will be very dangerous. The Cultural Revolution proved once again the vital importance of the mass line. We must have trust

in the masses and always rely on them; otherwise we may embark on the road to revisionism."

Lu clumsily took the note, folded it up and thrust it into his pocket. Then he heaved a long sigh. "I admit I can do nothing with Li and his squad. You win."

Wen smiled at Cheng. Lu's words might lack spirit, but they intimated a change in his attitude. Wen then put forward her ideas as to how to proceed with the work. First of all, the company should be aroused to criticize wrong thinking; next. . . .

As she listened, Cheng opened her eyes ever wider in delight. Lu's knitted brows slowly unfolded.

The following day after the midday meal Wen asked Li, Big Yung and Young Hu to come to headquarters to discuss work. When the three youngsters took their seats, Wen kept quiet for a while, leafing through a pile of mimeographed song sheets. The room was very still. They could hear singing from the dining hall where the girls' choir, conducted by Cheng, had given up their noon nap to rehearse for the concert so rapidly drawing near. Their voices, full of feeling, rang through the silent room. After listening for a while Wen asked Li, "Beautiful singing, isn't it?"

Li simply grunted. Wen said with a smile, "Lately our company has been brimming with life. It's really invigorating. This is the spirit all of us should have." Noting Li's embarrassment she asked, "Are you taking part in any item?"

Li kept silent.

Big Yung had a quick tongue. He said, "Pointless. We can hear better singing on the radio."

Wen shook her head. "They are two quite different things. We put on items to present the good persons, good deeds and good thinking in our company. How can you call that pointless?"

Li shot a warning glance at Big Yung and Young Hu, wanting them to keep quiet to save further trouble.

Wen pretended not to see and holding back her laughter went on, "How can we ever do without revolutionary art and literature? I remember during the Spring Festival in 1967 we went to perform

for the revolutionary workers at the harbour. I played the accordion. The more I played the higher my spirits rose. . . .”

“Political instructor, you play the accordion?” asked Li.

Young Hu suddenly piped up, “Political instructor, play for us at the concert, will you?”

“Well. . . .” Wen hesitated. “Cheng and her girls insist on the leading cadres being in the programme. They want Old Lu to sing and me to accompany him with the accordion. But Old Lu’s afraid he’ll sing out of tune if he has to give a solo. We thought, since he’s been with your squad, you might all sing together. . . .”

The three young fellows were dumbfounded. This was not the discussion on work they had expected. It was true that their comrades’ criticism and Wen’s help had enabled them to realize their mistake, but for them to switch suddenly from opposing the concert to performing themselves would make them look proper fools.

Not giving them a chance to argue back, Wen handed them a song sheet, saying: “How about singing this?” The song she had picked was *Plenty of Scope to Fight* composed by some comrades in the company.

Li glanced at the sheet and replied casually, “I’m no singer.”

At once Big Yung and Young Hu chimed in, “Neither are we.”

Wen brushed this aside. “That doesn’t matter. You can learn. Nobody is a born singer.” While the three of them exchanged baffled glances, she proposed: “Cheng Hsiao-feng can sing this. Go and learn from her.”

The trio gaped. Learn from Cheng Hsiao-feng? Nothing doing!

Allowing them no time for consideration, Wen continued: “What about letting Li go and learn it?”

To avoid being sent themselves, Big Yung and Young Hu at once seconded the proposal. “Good, very good. Li is the most suitable person to go. He’s a high school graduate and he can read music. He’ll pick up the song in no time.”

Li shot them a reproving glance. Too late to save the situation. And Lu, who had come in unnoticed, patted Li on the shoulder and announced: “Four to one. The motion is carried. Cheer up, Young Li. Show them that you’re a young revolutionary.” He add-

ed with genuine feeling, “It’s time I overcame my lack of faith in you young people.”

Li looked up at the company leader in surprise.

“I tell you what,” said Wen. “Suppose Big Yung and Young Hu go and find Cheng.”

“Us?” The two youngsters eyed Wen incredulously.

“Go and fetch her here, that’s all.” Wen quickly made herself clear, suppressing a chuckle.

The two youngsters hurried off as if reprieved.

In no time Cheng, all smiles, came in with an accordion strapped across her shoulder. “Political instructor and company leader!” she cried. “Decided on your song yet?”

Wen took the instrument from her and said, “We need your help. You teach Li and our company leader the song while I try the accompaniment. I haven’t played an accordion for a long time.”

Cheng walked over to Li and was tempted to laugh by his obvious embarrassment. Instead, she said briskly, “It’s quite all right with me. Listen to me first, Li, then sing after me.”

Cheng launched into the rousing song, which Lu began humming. Li stole a glance at Wen. She was playing the accordion with great skill, as if oblivious of the others’ presence. Seeing no way out, he began to sing awkwardly. Cheng came to his help and finally pronounced him proficient. Mopping his steaming head, he muttered his thanks and left.

Big Yung and Young Hu, who had been waiting outside, broke into laughter when they saw how sheepish he looked. Scowling, Li gave them each a blow.

“The fact is,” Big Yung said, “she’s way ahead of us. I thought Cheng would make things difficult for you. But no.”

“I’d no idea she was so warm-hearted,” put in Young Hu. “We went too far, the way we sneered at the concert.”

Li felt the same. Although he guessed that Wen must have done some work on the others beforehand, he took his defeat lying down. He began to realize that his negative attitude — the way he found things “pointless” — was incompatible with the vigorous revolu-

tionary atmosphere around him. The song he had just learned stirred his heart. He could not stop humming it.

We have full scope to go all out,
Here in the countryside;
Our task is heavy, our road is long,
To battle on is youth's pride!

6

Some of Company One's early rice was sown directly in the fields and this was to be done the day after the assembly and concert. That afternoon Lu Hsiung went to General Headquarters to attend a meeting. No sooner did the meeting come to a close than he received a phone call from his company, saying that a section of the new canal had been breached.

Lu hurried back on a bike at flying speed. He found the dormitories deserted, with only Ah Kuei standing like a block of wood by the dining hall. Ah Kuei had been discharged from his post as stock-keeper after investigation into his activities by company headquarters. He was now working as a carpenter under mass supervision.

"What are you doing here?" Lu snapped at him.

Before Ah Kuei could answer, the mess squad leader came out. "Him?" he said to Lu. "He's waiting for you, hoping to clear himself."

That evening, after work, leaks had been discovered in the newly-built canal. At once the sluice gate of the branch canal had been lowered. Falling heavily it cracked. The reason was plain enough: Ah Kuei had appropriated the best timber for private purposes, using rotten planks in their place.

By the time the broken gate was replaced, the canal had been breached. Wen promptly led the whole company to the rescue.

On hearing this, Lu fumed. He clenched his fists. However, he remembered what Wen had once said: A person like Ah Kuei has to be struggled against, but we mustn't forget to give him a helping hand too. "Follow me!" Lu roared.

When they reached the canal Lu found everyone hard at work, Wen taking the lead. The damage was worst in the section built by Squad Seven. The "allotment of work on an individual basis" had made some squad members overlook the points where their sections joined other people's. So now the fields had been flooded. Having rolled up her trouser-legs, Wen took over the reins from a comrade and proceeded to level the fields. In a tone that brooked no argument she called, "Old Lu, you take charge of rescue operations. I'm going to drive the ox."

It was early spring. The evening breeze blew cold. And Wen was thinly clad. When Cheng noticed this, she draped her cotton-padded tunic over Wen's shoulders, saying half-chidingly, "You haven't got over your cold yet."

Li's heart was too full to speak. He thrust his own coat at Cheng, then set to work frantically digging, his eyes wet.

On the banks of the canal, the row of youngsters passing earth began to chant, breaking the silence of the fields. Lu felt the blood rush to his head, his face burned. For he realized now what damage his forty-eight regulations had caused. If not for the collective. . . . He recalled Wen's prediction that the youth would respond if guided by Mao Tsetung Thought and her words, "This is a new feature of the young people who've been tempered in the Cultural Revolution."

Lu roared to Ah Kuei, "Open your eyes, man! Look!"

"What . . . what do you want me to do?" stammered Ah Kuei.

"Go and repair the gate first," Wen said gravely. "And come to headquarters after the assembly."

Ah Kuei took off. Lu, tapping his head, looked at Wen ploughing firmly through the muddy water. He sighed, "Those forty-eight regulations of mine. . . ."

The assembly started late. When it finally began all the lights were on, brightening every corner of the dining hall. The thunderous roll of drums stirred the hearts of the young people present. Among the drummers were Big Yung and Young Hu.

The meeting had two highlights.

The first was when Lu spoke. Starting with his note to the Party committee, he made a serious self-criticism.

The second came during the concert when Cheng Hsiao-feng calmly stepped before the curtain to announce crisply: "Next item — a male chorus, *Plenty of Scope to Fight*, sung by Lu Hsiung and members of Squad Seven. Accordion accompaniment: Wen Sung-hua." At once a storm of applause set the rafters ringing.

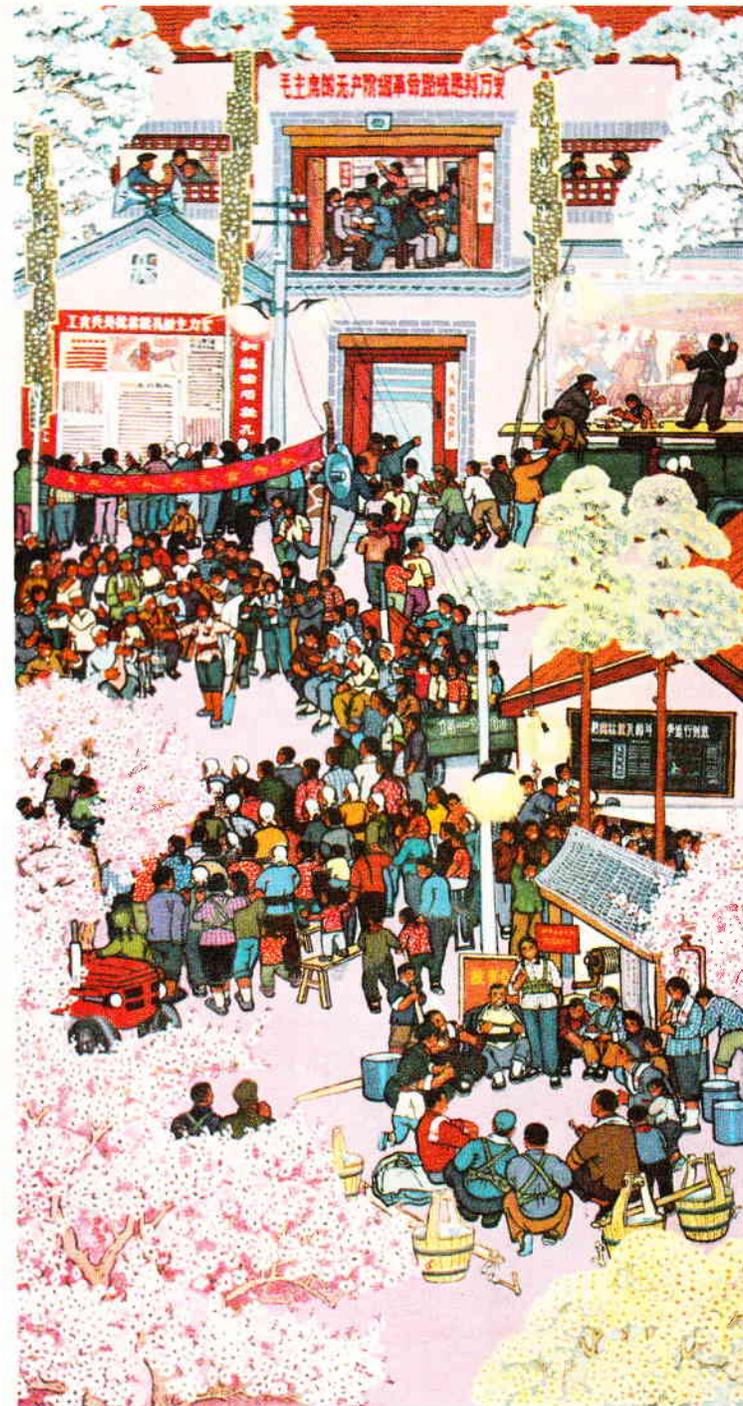
Wen stood up, the badge on her chest a vivid red, her face flushed with excitement. The youngsters' exuberance and fighting spirit filled her with happiness. She knew that many more struggles and difficulties lay ahead, but she was certain that they would win through them. . . .

Lu was deeply stirred too. He realized that not only was Wen a most competent young cadre, but the youngsters whom he had regarded as no good were really lovable people. How bitterly now he regretted his past mistakes. He wanted to shout: Our cause is like the mighty river, its rolling waves impelling each other on, so that each generation of revolutionaries will be better than the last. . . . Keeping his impulse under control, however, he straightened his army cap and patted Li on the shoulder. "Let's go."

Then came clapping that shook the hall like the thunder of ten thousand galloping chargers, like the mighty waves of the Yangtse rolling on for ever and ever. . . .

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

A Village Cultural Centre (Huh sien peasant painting) by *Chang Lin*



A Lecture on History

Ching-mei gave a talk entitled: Why Did Lin Piao Attack Chin Shih Huang for Burning Books and Burying Confucian Scholars Alive? To her surprise, this gave rise to two entirely different reactions.

Some of the veteran workers were all for it. Master weaver Shan-chieh, for instance, buttonholed everybody she met to say: "Our own theoretical instructor's gone up the rostrum and given a talk on history. This is something new, just fine! Her talk wasn't perfect of course, but she'll improve with practice."

Others frowned and said, "These youngsters have worn themselves out burning the midnight oil. What need is there for weavers to lecture on history?"

Li San-kuei, a member of the Party committee, belonged to this second group. And now he was exchanging views with Ching-mei in the office.

"Look at you, Ching-mei. Staying up so late to prepare your talk, you've worn yourself to a shadow. It's too difficult a subject for us

anyway, the history of the struggle between the Confucian and the Legalist schools."

Taking down the newspaper folder from the wall, Ching-mei turned to the page with a write-up on the Shanghai No. 5 Iron and Steel Plant. She pushed it over to Li. "Look! The Shanghai steel workers have done a fine job criticizing Lin Piao and Confucius. We belong to the working class too. Why should we lag behind them?"

"Are you accusing me of being conservative again?" Li San-kuei had kept his temper. "They're a big plant with several thousand workers, my dear Youth League committee member. We're a small mill with only 300 workers. How can we compare with them?"

"What's wrong with a small mill?" Ching-mei was furious. "You mean a small mill needn't criticize Lin Piao and Confucius?"

"I mean we can ask university professors to give us a few lectures." Li was worked up too.

"Everybody's studying. If we all ask professors to give lectures, there won't be enough of them to go round. Besides, why do you look down on workers?"

"We're a mill, not a university, comrade. We don't specialize in theory. How can we tackle the classics, or the people and events of ancient times?"

Li was wanted on the phone. Before he left he waved his hand dismissively. "I guarantee to get hold of a teacher in four days." He opened the door and left.

Ching-mei bit her lips. She would have liked to follow and argue it out. But she was a young worker who had finished her apprenticeship: she mustn't give rein to her temper. With an effort she bit back an angry retort, her mind in a turmoil as she gazed out of the window.

Liu Ping-hsia, the Party secretary, had gone to a class in company headquarters to study how best to repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius and would be away for about a week. Before leaving, she had a talk with Ching-mei, propagandist of the Youth League committee, and urged her to take the lead in criticizing Lin Piao and Confucius. Ching-mei as a cadre of the Youth League naturally wanted to fight

in the van. But Li didn't see the necessity and had doused her with cold water the first time she gave a lecture.

The afternoon sun high above the clouds shed warm and brilliant rays on the small mill, the walls of which were covered with big-character posters criticizing Lin Piao and Confucius. At the break many workers came out to read the posters. The mill might be small, but not so its fighting spirit!

Ching-mei was deeply stirred. She adjusted the satchel slung on her shoulder and in a low voice vowed, "Nothing can be allowed to stop this criticism movement — we'll see to that!"

2

As the purple sunset faded into night, the moon came out mantled in silver.

Ching-mei cycled to see Shan-chieh. In a simply furnished room, the bespectacled veteran worker was busy writing a denunciation of Lin Piao and Confucius. One of the oldest workers here, she had known what it was to go from job to job in the old society. This had turned her into an experienced fighter. After Liberation she took active part in every political movement, the present campaign being no exception. She had noted Li's opposition to the workers themselves giving talks on the history of the struggle between the Confucians and Legalists. Ching-mei's argument with Li that day had prompted her to call up the Party secretary and give her a full report of the very different reactions to Ching-mei's talk.

"Is that you Ching-mei?" Shan-chieh asked without looking up as the girl appeared at the door.

"How did you guess?"

The older worker smiled wisely. "I knew you'd be coming. Didn't I hear you arguing your head off with Old Li?"

What she said was ordinary enough but her words sent a flood of warmth coursing through Ching-mei's veins.

"Tell me, Shan-chieh, is it necessary or not for us to get clear on the classics and on those old historical figures and facts?" the girl asked eagerly.

Shan-chieh's pensive eyes rested for a while on the girl's face. Finally she said, "In 1957, when the bourgeois Rightists were frantically attacking our Party and socialism, a Rightist in our mill slandered the Party's policy on intellectuals. He compared it with 'burning books and burying Confucian scholars alive'..."

"No!" Ching-mei slapped the table as she sprang to her feet. "So that was one of the Rightists' charges, was it?"

Shan-chieh put her hands on the girl's shoulders to make her sit down. "Let me finish. Why, that diehard was so arrogant he kept writing to the papers too. So we started a debate with him, right there in our night school classroom. I told him: We're having a small debating session. You're allowed to rest if you get tired. There's water too for when you've talked yourself dry. But we insist on getting the questions of principle straight before we quit. We can go on with the debate day after day if necessary. We've Chairman Mao's writings and aren't afraid of you! That's how we fought the Rightist tit for tat. In the end, though he scratched his head till his hair stood up like a bird's nest, he had nothing more to say."

"That's the spirit!" Ching-mei shook her fist.

"That scoundrel Lin Piao unearthed the 'sacred canons' of the Confucians to attack us again. Like the Rightists, he accused our proletarian dictatorship of 'burning books and burying Confucian scholars alive'. It's the duty of us workers to right the history which they stood on its head. We, the working class, are the main force in the criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius. So we have to master Marxism-Leninism, don't we?"

The girl, her face solemn, said nothing. The significance of the veteran worker's words had dawned on her. As a fighter, she appreciated the value of this guidance at such a critical moment in the battle. Her eyes shone. "I understand now. You consider things more deeply and see much farther than I. All I was concerned about was that we in this mill mustn't fall behind others. I haven't got your vision. Now I see that this is a battle on the ideological front, and we've got to hold our position."

This time the master worker smiled with satisfaction. She went on to her second point. "Many of us old hands think you youngsters are doing fine. You're going in the right direction. But we must also point out your shortcomings."

Ching-mei pulled her chair up to the older woman. "That's what I want to hear."

"You shouldn't just stick to theories. Try to make your talks easier to understand so that everybody can catch on. Many of our old workers never had any schooling. You've got to keep that in mind."

And so a detailed discussion began between Shan-chieh and her former apprentice. As they talked, the moon rode high up the sky, the stars dimmed. One by one the lights in other apartments went out but the two of them were too engrossed to notice.

As the clock struck twelve, Ching-mei said with no trace of fatigue, "I'm thinking of making a map of the Warring States, with explanations and charts, showing how the country was split up before Chin Shih Huang the first emperor unified China. This will make it clearer to people why it was necessary to attack the Confucian scholars who were separationists and opposed unity, why it was necessary to burn their books."

"Make a map of ancient China? That's a good idea," said Shan-chieh, standing up to see off her guest.

3

Three days later at dusk, spring rain fell lightly and steadily, washing clean the cement-paved road outside the mill and turning the willows green.

Trouser-legs rolled up to her knees and holding an umbrella, Ching-mei came once again to the gatehouse. "Anything for me?" she asked the gateman Chang.

"Just arrived," said Chang, handing her a package.

Ching-mei's chest heaved with emotion as she looked at the unfamiliar writing on the cover: "To the Youth League Branch of

Mill 109". When she tore off the wrapping paper she found a book with a map of the Warring States as its frontispiece.

A young man darted up, rain dripping from his wet hair. "Is this the map? I can get it copied in an hour. Everything's ready, paper, ink and brushes."

Ching-mei clapped her hands. Forgetting her umbrella, she dashed back to the office with the lad. Sparkling water splashed under their running feet.

The idea had originated two days earlier when Ching-mei gathered together her group of activists in the criticism movement and told them the workers' suggestions and comments about their talks on the history of struggle between the two schools. They had drawn up a new plan and gone straight into action, looking up reference material or writing out lecture notes. Using every moment they could spare from work, they quickly prepared another series of talks. Only one thing was lacking: a map of the Warring States to illustrate the lectures. None was available in the mill's library which had lent out all the books on that period. The young workers were frantic. One of them, however, hit upon an idea. "When we went to the Exhibition of Technical Innovations, I noticed some big-character posters describing the technical problems of certain plants, and posters put up by the workers of other plants suggesting various solutions. If workers can provide a brains trust like that for production, why shouldn't they help us with our political movement?"

Ching-mei promptly posted up an S.O.S. on the door of the reading room of the local cultural centre where material on Lin Piao and Confucius was laid out. Today, the map they needed had come from an utter stranger, a young building worker. With the book he sent them an encouraging letter wishing them success in their lectures. His sympathy and help warmed Ching-mei's heart.

The two youngsters were soon bending over the paper spread out on the table. The lad was an able draughtsman, both quick and accurate. Ching-mei was content to be his assistant, ruling lines with a long ruler and writing out explanations in Chinese ink. By the time the street lights came on, the map was finished.

"You've been rushed off your feet these last few days," said Ching-mei. "Go home now and rest. I'll clear up here." When the lad demurred, she continued, "I have to wait for Master Li anyway, to report to him about our preparations for these talks."

Then he left with an apologetic smile. He was no sooner out of the door than Li came in. Beaming broadly and in high spirits, he put his dripping cap on the table and unbuttoned his coat.

"I've got them at last," he announced. "Nearly run my legs off!" Without waiting for Ching-mei to ask who "they" were, he told her, "Professors from the university will be coming three days from now. They've got a tight schedule lecturing in different plants. It wasn't easy to fit us in. You must help to make their visit a success."

"We've got our talks ready," said Ching-mei, washing the brushes.

Li waved his hand airily. "That's not what I mean. You must take notes during the lectures, detailed notes."

"Of course we welcome lecturers from the university and we'll take notes conscientiously, don't worry. But your estimate of workers is all wrong. The fact is, you've no intention of building up a contingent of worker theorists in our own mill." Ching-mei bit her lips and fixed compelling eyes on Li.

Li was unruffled. Now that he'd succeeded in getting the lecturers, he didn't mind what she said. "I know that tongue of yours, lass. Fire away."

The telephone rang sharply. Li picked it up. It was Party Secretary Liu Ping-hsia, who was all in favour of the workers going up to the rostrum themselves to talk on the struggle between the Confucian and Legalist schools.

Li sounded delighted at first. "Yes, Li speaking. What's that? Your study group at headquarters is sending a team to our mill to listen to our lectures? Fine!"

Ching-mei's hands paused in her task of washing the brushes. She strained to catch the telephone conversation.

"Tomorrow? No, impossible! Listen, Ping-hsia, I've arranged for two lectures by university professors, but they can't come until three days from now." Li was frantic.



Ching-mei pushed back her chair and was beside Li in one stride. She stared at him hard.

"What's that you're saying? Let our own workers do the lecturing? Those youngsters? But what can they say? No, impossible. . . ."

Ching-mei's hands flew to Li's wrist. With a firm twist, she pulled the receiver close to her mouth to shout, "Comrade Secretary, please let us workers go to the rostrum. We're not afraid and we can do it. Everybody says so."

With the iron wrist of a bench worker, Li twisted the receiver back towards himself. "Don't listen to her!" He was shouting too. But Ping-hsia at the other end was responding:

"Is that you, Ching-mei? Go on. . . ." Li could not but surrender the telephone.

Cradling the receiver to her ear, the girl said excitedly, "We're all ready to go on the rostrum, Comrade Ping-hsia."

"What if you mess things up? Won't that be a disgrace? Won't you lose face?" cried Li.

Ching-mei turned to confront him. "We'll be going to the rostrum to lecture because this is essential to our movement. The question of losing face simply doesn't arise."

Li gaped. "You've got guts all right," said he with a sigh. "You're ready to charge ahead. But if you say one thing wrong, it'll have an effect on several hundred people. Think of the damage that would do!"

Ching-mei took him up. "Let me tell you what does real damage — your lack of confidence in us workers. We can master theory. Why not? We should be the main force in this campaign. But you're trying to thrust us aside."

"All I want is to see the movement go with a swing here. What damage can that do?"

"Do you want to train worker theorists and build up their ranks or not? This is a question of the struggle between two different lines."

In the heat of their argument they forgot the telephone completely. Meanwhile the Party secretary listened quietly at the other end.

When her voice broke into a pause in their dispute they were both taken aback.

"Listen, Li," the Party secretary was saying. "Ching-mei is right. We need a big contingent of Marxist theorists so that Marxism can dominate all spheres of the superstructure: philosophy, history, education — the lot. This contingent should include workers, peasants and soldiers who are not divorced from production. This is necessary if we want to consolidate our proletarian dictatorship. For workers to march up to the rostrum is something new and tremendously important. Li, we should support Ching-mei and the others. That's the right thing to do."

Ching-mei eyed Li with an eager, expectant smile. She passed him the telephone receiver, warm from her hands.

"As things are, we'll just have to let them have a try," he said slowly. Replacing the receiver he asked Ching-mei, "How well prepared are you?"

"Here, read this and see if it's all right." Ching-mei produced a sheaf of notes from her apron pocket.

Clutching the notes, Li glanced worriedly at the map of the Warring States lying on the table. Could these youngsters really get their teeth into such a deep and difficult subject?

4

Ching-mei's fiery words were still echoing in Li's ears when he got home. Impossible not to be affected by them. He found the notes well prepared with vivid accounts of Chin Shih Huang written by Legalists during different periods of history and an analysis of these accounts from a Marxist viewpoint. Li could see that the young workers had studied their subject thoroughly and devoted much time to preparing the lecture. What troubled him was not knowing whether their approach was fully correct or not. He simply did not believe that they were equipped to tackle such a task.

Li slept badly that night. Going early to the mill, he met Ching-mei coming out of the washroom. She had just put her head under

the cold-water tap and was still drying her face. Her hair was plastered to her cheeks; beads of water dripped down her collar.

Li returned her the notes. "Been cleaning up so early?"

Ching-mei wiped her hands on her apron before taking the notes and putting them carefully into her apron pocket. "Shift'll be starting soon. I've been freshening up."

Li gave her a closer look. "Why? Slept late last night?"

"Mm . . . a bit . . ." Ching-mei pushed back her hair and changed the subject. "Mind you come and listen to our talk this afternoon, Master Li. You must tell us our shortcomings afterwards."

When the shift was over, people surged from the workshops to the night-school classroom which was in a separate building. Rambler roses in full bloom under its windows lent the place a lively air. Ping-hsia, Li and the team from the headquarters study-class sat talking with the workers. The atmosphere was vigorous and cheerful. Shan-chieh beckoned Li to share a bench with her.

Ching-mei announced the subject of her talk: The Historical Significance of the Unification of China by Chin Shih Huang. She hung up the map of the Warring States and pointed out places on it from time to time. Going back more than two thousand years in history, she conjured up for her listeners the bustling scene of spring ploughing and preparations for war in the state of Chin. She described the tempestuous wars to unite the country that raged from the banks of the Yellow River to the Yangtse, the smoke rising from the big fire to burn Confucian books in the city of Hsienyang. . . .

Shan-chieh glanced at Li. Leaning slightly forward he was listening intently, nodding from time to time. All around her, everyone seemed completely absorbed.

Suddenly Li felt Ching-mei's glance on him. Their eyes met.

"Over two thousand years ago, the ducal states of the slave-owning class kept China cut up between rival regimes and seriously obstructed social development," said Ching-mei, one hand sweeping over the map. "Taking the stand of the up-and-coming landlord class and following the direction of social progress, Chin Shih Huang annexed the six other states of Yen, Chao, Han, Wei, Chu and Chi and unified the country. In so doing, he helped to impel history forward. This is quite dif-

ferent from wars of aggression between two separate nations." She paused to toss back her plaits. "The vicious attack on Chin Shih Huang by Lin Piao's gang only goes to show that Lin was a reactionary who tried to turn back the wheels of history. With double-dyed treachery he plotted to split our Party and our country. But that could never be!"

These words touched a chord in Li's mind. He was still ruminating over them when he realized that Ching-mei had finished her talk. Her face flushed, she was saying, "Now, let's start our discussion in small groups. If you have any questions to raise we can talk them over together." With that she slipped down from the platform, took a seat behind a desk and opened her notebook.

An animated discussion immediately followed. Admiration shone in people's eyes, their voices rang with excitement. Li saw someone from the study-class whom he knew to be a college graduate. He edged closer to him and asked in a low voice, "What did you think of her talk?"

The young graduate slapped his notebook enthusiastically. "You went to the university to look for a professor when all the time you had such a good lecturer right here in the mill! Comrade Ching-mei has given us a splendid lecture."

Li was astonished and smiled sheepishly. Ching-mei who had overheard this remark protested, "Don't give *me* the credit, this was a collective effort. If you don't believe me, you can ask Master Shan-chieh."

Shan-chieh herself stood up at this juncture. In the loud, piercing voice acquired by textile workers she said, "Facts show that we workers are fully able to master theory. I propose we set up a full-fledged theoretical instructors' team in our mill." Her proposal met with shouts of approval as the general enthusiasm reached a climax. Ching-mei, especially, clapped with all her might as she cried, "Good, good, this will really change the face of our mill."

The meeting ended and the workers dispersed. From different workshops came the sound of voices and laughter.

Together Li and Liu Ping-hsia saw the comrades from headquarters to the gate. When they came back still talking about the lecture, they

found Shan-chieh waiting for them. Usually so placid and composed, her lined face shone with excitement. She said with feeling, "Ching-mei's a lass who thinks big and dares to tackle difficulties. Last night, as I came off shift I noticed her standing before a map which she'd hung on that window near the staircase. She told me she was trying to impress on her mind the geography of China in ancient times. This morning the night watchman told me she had been at it all night. To make a success of the lecture, she didn't sleep a wink last night."

Li was stirred. "And she worked through the morning shift too. She's been on the go all this time." Calling her name he strode into the classroom.

But Ching-mei was oblivious to his call. While they were talking outside she had fallen asleep at her desk, her head cushioned on her arms. The afternoon sunshine slanting in through the window cast golden patterns on her sleeping form. A stack of minutes of the groups' discussions flicked her young cheeks as the breeze ruffled its pages. Tired out as she was, her brows were still knit in sleep and her lips compressed. Sunlight glinted on the nib of the pen in her hand.

Ping-hsia took off her jacket to put it round the girl's shoulders. "Whether or not we rely on the workers to build up our theoretical ranks is a question of the struggle between two different lines," she said repeating Ching-mei's words. "How can we still doubt the ability of workers when we see fine comrades like her?"

"A question of the struggle between two different lines!" Li repeated these stirring words silently. He meant to say, "I understand now, Ching-mei!" Instead, all he did was to mutter, "Let's go somewhere right now and study this crucial question."

"Study what? The question of building our theoretical ranks?" Ching-mei had slept through their arrival but now Li's muttered proposal had woken her. Rubbing her eyes she said, "Good! When our working class has a big contingent of Marxist theorists we'll be able to make a thorough job of debunking those devils — Lin Piao and Confucius."

She looked steadily at Ping-hsia and Li then at Shan-chieh, the master weaver who had taught her so much. Resolution, hope and confidence shone in her eyes.

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

Raising Seedlings (Huhsien peasant painting)
by *Li Shun-hsiao*



Granny Chin

After the meeting in the district office was over I started back for Poplar Village. Two days away from our production brigade seemed a long time to me.

During the busy wheat harvesting time, there was plenty of work awaiting me as accountant. Had the grain been stored in the granary? Had we delivered our quota to the state? Was the commune members' share in the wheat harvest decided upon? And what about Granny Chin? . . .

I was staying in Granny Chin's cottage. My first evening in the village, sitting side by side on her *kang* we had got acquainted. I asked her: "How old are you, aunt?"

"You guess." Sitting up even straighter she smoothed the grey hair at her temples.

"Sixty?"

She shook her head.

"Sixty-five?"

She shook her head again.

"You can't be more than sixty-five," I said positively.

Smiling, with her thumb and forefinger she made the figure "7". "See, child!" She burst out laughing heartily.

Her glowing face and gay laughter made it hard to believe that she was really seventy. Before I could make any comment she told me with a twinkle: "People twenty years older than you call me Aunt Chin. So you'd better call me Granny."

"Granny Chin!" I echoed promptly.

She chuckled delightedly.

From the start I took a fancy to this honest warm-hearted old woman. Any progress I had made in the past two years in the countryside was due to her love and care. So she had a very special place in my heart. I wished I had wings now to fly home to her. . . .

As I entered the village a young man, his bronzed back bare, came panting up to me. "Little Peach!" He thrust out a big hand to greet me. "It's good to see you back. We've got the wheat ready and will deliver our grain to the state tomorrow. The other news can wait." This was Shih Yang, our brigade leader. Looking as if he had some urgent business he turned and made off.

"What's the hurry?" I asked. "Where are you going?"

"To the vegetable garden. I just asked her to shoo the chickens away from our vegetables, but she insists on weeding the plot as well. She's old enough, isn't she, to take better care of herself?"

"Who are you talking about?" I asked, mystified.

"Granny Chin."

Hearing that, I dashed after him toward the vegetable garden.

Lush green melon vines filled the neat plots. On them were growing melons of different sizes. Among the plants squatted an old woman busy weeding. Perspiration dripped from her forehead, cheeks and neck. I walked closer, then pulled up abruptly. Plunging her fingers into the moist earth, Granny was uprooting the weeds which had sprouted in the furrows. As she moved slowly forward she carefully filled in the holes left in the ground, so intent on her work that she didn't even notice our arrival.

The sight took my breath away. What could I say to this old granny working so hard under the blazing sun?

It was the brigade leader who first called to her: "Granny Chin!"

Granny looked up then and saw me. "Back from your meeting, Peach?" she said. "What good news have you brought your granny?"

Not answering her question, I walked over to help her up and wiped the perspiration from her face.

"Why don't you do as you're told, Granny?" the brigade leader complained. "I won't assign you any jobs in future."

"What's wrong?" Granny countered.

"I asked you to sit in the shade here to shoo hens away from our melons. But you. . . ."

"How can I sit twiddling my fingers, watching the weeds shoot up? You should get the school children to look after the hens, brigade leader, and let me go to the threshing floor instead. Don't think because I'm seventy I'm past working. All right?"

"No!" He gave a categorical refusal. "You're not talking me round again, Granny. Starting from this afternoon, you get no more jobs. You must stay at home and rest!"

"Nonsense. Want me to die of boredom?" Granny retorted. Looking up at the sky she went on, "It may rain this afternoon, Blacky. You'd better speed up the threshing."

The sun was shining brightly. The sky was blue except in the southwest where dark clouds were gathering. The willows were swaying lightly in the breeze. Was there any real likelihood of rain?

That afternoon I went to the brigade office and saw a horse-collar lying on the desk. I picked it up and found five holes in it. Evidently some waggoner had brought it in to be mended before tomorrow's delivery of grain to the state. It was so badly worn, I had better buy a new one. That would only cost five or six yuan. Just then a hand reached towards me. I turned and saw Granny Chin.

She held up the collar in both hands and carefully examined both sides with narrowed eyes. After a while she pursed her lips and said: "Worn out, eh? Want to buy a new one?"

"It's too far gone to mend. A new one only costs. . . ."



“...over five yuan, eh?” she cut me short. “All you need do is fill up a requisition form. But the accountant is the housekeeper of our brigade.” She laid stress on this last sentence and with a reproachful glance at me turned and left.

Six months previously when I was elected accountant I had thought the job beyond me and hesitated to accept it, for as a student in town I had never even opened an account book. When Granny learned of this, weighing her words she said: “Peach, there’s no one in the world who’s born an accountant. You can learn by doing. The accountant is the housekeeper of our brigade. Since the poor and lower-middle peasants have faith in you, lass, you must take on the job and be a good housekeeper for our commune members.”

Encouraged by the brigade leaders and by Granny, I had started work as accountant. Whenever difficulties cropped up in my work Granny lent me a helping hand.

Granny was noted for her diligence and frugal way of life. Not long after I came to her house I noticed some marks cut on the gourd she used to measure grain. Asked what they meant, she pointed at the lines and explained: “This line marks one ounce; that one, three ounces; and the third half a catty. If I want to cook one catty of rice, I use two half-catty measures. If I want to cook eight ounces of flour, I use a half-catty and a three-ounce measure. I find this a handy method.”

Her explanation made me laugh. I remarked: “Now I know why people say you are...”

“Close-fisted! Is that what they say?” Granny’s face turned dark. “Peach, in the old society I went begging for dozens of years. In the freezing winter when the ground was a foot deep in snow I had to beg from place to place, with nothing but a piece of sacking round my shoulders. Sometimes I collapsed in the snow from hunger and exhaustion. I would struggle up only to fall down again. If you just lay there you’d soon be frozen to death. I had to struggle on. Life was hell till the Communist Party came and saved me. Since Liberation things have changed completely. Now we have this roomy brick cottage and life is just fine. My daughter-in-law once said to me: ‘At your age, mother, you should eat whatever you fancy. Life’s getting better all the time, so why go on pinching and scraping?’ What a way to talk! I ticked her off properly. Even after we reach communism, hard work and thriftiness will still be needed.”

As these memories crossed my mind I took the horse-collar home and put it by the window, resolved to repair it myself later that evening. When Granny saw this through the window, a contented smile lit up her wrinkled face.

It was late by the time I finished my accounts that evening. I had to grope my way home from the brigade office. As I opened the front gate I saw that the lamp in the eastern wing was still alight. Why hadn’t Granny turned in? I tiptoed over to raise the door-curtain

and discovered her sitting by the lamp, her spectacles on, industriously mending the horse-collar. Leaning against the door-frame I looked at her fondly. Although her forehead was lined with age, her eyes under the spectacles were bright and keen. Holding the horse-collar tight against her breast, she plied her needle swiftly and skilfully. With these work-worn hands she had mended padded clothes for Eighth Route Army men, made black cloth shoes for PLA fighters; the calluses on them recorded feats of endurance, hard work done in the blazing sun or blustering wind. Now in her seventieth year, with these same hands, she was putting all her devotion for the collective into this mending, a mundane yet glorious task!

"Granny!" I ran to throw my arms around her.

"Silly child." Granny stroked my hair. "When did you creep in?"

"Granny, let me mend it."

"A few more stitches and it'll be finished. It's late, you must go to bed now." With that she pushed me on to the *kang*, then turned back to the light and resumed her work.

Lying on the *kang* I fixed my eyes on Granny, my mind in a tumult. Then I must have fallen asleep. When I woke up and reached out to feel Granny's quilt I found her place was empty. I sat up quickly. Raindrops were pelting on the window. Jumping up I dashed out towards the threshing floor.

When I reached the threshing floor swept by wind and rain I saw Granny working there like a house on fire.

"Granny!" I shouted.

"Granny!" echoed the commune members who had come rushing to protect the wheat.

The commingled sound of wind, rain and running footsteps converged on the threshing floor, on Granny Chin.

Mopping her streaming face, she called out to us: "I've checked all three stacks — our wheat's well covered. Go back, quick."

The commune members pressed round Granny Chin. The brigade leader had to squeeze through the crowd to confront her. "All right, Granny wins," he cried, slapping the back of his head. "It's no use trying to make her stay at home."



"I'm glad you admit defeat," Granny retorted. "Take back your order to me to rest and let me join the work on the threshing floor!" She started crowing with laughter.

The rain subsided, the wind died down. In the stillness, Granny Chin's gay laughter kept ringing in my ears. . . .

Illustrated by Liu Jen-ching



We Are All Ready! (traditional Chinese painting)
by *Chiang Cheng-nan*

Storming Tiger Cliff

This is an excerpt from the novel *The Long Trek*.

In 1968, Chairman Mao pointed out the need for educated young people to go to the countryside to be re-educated by the poor and lower-middle peasants. In response to this call, millions of young people from various cities of China went down to the countryside and there wrote another glorious page in the annals of the Chinese youth movement. In recent years, many literary works have appeared reflecting this new socialist experiment, one of them being the novel *The Long Trek*.

The action starts in 1969 when Chung Wei-hua, Mei Ying-tzu, Lu Hao, Tien Hsiao-ping and other school-leavers from Shanghai go to settle in a production brigade in the province of Heilungkiang near China's northeastern frontier. The start of their revolutionary long trek exposes many contradictions which trigger off fights. These include class struggle between youngsters like Chung and the saboteur Chang Shan and the two-line struggle between conservative ideas as represented by the brigade leader Yu Chun-pao and the school-leavers. Among the educated youth there is also a struggle between proletarian and bourgeois ideology in connection with the problem of how to receive re-education from the poor and lower-middle peasants.

The novel shows these young people, headed by Chung, grappling with these complex and turbulent cross-currents. Such episodes as their fights to reap more grain despite snow and ice, to protect the bridge, storm Tiger Cliff and capture

the saboteur Chang Shan project the heroic image of Chung Wei-hua and the fine spirit of China's younger generation who are on a long trek to continue the revolution after being steeled in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

The novel, forty-three chapters in all, was published in 1973 by the Shanghai People's Publishing House. It is one of the first works of its young author Kuo Hsien-hung.

— The Editors

Tiger Cliff shrouded by clouds
Stands ten thousand feet high;
Stags dare not cross it,
Eagles come not nigh.

As this folk-song shows, this cliff was quite formidable. Shaped like a crouching tiger, it loomed above the surrounding hills like a wall of granite barring the road into the mountains, allowing neither carts nor trucks to pass. It was a real tiger in the path of the bridge builders.

The fighters of Tiger-taming Company, having passed the cookhouse where Aunt Kuan was preparing their supper, went on another two kilometres till they reached the foot of the cliff. Since this was as far as their tractor could go, they halted on a small hill. There Yu Chun-pao, deputy leader of the company, organized them to fell trees, dig trenches and fix up a shelter for the night.

Young company leader Chung Wei-hua and his fighters soon got a shed erected. After telling the others to rest, Chung shouldered his axe and asked Yu to go with him to the foot of the cliff to look round. Since their orderly had not yet arrived from the cookhouse with their supper, Yu agreed to go although it was growing late.

With them went young Lu Hao, Ying-tzu, old brigade leader Chen, and Muren the seasoned Olunchun hunter from another brigade whom they had just met on the road. Muren, shouldering his rifle and carrying a hunting knife, was riding his shaggy horse, followed by his powerful hound.

Yu still felt dubious about the scheme to blast through Tiger Cliff. Pointing towards it he said: "There are only a hundred of us, counting the girls; and even if we were all supermen we'd have our work

cut out blasting through that cliff. Remember, Old Chen, when the Japanese tried to do it? They had a huge work force and spent months on the job, yet didn't pull out even one of the tiger's teeth."

"That's different. You can't compare our job today with work done during the Japanese occupation," replied Chung quietly. "They were building a road to help Japanese aggression, a road to death. We're building a revolutionary road for the proletariat, a road to communism. In those days the workers were press-ganged. Bayonets and whips forced them to work. We've the backing of the whole people and we've come as volunteers, singing battle-songs. You lived through the Japanese occupation here, Old Yu, so you understand it better than us youngsters. When you've time, you must tell us some of your experiences."

"Hear that, Old Yu? Our youngsters have the right spirit, eh?" put in Old Chen approvingly. Beaming at the three mettlesome young people, he thought what a good job Party Secretary Li had done turning these young students into first-rate cadres in less than a year in the commune. It was Li who had sent them to storm Tiger Cliff. This was a way to temper them into fine steel. And they had such a resolute young leader, if they all pulled together they could surely tunnel through the cliff even if it were made of steel.

When Yu and the other four reached the foot of the cliff they found Muren tightening his horse's girth. The Olunchun hunter evidently intended to ride to the top.

Chung, Ying-tzu and young Lu Hao looked up at the sheer cliff, a truly awesome sight. They knew that the head of the road construction work Old Chi, the commune Party secretary Old Chiang who was responsible for this section of the road, and their guide Old Han had gone up to reconnoitre. Were they still up there?

When Muren had saddled his horse to his satisfaction, he fed it a large pinch of salt. Then rubbing the scar on his right cheek he said: "Let's get started. Who'll take the lead?"

Yu laughed. "You Olunchuns are famed mountaineers. We'll be pleased if we don't drop too far behind you. Of course you must take the lead."

Muren grinned, disclosing a gap in his mouth where two front teeth were missing. Without a word he vaulted on to his saddle. But at once Yu stopped him.

"I know your Olunchun horses can climb mountain tracks. But this cliff is too steep, you'll never make it on horseback."

"Don't worry. Last winter I chased a stag halfway up this cliff before I caught it." Muren threw a glance at the peak. "If my horse can't get to the top, neither can we."

"So you want it to blaze the trail." Yu let go of the reins and Muren rode forward, his hound following him with a bark. Next came Yu close behind, and after him the three youngsters with Old Chen bringing up the rear. It was a hard climb. But they managed to find footholds in crevices in the rock and to pull themselves up by clutching at trees and brambles. They were panting and pouring with sweat by the time they got halfway up and found Muren waiting for them, still in the saddle. His horse was certainly sure-footed and agile.

As they stopped to rest, Chung keenly surveyed the terrain and made certain calculations. They had just reached the belly of the tiger and still had a long climb to get to its backbone and the head. Above them, the cliff loomed like a wall of iron. But at the top, oddly enough, was a forest which the local people called the Cap. Half hidden in the clouds, the trees with their mottled foliage looked like a striped tiger skin. This forest high in the sky appeared unapproachable. More than twenty years ago, the Japanese invaders had tried to climb up there to strip off the tiger's skin and blast through its back so that they could build a bridge across Double Deer River and carry off all the wealth of this mountain region. However, this scheme of theirs had fallen through. The invaders had to withdraw, leaving only some holes blasted halfway up the cliff.

Pointing at the granite pitted with holes, Yu exclaimed: "See those? Made by the Japanese, those were. They dragged over a thousand workers here for more than half a year, and several hundred poor devils got killed or maimed, but all they did was dent the tiger's skin. This rock's so hard, houses built of it will last for generations."

"That's taking a long-term view, brother," quipped Old Chen. "We'd better take a few pieces back with us."

Chung had stripped to his red vest on which was printed in yellow the words: Red Guard. Taking out his notebook he asked Yu how the Japanese had set about blasting the cliff. He jotted down Yu's answers, interrupting him from time to time with questions. The Olunchun hunter, seeing him so much in earnest, told Chung all that he knew too. Chung listened eagerly, nodding. Finally he said confidently: "Right. Now let's climb the tiger's back."

"That'll keep till tomorrow," said Yu. "Time to go back for supper. It's no easy job getting to the top of the cliff."

Brushing back her hair from her perspiring face, Ying-tzu protested: "Old Uncle Han and those leading comrades went up there. If they can climb it, why can't we?"

"That's right," agreed Old Chen. "They're not equipped with wings either."

"However high a cliff, it has a top," chimed in Lu Hao. "We can find a way up."

Chung observed: "I see some fresh marks on the rock here. They must have come this way too."

Yu repeated: "It'll keep till tomorrow. Let's call it a day."

"No, Comrade Yu," replied Ying-tzu doggedly. "If we persevere we can make it. We must get to the top today. If you're tired, stay here and watch the clothes and the horse while we youngsters go up."

"That's it. You stay with Brother Muren and this lass, Old Yu. I'll go up with the two young fellows." Old Chen tightened his belt as he spoke.

Ying-tzu flushed. "That's not fair, brigade leader," she protested. "It was my suggestion, but you want to leave me behind. Come on, I'll lead the way."

Lu Hao pulled her back. "I've longer legs. Let me go first."

Muren scratched his chin, then barred Lu Hao's way. "You're good youngsters, all of you, but here you must listen to an experienced hunter. You stay here while I climb up first; then you can follow."

Muren patted the coiled rope tied to his belt and fastened his whip to the saddle. Next he pulled up his leather boots and tightened his belt. Then, his rifle over his shoulder, he started off.

Just at that moment Chung called to him to stop. "Wait, Comrade Muren! What's that?"

All looked up to where Chung was pointing and saw a thick rope being lowered from above. This was the first time Old Muren with his keen eyes had failed to catch sight of something before the others. So people were lowering this rope for them from the summit.

"Good," said the old hunter. "There are four of them up there. They're beckoning to us."

"Come on then," cried Chung. He slipped on his jacket and caught hold of the rope. His axe slung over his shoulder, he shinned quickly up, followed by Ying-tzu, Muren and Lu Hao.

Old Chen nudged Yu. "It's our turn now. Go on, man. Don't let the youngsters leave us behind."

So all six of them in turn climbed up the rope, scaling the tiger's back. Sure enough, as the sharp-eyed hunter had said, there were four men waiting there to help them up.

Chung glanced round at the hills and valleys below before examining the cliff itself more closely. He saw that this cliff, which seen from below loomed up like a crouching tiger, was nothing more than a thin wall of rock. His spirits rose. Though this granite tiger appeared formidable, it was not invulnerable. Its height and lack of density meant that it could be conquered without too much difficulty. Next he looked at Double Deer River winding like a jade belt behind the cliff. The banks were thick with people, carts and horses, milling about to build the highway and bridge. Eight stone bridge piers already constructed rose from the river. He glanced back at the two gleaming streams like two deer chasing each other. Emerging from opposite valleys, they converged under Tiger Cliff to flow down to the Heilungkiang River a hundred *li* away.

Chung was delighted to see among the four men there the vice-commander of the local garrison. Though his hair was grey he was still healthy and active, and he was in charge of the whole construc-

tion project. He had obviously heard about these youngsters from the county and commune cadres. Putting one hand on Chung's shoulder, he pointed to the terrain below and said:

"Look, young fellow. Our task here is to topple Tiger Cliff and build a bridge a hundred metres long across the river so that, no matter what the weather, trucks can travel fast between this county and the provincial capital. See that bridge building contingent of army-men and civilians from the next county? That's the Dragon-taming Company. By working hard all winter and spring they've already finished the bridge piers. The task of your Tiger-taming Company is to pull down this tiger in our path as fast as ever you can. We'd like you to fell the trees up here too and shift the timber to the river shore for the bridge builders. By using local timber, we can save labour and material besides speeding up the work. We want to get the bridge open to traffic by National Day, October the First. How about it?"

The vice-commander's powerful, warm hand still lay on Chung's shoulder. He had given the young fellow a heavy assignment and clearly expected that he could pull it off.

"Sure, we'll do our best to finish the job on time," replied Chung firmly. He was thinking: The task assigned us by the county and commune was just to blast through the cliff. Now part of our force will have to fell trees at the summit. Well, this shows the leadership's faith in us, and it's in line with the policy of doing more to build socialism faster, better and more economically. But carrying out this dual task won't be easy. We'll have to mobilize the masses and work out carefully the best way to cope. He glanced at the two keen youngsters, then at Old Chen who was staring up at the forest and at Muren who had fixed his eyes on the rushing stream below. Then he looked at the red banner fluttering in the wind above the sheds at the foot of the cliff, and felt the heavy axe slung over his shoulder. The warmth of the vice-commander's hand made him conscious that he had the support of hundreds of other firm hands and that many people were convinced he could carry out the assignment. He recalled the parting words of old Party Secretary Li and Grandad Kuan: "If you youngsters have guts, you must plunge

into the heart of the storm and steel yourselves in class struggle and the struggle between two lines. This way, you'll become like pillars of steel able to withstand hurricanes or thunderbolts. . . ."

With quiet confidence he said: "Commander, I've got some ideas which I mean to propose to the Party branch when I go back. I shall also consult veteran workers and my comrades."

"Good." The vice-commander's eyes crinkled in a smile. He could see that this lad of twenty or thereabouts was modest and prudent; what's more, he had the right idea about relying on the Party and the people. For any group leader, however talented, must unconditionally accept the leadership of the Party and the supervision of the masses. Only by summing up the wisdom of the collective can he overcome difficulties and succeed in his task.

"You're right. We should always trust and rely on the masses, on the Party." The vice-commander added approvingly: "I hear that when the brigade assigned you this job, you consulted many people and noted down all sorts of suggestions for blasting through Tiger Cliff. That's the spirit. We revolutionaries have to use our heads. Let's go back now and rest. Tomorrow morning after breakfast you and your deputy leader must come to our headquarters for a meeting. Together we'll work out a plan to fell trees and blast the cliff."

Late that night, after their long trek, nearly everybody was asleep. Only company headquarters remained lit up. In early autumn in the mountains the mosquitoes are very fierce. All the youngsters from Shanghai except Tien the orderly slept under mosquito-nets. The peasants from the commune, however, slept soundly regardless of mosquito bites.

A whole squad of men slept in company headquarters. Old Chen and Muren lay snoring on Young Tien's bunk. When mosquitoes alighted on their bare arms to suck blood, Chung drove them away with his hands, then quietly covered them with his own mosquito-net.

Chung and Lu Hao now went over to their "desk", a tree-stump on which they had placed a sand-table. A long smooth slate sticking out of the sand represented Tiger Cliff.

Deputy Leader Yu came in quietly and urged softly, "Better turn in."

"Don't wait up for us, Old Yu," said Lu Hao smiling. "You know how pig-headed Chung is. He can't sleep till he's settled this question in his mind."

"He's not the only one," retorted Yu. "You should see the girls' team. Ying-tzu, Ying-hung and that daughter of mine are the same. It beats me. At your age, I never kept on the go the way you do."

"That was in the old days," Chung remarked cheerfully.

"That's right," agreed Yu. "In the land reform after Liberation I was every bit as keen and energetic. Now it's your turn."

"Hard work isn't enough; we need guidance from the older generation. Well, the vice-commander of the local garrison, although he already has white hair, has come all this way to fight shoulder to shoulder with us." Chung indicated the sand-table and continued: "In this fight to blast through Tiger Cliff we certainly need the help of veterans like you. We youngsters haven't your experience."

"Right, a veteran fighter is worth two of us. Here, you'd better come and help us." Lu Hao made Yu sit down beside them.

His eyes on the pebbles in the sand-table, Yu laughed. "I thought you were playing draughts, but I see you're still working. Perseverance pays. I bet Tiger Cliff will have to give way to you."

"It's too early to say that." Pleased by Yu's growing enthusiasm, Chung stood up. "To demolish Tiger Cliff we must rely on collective wisdom, careful planning and boldness in action. Let's go and have another look at the cliff. You can tell us how you tackled it twenty years ago, what dynamite charges you used. All that technical data should come in useful now."

"Come on, Old Yu. The moon tonight is brighter than an electric light." Lu Hao jumped up and pulled Yu to his feet.

"All right." Touched by the fighting spirit of these two tiger-cubs, tightening his belt Yu remarked, "When I'm with you I feel younger too. Quietly, don't let's wake the others." He tiptoed out.

Chung and Lu Hao exchanged pleased glances before following Yu out. In the moonlight they saw approaching them two girls: plump, short Ying-hung and tall slender Ying-tzu. They had come to find Chung and talk over the plan.

As the five of them made their way to Tiger Cliff, they heard heavy footsteps behind. It was Old Chen and the Olunchun hunter. Perhaps they had felt hot under the mosquito-net or was it because Muren was a light sleeper? Anyway, as soon as Chung and the others left they had got up and followed.

An hour later, seven faint silhouettes could be seen on Tiger Cliff. Under the blue night sky, they seemed to be reaching for the stars. . . .

The road construction headquarters was on a slope to the left of Tiger Cliff. The wireless transmitter in its large tent kept headquarters in touch with all the different sectors.

The meeting to discuss the demolition of Tiger Cliff was chaired by the vice-commander. Heated arguments and cheerful laughter made it lively.

"You're the chief of our Tiger-taming Company, Young Chung," said the vice-commander. "Let's hear your company's ideas on this job."

All eyes turned to Chung. Yu prodded him. "Go on. If you don't come clean, I'll tell them."

"Out with it," urged the vice-commander.

Yu could never keep anything to himself. Rubbing his eyes he announced: "Young Chung here didn't sleep a wink all last night. He climbed the cliff by moonlight and came down when the sun was rising. He's gone over the whole terrain, practically burrowing into the tiger's belly."

"So Young Chung was up all night investigating the cliff." The vice-commander nodded his approval.

"It wasn't just me," Chung disclaimed. "Seven of us went to make a more thorough survey of the cliff."

"Not just a general survey either," put in Yu, indicating Chung's notebook. "You made a lot of calculations and sketches, working all through the night. And you all said you'd figured out a plan. How come you're so conservative now?"

"I'm not being conservative." Chung smiled to hear this criticism from Yu of all people. Opening his notebook he continued, "This is only a preliminary plan for demolition. We still have to make

further investigations and collect more scientific data. We haven't consulted other people yet either."

"All right, let's have it," said the vice-commander.

Young Chung straightened his old army cap and stood up diffidently to explain his proposal.

"I'll speak first about the project to storm Tiger Cliff. According to our estimate, which is confirmed by Comrade Muren, Brigade Leader Chen and Old Yu, the whole cliff is one hundred and fifty metres high. It's all hard granite. Crouching on that rocky base fifty metres high, it looks pretty imposing. In fact, it's like an underfed pig, quite a size but lean and flabby." Chung turned and pointed through the window at the cliff. "The thickest part at the middle is only twenty metres; and that concave place where the belly joins the base seems to be the weakest spot. See?"

Having taken a good look at the cliff, they agreed with Chung's estimate.

"Our job is to make a cut about fifty metres wide through the middle of the cliff just about fifty metres above the river. We've made a rough calculation: the tiger's belly is about the right height and it goes up a hundred metres. That means that about one hundred thousand cubic metres of rock will have to be blasted away. If we start from the top and work down, the way the Japanese did, that won't do."

To illustrate his point, Chung arranged some pebbles on the sand-table, then went on: "Our idea is to concentrate our attack on the bottom of the belly, the thinnest part. Over an area fifty metres wide, we'll drill tunnels every ten metres, making each ten metres deep and two metres across. We'll be needing one hundred tons of dynamite altogether, a kilo for each cubic metre of rock. If we have no electric detonator, we can get five men to light the fuses at the same time. This way, we can blast through the middle of the tiger."

"That's a good idea, driving tunnels." The vice-commander clapped the table lightly.

"As for the one hundred thousand cubic metres of rock," — Chung knocked over the pebbles on the sand-table — "we can blast them so that they fall on both sides of the base. They'll be enough to

construct a highway five metres wide and a thousand metres long. And a highway paved with granite will be solid enough to stand up to mountain freshets. By this method we can ensure getting the highway built on time or even ahead of time. Of course this is just a theory; we still lack practical experience. . . .”

“Very good indeed, Young Chung,” said the vice-commander.

A veteran soldier, he had amassed considerable experience in an engineering corps. During the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea he had led sappers to drive tunnels and blow up enemy installations. Later, as regiment commander, he had commanded troops to blast through mountains with thousands of tons of dynamite in order to construct an inland railway in China’s southwest. The boldness of the plan proposed by this twenty-year-old youngster after only a short period of work in the country impressed him with the ability of the younger generation educated by Mao Tsetung Thought. Though he did not put this feeling into words, his glance at the rather bashful lad who was speaking with such confidence and good sense showed his delight and approval. Old Yu, his enthusiasm also aroused, made some additional comments to fill in details.

After this, Chung pointed to the trees on the cliff and explained their proposal for felling them. He analysed the difficulties they would encounter and the measures that could be taken to overcome them. Their idea was to take a tractor to the forest to transport the felled timber to the edge of the cliff and also use it as a hoisting machine. He then gave estimates of the dynamite, heavy sledge-hammers and iron picks that would be needed.

The leading cadres listened attentively and put down his requests in their notebooks.

It was nearly noon when the vice-commander closed his notebook. “Young Chung’s plan basically corresponds with our views,” he said. “We can give his company more dynamite. This assault on Tiger Cliff is crucial for getting the highway and bridge open on time. More important, it’s part of Chairman Mao’s grand strategy of preparedness against war and natural disasters and doing everything for the people. This is a stern test for us all. Comrade Chung, this



fight calls for resolution and courage. We must dare to overcome all difficulties and adopt a scientific attitude. The road is going to be rough. Stand firm, keep your eyes open, and never forget class struggle. This means you must rely on Marxism, Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought, on Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. When you cadres go back, call meetings of Party and Youth League members. Rally everybody to discuss and improve on this plan. I wish you success! The meeting is adjourned."

Two days later, a helicopter gleaming silver in the golden sunlight carried a tractor fitted with a hoist to the top of Tiger Cliff. There Chung and his lumber team planted a red banner. Like a bright torch it floated in the breeze.

The tractor started roaring in the clouds.

On the same day, Ying-tzu and Ying-hung led a group of educated youth and commune members to storm Tiger Cliff. Wearing wicker-helmets they swarmed up the steep cliff. With hammers and picks they assaulted the hard granite like a flock of woodpeckers. The valley rang with hammering like thunder.

Meanwhile, according to plan, headquarters sent a platoon of men from the army stud farm to help the Tiger-taming Company. Young Chang Ta-wei who was in the transport platoon was the first to leap down from his cart to welcome these new comrades. One of them, hefty Tsao Hsiang-fei, stepped forward shouldering a hammer weighing twenty-eight pounds, to shake Chang's hand cordially.

The waggoner Chang Shan, however, behaved quite differently. He stayed put on his cart which was loaded with firewood and surveyed the whole scene with a jaundiced eye, inwardly fuming.

Aunt Kuan and her helpers in the cookhouse worked hard from morning to night preparing meals which Chang Ta-wei carted to the cliff for the lumbermen.

Tien the orderly and postman worked round the clock too, traveling on horseback between the county town, the commune office and the construction headquarters. Sometimes he had to climb the cliff as well, or ford the river to the neighbouring brigade.

From sunrise to sunset Yu stayed at the tiger's belly, only coming down for meals. He reminded the workers to take safety precautions

and wielded a hammer himself. Most of the time, dangling on a rope, he helped the youngsters drive tunnels in the cliff face. The lads' energy pleased him; their recklessness worried him. He kept an anxious eye on Tsao with his extra heavy hammer, for fear lest he swing too hard or miss and smash young Liu Chiang's arm.

Chung was on the top of the cliff. His comrades watched apprehensively as he climbed alone up the tiger's head and all along its tail to find the best place for the tractor to dump timber. Even Muren, veteran mountaineer as he was, felt Chung was taking far too many risks. With Old Chen and Lu Hao he went after him, and together up in the clouds they worked out a plan. They must ensure the safety of the comrades driving tunnels halfway up the cliff and use the hoist on the tractor to lower the felled logs by steel cables to the river bank. Otherwise, if the logs hurtled down from the cliff, they might cause accidents or get broken up. Even a small pebble falling from such a height could smash a man's skull, not to say a tree thousands of pounds in weight.

When the time came to start felling, Chung chose a big pine and chopped at it with the axe given him by Grandad Kuan. Then Old Chen applied his saw. And soon, at a blast of the whistle, the giant tree crashed sideways just as they wanted. Muren ran over to fasten one end of the trunk with a cable, as if tying up a wild beast; then taking off his cap he waved it. At once Lu Hao and his assistant Tao set the tractor into motion, hauling off the big pine like a boat towing a whale. When they neared the edge of the cliff the tractor turned. Lu Hao jumped out and together with Tao rammed stones in front of the wheels, while men ready with hooks and levers lugged the tree a dozen metres to the edge of the cliff. There, as if lowering a boat to the sea, they propelled the tree out little by little, crown first; while a signal flag on the cliff warned those below to keep clear. When the great pine was hanging in mid air on the cable like a fish on a line, Lu Hao and Tao lowered it slowly by means of the hoist till at last it lay tamely on the river bank, ready for the construction of the bridge. Then the workers by the dyke unfastened the cable. A green flag was waved, and the cable was hoisted up.

This whole process, from felling to lowering the trees to the bank, went smoothly as a result of Chung's careful arrangements which he had learned some months previously when felling trees under the guidance of Party Secretary Li on Pinewood Island. Even Tao, inclined to be timid, soon grew bolder. Coached by Lu Hao, he manoeuvred the tractor at the top of the cliff in an area no wider than a basket-ball field, hoisting and lowering trees without a hitch.

Time flies when people's hearts are in their work. In a flash a fortnight had passed. From dawn till late at night, the two groups of workers on Tiger Cliff and on the river bank tried to race each other. Their enthusiasm and scientific organization greatly speeded up the whole project.

But every step forward on the revolutionary road is beset by difficulties. The assault team headed by Ying-tzu and Ying-hung had a hard time driving tunnels into the granite; and then the weather played up. First, a heavy downpour soaked them to the skin. Then hailstones, some as large as ping-pong balls, battered them. If not for their wicker-helmets, they would have been badly hurt.

As soon as the hailstorm passed, Liu Chiang filled a helmet with hailstones big and small and called to the others: "Hey, try these fresh chestnuts and iced lichees. Oh, here's a ping-pong ball too, but this I must keep for myself." She picked out the largest and stuffed it into her mouth.

The youngsters were in high spirits. Following Liu's example, they picked up hailstones and popped them into their mouths.

"Wonderful!"

"Ice-lollies from heaven!"

"What a treat!"

As they were joking and laughing, Ying-tzu blew her whistle. Cheering "Time for lunch!" they put down their hammers and picks, seized the stout ropes suspended from the top of the cliff and slid down to its foot. Soon they were joined by Chung's lumber team from the summit.

Their strenuous exertions made the food taste good and their appetites were enormous. Unfortunately they could get no fresh vegetables. In the three weeks or so since they had come to the

mountains it had rained almost every day, and since the road was not constructed yet, trucks could not reach them to bring vegetables. They had to make do with pickles. By now, even the pickles were nearly finished; one carrot had to be shared between several people. Even wild herbs to make soup were running short, although Aunt Kuan and her helpers spent all their spare time searching for such herbs.

When Chang Ta-wei brought their lunch today on his cart, he said ruefully to Young Tsao: "It's too bad, we can't even supply you with enough pickles. Aunt Kuan is worried stiff. And if the rain doesn't let up, you'll have nothing to eat tomorrow but dumplings with salt. Can you take it?"

"Sure, that's nothing." Tsao put half a dumpling in his mouth. "As long as there's flour, we're all right. It's harder for these youngsters from the south, accustomed to eating rice."

"In the old society, when did we ever eat dumplings made of white flour? Even dumplings made of husks could cost a man's life. Old Yu knows that," declared Liu Chiang, gulping down her wild herb soup with evident relish.

Chung hearing this said to Yu: "You told me once that not far from here is a gully where thousands of labourers were buried. Suppose you show us the place? That would be a good political lesson for us youngsters."

The others all turned to Yu, urging him to agree. And moved by the young people's wish to know more about the bitter past to strengthen their love for the new society, he promptly agreed to take them.

Yu led them to a gully near Tiger Cliff. With grief and indignation he described how more than twenty years ago the Japanese aggressors had dumped the corpses of countless labourers here. Some had died of exhaustion and illness, of hunger and cold; others were beaten to death. Vultures and wolves had torn the flesh from their bones. And when freshets poured down from the mountains every year, their skeletons were swept away into the river. The whole area between Tiger Cliff and Double Deer River was strewn with corpses and bones. At night, will-o'-the-wisps flickered in

that hellish place. Tears choked Yu's voice as he recalled the past. Those who listened clenched their fists.

Ying-hung picked some wild herbs here and proposed to the others: "The endless rain's cut off our vegetable supply, so we'd better look for local substitutes. Look, this creeper with white flowers is a wild pepper with leaves just as hot and tasty as green paprika. This bulb with the slender stem is a sort of wild garlic." She showed Liu Chiang a herb with blue flowers and asked: "Do you know what this is?"

Liu Chiang thought for a minute, then said: "It's local name is 'fireworks flower'. It's a medicinal herb, and its scientific name is *chieh-ken*. Right?"

"Quite right." The girl nodded. "It's not only a medicinal herb, it makes delicious pickles too."

Old Chen scratched his chin. "Old Han really has a smart daughter!" He turned to Yu. "Once this road-building job is finished, I'll choose a lucky day after the autumn harvest and take a cart to fetch her away."

Yu chortled: "Your son is young yet, wait another couple of years. Old Han will do as I say."

Some people laughed, others were mystified. Ying-hung understood all right. Blushing, she thought: "You can wait as long as you like, but if I don't agree there's nothing doing."

Chung understood too and changed the conversation to save the girl further embarrassment. "That's a good idea of Ying-hung's," he remarked. "We should solve the problem of vegetables ourselves. I suggest that every day after work we each pick some wild herbs for the cookhouse."

Cheering, the others agreed to start that same day, while Yu and Old Chen nodded their approval. Only Muren seemed lost in thought. During the past fortnight, while working hard felling trees with Old Chen and Chung, he had more than once noticed the waggoner Chang Shan, though this Chang had not put in an appearance the last few days. For some reason which he could not explain Muren had taken a dislike to the fellow. The crafty looking old man's shifty eyes, goatce, whiskers, flat nose and pointed ears all



seemed to him strangely familiar. In fact the old hunter felt as if he had encountered a wild beast which had attacked him earlier, then escaped. Moreover, and this struck him as more suspicious, Chang Shan appeared to be avoiding him. As Muren was brooding over this mystery, Ying-tzu suggested:

"We may as well shoot some wild game too. After all, we have a crack hunter right here with us."

All approved this idea and eagerly asked their company leader's opinion.

When Chung had come down from the cliff the previous night, he had gone with Yu to the cookhouse to see Aunt Kuan and find out what chance there was of getting a supply of fresh vegetables. Some of the youngsters were beginning to suffer from night-blindness. The lad teamed up with Ying-tzu had injured her wrist with his hammer because he could not see clearly, but she had encouraged him

to go on and not worry. Her own eyesight was deteriorating too. Some other young people were suffering from diarrhoea, but instead of admitting this they insisted on working. All in all, it was a disturbing situation. Chung, Yu and Aunt Kuan decided to look for remedies and report the difficulty to headquarters. Since the heavy rain had washed out the dirt road, trucks would be unable to come in the near future; so they must be prepared for the worst. Thus Ying-hung's proposal to gather wild herbs and Ying-tzu's suggestion to hunt for game struck Chung as extremely timely. He said:

"With the support of the higher-ups and the able guidance of the local peasants, by working hard we've already felled eighty per cent of the trees on the cliff and nearly finished driving tunnels in the granite. In a few more days we can start filling the tunnels with dynamite and set about blasting. At the moment we have some problems, the main ones being the lack of fresh vegetables and the wet weather which is affecting some people's health. Our headquarters and the local Party branch have given us medicine and taken other measures to stop diarrhoea. Still, many comrades are suffering from night-blindness. They won't let on or allow others to report it." He glanced significantly at Ying-tzu.

Ying-tzu eyed Ying-hung reproachfully, blaming her for reporting her trouble to Chung. And the youngster who had injured Ying-tzu's wrist shot a glance at her bruises and hung his head in shame.

Chung continued: "By pretending you're all right, you're liable to cause accidents during work. Take our tractor driver Comrade Tao, for example. In the evening he can hardly see, yet he insists on remaining at work. His spirit's fine, but if we go on like this our work is bound to suffer and we may have more serious accidents."

"Don't just tick other people off," Tao retorted. "You had such a bad stomach-ache today during work that your face turned a ghastly yellow, yet you told me I wasn't to let anyone know. You just worry about other people without taking proper care of yourself."

Old Chen cut in: "Quite right. Chung's young yet he takes stock of everything. Still, he never says a word about his own troubles. I knew about Lu Hao's diarrhoea and the cases of night-blind-

ness, but not about Young Chung's belly-ache. The tunnelling team is in even worse shape. It's no good just gritting your teeth and working hard. Collect wild herbs—I think that's a good idea. And why not hunt for game too? What do you say, Old Yu?"

"Those suggestions aren't bad but they won't really solve our problems," Yu answered calmly. "The main thing is still to get supplies brought in by truck. Since trucks can't reach us until the highway's built, I've sent Chang Shan to fetch us some pigs and vegetables from the commune. He'll be back in a couple of days. Wait for the vegetables and pork I say. This is more reliable than hunting boars."

This announcement surprised them all. Several youngsters objected:

"That's no good. If we wait for Chang Shan, we'll all go blind waiting for vegetables and pork."

"That fellow reliable? Not likely! He can talk but he won't work. You shouldn't have sent him."

"He's probably drinking in some inn with his cronies, using the rain as his pretext."

Yu, quite unruffled, just smiled.

Suddenly the old Olunchun hunter burst out: "That bastard's a wolf in disguise. He's up to no good." His eyes flashed angrily.

"Aren't you being too hard on him?" protested Yu.

Before Yu could say more, Muren insisted: "If he's no wolf, he's a crafty fox or weasel."

Muren's sudden outburst astonished everyone. Yu thought: This old hunter never met Chang Shan before or had any dealings with him; why does he feel so strongly about him? He said:

"That's no way to talk. We should unite with each other. Why curse Chang Shan like that?"

"I only curse wild beasts, not human beings."

"Is he a wild beast?"

Muren was unable to explain himself. Chung, knowing there must be something behind this, said: "Steady on, comrade. Take your time. Have you met Chang Shan before?"

Muren blinked, then fingered the scar on his cheek and put his hand to his mouth. "No..." he said slowly. "I don't think I have..."

They all felt more puzzled than ever. If the two men had never clashed before, why should Muren feel such a strong aversion to the waggoner? However, Chung realized that there must be some reason. Indeed, he himself had sensed something wrong about Chang Shan, and was eager to learn more about his past. Quietly he asked Muren: "Sure you haven't met him somewhere, some time? Think carefully. If you can't remember now, it may come back to you later."

Actually Muren suspected that Chang Shan was the man responsible for the scar on his cheek and the loss of his two front teeth. For the waggoner reminded him of a traitor called Lang who had worked for the Japanese as an interpreter. Chang Shan looked like that man, only older, with whiskers and scars on his face. He would never forget that day twenty-five years ago when that traitor Lang, on horseback, booted and spurred, with a sword at his belt, had ordered his thugs to seize all Muren's precious skins and furs — the result of a year's hard work. In those days the hunter had been young and hot-headed. He unsheathed his knife to have it out with them. Lang fired at him from the saddle. His bullet knocked out two teeth and came out through Muren's cheek. Muren's hatred knew no bounds, though he had to bury it deep in his heart. Later on, up in the mountains, where news took a long time to reach them, the hunter heard that the Japanese had surrendered. At once he went back to town to settle scores with Lang, but the traitor had disappeared. Some said he had been killed, others that he had run away. All this was ancient history now, but the sight of Chang Shan had rekindled his old flames of hatred. Still, he couldn't be sure that this was the same man. The keen-eyed Olunchun hunter could spot a stag he had once hunted among a whole herd; but this old, decrepit waggoner who seemed so humble looked very different from that traitor Lang who had ridden the high horse. A good hunter never fires a shot until he is sure of bagging some game. But Muren was convinced that Chang Shan was a wolf in sheep's clothing.

"Don't worry," he told Chung. "I won't fire until I've taken careful aim. I've been a hunter for more than thirty years. In the long run no wild beast has ever escaped me."

Chung nodded and smiled. "Right you are. You Olunchun hunters have eyes like lynxes." Changing the subject he went on: "I think the proposal to do some hunting is a good one. We'll discuss it this evening in our Party branch meeting and let you know tomorrow what we decide."

"That suits me fine. Whether we fell trees or hunt tomorrow is all the same to me. Don't worry about the night-blindness. A little stag liver will clear it up in no time. The reason we Olunchun hunters have good eyesight is because we eat plenty of liver. If you can't spare people to go hunting in the day-time, I can easily go out at night and bag a few stags."

That evening when Chung came back from the Party meeting he woke up Muren who slept next to him and told him that the Party committee had approved the idea of hunting. Muren, so elated that he could not sleep, quietly confided to Chung all that was in his mind.

At the Party branch meeting, Yu had disclosed that he had certain suspicions about Chang Shan and had sent him to the commune in order to find out what connections he had. Aunt Kuan and Chung agreed with Yu. Since they believed that Chang Shan was up to no good and probably had confederates working with him, they decided to keep a close watch on his movements and to guard their worksite and the dynamite brought in earlier against possible sabotage. They lost no time in reporting the situation to the county security office, arranging to assist the authorities in getting at the truth.

A storm of class struggle was brewing. Young Chung and his comrades charged forward, braving the raging storm to scale new heights....

Illustrated by Huang Chia-yu



YUAN CHUN

Sparks from the Welder's Torch

A wintry night; snow and wind
beat at windows; yet a light still shines
from the office of the Party committee;
comes the sound of knocking
breaking the silence, resounding
back and forth over the shipyard.

Inside the office there is a sound
of heated discussion, but then
continued knocking makes all wonder.
Wang Feng, the Party secretary rises,
opens the door, and from amongst
the snow a young girl enters.

She's wearing a welder's silvery overalls
her face as red as early plum-blossom
blooming in the snow. "To be frank,
I represent the shock team come to set
a fire amongst you, which we hope
will burn away conservative ideas."

Just as the east wind blows up the waters
of the spring river, so do members murmur
together praising the girl's action;
Wang Feng hurriedly pours
a cup of hot tea for her
as she sits by him.

"It is about the launching of the *Lushan*
in the spring; everyone likes to unite
in giving strength and enthusiasm.
Our Youth League has set up
a welder's shock team to envelop all
in its vivid colour and make for advance.

"At present, the struggle to join all sections
has begun. The gaps that need welding
are like a tiger standing in our path;
our welding technicians working day and night
have eyes rimmed with red, but still
there are some without faith enough
to allow us to join in the fight.

"Comrades, soldiers without rifles are not
really fighters. The most bitter thing
for the fighter is to be just an onlooker.

Technical grading of workers is a deep ditch
hard to cross; why look down on
the qualities and strength of youth?"

Then the girl takes out X ray pictures
to prove her welding skill, gaps showing
to be welded perfectly, shining and smooth,
her enthusiasm affects all,
her plea deeply impressing
each and every heart.

Wang Feng grips her hands,
her enthusiasm setting his mind alight.
"Yes, technical grading does classify skills,
but what kind of rule can we get
to measure our thinking?"

"Comrade Yu Meng, you have lit the fire well,
the Party committee appoints you
leader of your shock team; you must
remember that our cause is as young
as you are, so must temper
yourself through struggle."

Wang Feng farewells her
outside the door, until snow
covers her back; through the storm
can be seen the sparkle of welding
in the shipyard. River waves
dash against the banks, just like
the spring tide advancing rapidly. . . .



Time flies,
leaving in its path flashes of miracle.
Workers farewell time with the poetry
of their skill, and full of pride
usher in the first morning of 1970.

Wang Feng, wearing a worker's rattan hat,
moves amongst the first shift,
asking workers about intimate things
concerning them until finally he gets up
to the ship's deck right in the sunlight
feeling very happy at heart.

The huge *Lushan* just like a cradle of steel,
cranes standing like sentries
along its side; brave workers patiently
with their hands working on her, she the
path finder, a new generation of workers
trained in creating her.

Daily the fame of the shock team spreads
over the shipyard; they do not halt
day or night in their struggle. Overtired,

they just sleep a while in their clothing
in the corner of a cabin;
hungry, they simply eat cold food
washed down with water.

Wang Feng, entering this scene
of activity, coming from half darkness to the
blue light of welding, sees flying sparks
like spring peach blossom falling, but
workers with faces masked for protection,
unable to be recognized.

“How familiar is that back to me!”
Wang Feng thinks, as if surprised.
Ah, the wearer is that young shock team leader,
just like a strong and swift young eagle
spreading its wings over steep cliffs
with a purple haze enveloping her.

Suddenly the glitter of welding sparks
disappears and the girl pushes the mask
over her head, showing the dimple
of her smile on her cheek.
“Comrade leader, I report to you,”
Wang Feng says, taking the welding gun
she hands him with a smile.

Then a burst of laughter comes
from the scaffolding, Wang Feng
is full of wonderment.

“The wild geese keep together in
their flight, why today have I missed
the others of the team?”

It seems that Yu Meng reads his thoughts;
like a burst of fire comes
the sound as she raises a hammer
and knocks on steel plate,
the sound ringing out clearly
far and wide.

It seems that that small hammer
has a magic strength, for the signals
of response come in from everywhere,
ringing clearly, one after the other
echoes resounding around the job.

Very quickly, in come a group of lasses
and lads from nearby workplaces,
vigorous like tigers springing up mountains.
“Team leader, what emergency is there?”
And Yu Meng just turns her smiling
face up to the secretary.

The river wind blows up over
the high scaffolding, blowing
apart the silvery welding clothing
of the youngsters. Then Wang Feng sees
a flock of sea birds learning how to fly
swiftly and happily over the waters. . . .



3

A storm causes many lights to go off
and the *Lushan* has become a dark mountain
looming out of the storm. Yu Meng
stands in front of the window
silently pressing her face to the ice cold
window-pane, staring into the distance.

The storm makes the girl's heart heavy,
its fury even halting sea birds
from flying. Suddenly she turns her back
and looks at her work-mates; faces of
the members of the team reflecting
the red from the charcoal brazier.

"This will not do! We must launch
the *Lushan* in time. How can we
permit the storm to stamp out our welding sparks?"
Then stretching her hand she put some more
charcoal on the brazier, the fire
of her group stirred by her enthusiasm.

"Give us directions, team leader," they all say
standing up. "Otherwise we shall never

hold the title of Never Halting Our Sparks."
"That's right! If people bow down
before such kind of storm,
how can the finished ship stand up
against the great waves?"

As they are talking one has already
dashed out the door in spite of the fierce wind
and the whip lash of cold rain. Other youngsters
follow just like silvery arrows, aimed
into the depths of the storm. In no time
the sparkle of light appears in the shipyard.

In the middle of the storm,
as the first sparkle appears, Wang Feng
is just on his way along the river bank.
Hurrying his steps, he comes swiftly
to the shipyard, his chest full of pride
and joy as if excited by drum beats.

Lushan standing high amongst the storm,
the youth activists going busily
back and forth, the drive of the cold rain
making some unable to open their eyes;
they using their own raincoats to protect
work being done from water.

The youngest shock worker comes up
to Yu Meng saying, "Team leader, let me go
to find you an umbrella, because the rain

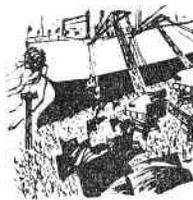
troubles so much.” “No, Little Ku, go and protect the crack we weld, otherwise the quality of our welding will be affected.”

Swiftly the youth darts around the hull, he lies down putting his body over the space to be welded. Out of the storm comes his young voice, “Look, team leader, this is our most modern tent.”

“Hello! Above us the wind is strong, be careful!” Yu Meng tries to overcome the sound of the wind with her voice. “Never mind, team leader,” the youth shouts, “My whole self is welded here.”

Yu Meng is moved by the words of the youngster, then like a flash of lightning an idea strikes her: Today the gusts of this storm have tempered us, its harshness helping; now never mind what difficulty comes, none can overcome us.

Then Wang Feng puts his padded coat over her shoulders; the whole shipyard is seething, welding sparks have repulsed the storm. The *Lushan* becomes like a lighthouse in the sea. . . .



4

With the first rays of dawn glinting over the river, ships' hooting joined together; the great *Lushan* raising her head higher into the heavens, the beating of drums and the clashing of cymbals reach over the sky of the whole shipyard.

Crowds of people, just like the tide, encircle the dry dock, they grasp each other's hands and shake vigorously. Sounds of quick hammering are heard from under the ship, workers at the crane run about shouting like soldiers charging on the battlefield.

Suddenly, all sounds cease, numberless eyes stare at Wang Feng, the work director. “Begin the launching!” he waves his arms across his chest in signal, immediately the sound of celebration bursts out, like sea waves sounding.

The *Lushan* slides into the middle of the river, she has gone with the good wishes of those who built her,

seeming like farewell to
their own families with feelings
as deep as the sea.

Yu Meng and her team encircle
the secretary; their fiery enthusiasm as if
thawing the frost of his hair.

“Comrade, when shall a new fight start?
Will it be necessary for our team leader
to set you on fire again?”

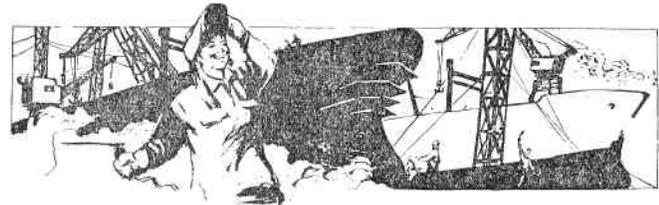
The eyes of young workers seem to hold
something they wish to say, but every
smiling face wants to keep it secret.
“Oh, well, to put a railway over the sea,
there are enough hard battles in front
of us all the time. I wonder if
you are still bold enough to meet them.”

Yu Meng laughs, and takes out a
blueprint, “Well, this kind of thing
seems very ordinary: how to gain
automatic welding which technicians dream of
day and night, we have designed this method
which gives eyes and wings to the tool.”

“This time, no matter how heavy the storm,
it cannot overcome our will. Now the ration
grain for ten days can be finished at one meal.”

“No,” comes the reply, “what we have to understand
in our battle in shipbuilding is
what is the best way to fight.”

The young folk discuss heatedly,
each with his or her viewpoint,
just like the firing of a machine-gun.
Under the sunlight, the new generation
of shipyard workers, as if with
the swiftness and strength of a sea bird,
spreading its wings, strengthening
themselves against storm and wave.



NOTES ON ART

TSUNG SHU

New Life for Local Operas

In August and September this year a dramatic festival of new productions from Liaoning, Hunan, Kwangsi and Shanghai was held in Peking for our workers, peasants and soldiers. The items presented, all reflecting the revolutionary struggle and life of our people, have further enriched the Chinese theatre. An outstanding feature of this festival was the adaptation of revolutionary model Peking operas by local opera companies. Each province presented at least one such adaptation, either of a whole opera or selected scenes. Thus the Peking opera *Shachiapang* was presented in the form of a Hunan *huaku* opera, while *pingchu* opera artistes from Liaoning had adapted the Peking opera *Song of the Dragon River*. Scenes from other model operas had been transposed into the *hsiangchu*, *huchu*, *yuehchu*, *huaichu*, *kueichu*, *chuangchu* and *tsaitiao* opera forms, a clear indication of the nationwide influence and growing popularity of the model revolutionary operas.

China is a vast country with many nationalities and hundreds of different forms of local opera. Evolved by folk artistes on the base

of local dialects and folk music, these operas have a close affinity to the regional life and tastes. The revolutionary Peking operas *The Red Lantern*, *Shachiapang*, *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*, *Fighting on the Plain*, *On the Docks*, *Song of the Dragon River* and *Red Detachment of Women* are models for the implementation of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in literature and art. People of different localities and nationalities throughout China are eager to have these works popularized and adapted to their local stage. For adaptation of this kind makes the model operas easier for people speaking different dialects to understand and enjoy, helping to imprint in their minds the heroic images created by these revolutionary operas. Such adap-

Li Kuang of the China Peking Opera Troupe who plays the role of Chao Yung-kang in *Fighting on the Plain* demonstrating to *chuangchu* opera actors from Kwangsi



tation is thus an effective means of further popularizing these splendid works and consolidating their command of our stage.

When the *Chuangchu* Opera Company of Kwangsi staged *Fighting on the Plain* in the Chuang dialect in districts where national minorities live, the Chuang and Yao peasants flocked to see it. One old poor peasant, a Chuang, said with emotion: "You've turned this revolutionary model opera into a *chuangchu* opera and brought it all the way here to our mountains. This shows the concern and love of the Party and Chairman Mao for us Chuang people."

When the *Huaichu* Opera Company of Shanghai performed *On the Docks* in all the city's ten dockyards, some third-generation dockers were deeply moved. They vowed to learn from the spirit of the heroine Fang Hai-chen, to keep the world revolution in mind and make a greater contribution to it. During their tours of the last few years, the local opera companies have used these adapted operas to educate audiences far and wide, spreading the brilliant influence of the heroic characters in these works.

Although all local operas have a mass base, before Liberation most of them were utilized by the reactionary rulers to propagate pernicious Confucian doctrines and other ideas of the exploiting class. After Liberation certain reforms were made both in form and content, but under the control of the counter-revolutionary revisionist line before the Cultural Revolution these local operas were still dominated by feudal characters — emperors and high officials, literati, gentlemen and ladies. A thoroughgoing revolution was needed to enable them to reflect the life and struggles of our socialist period and depict our worker-peasant-soldier heroes.

During the last ten years, the proletarian revolution in literature and art starting with the revolution in Peking opera has given powerful impetus to the revolution in local operas. Opera companies in various provinces, municipalities, autonomous regions and counties have adapted the model Peking operas and staged them as local operas. This festival showed the new headway made in this field during the current movement to repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius.

While adapting the model Peking operas, many local opera artistes have also repudiated the reactionary content of their old repertoire



Li Ping-shu of the Peking Opera Troupe of Shanghai who plays the Party secretary in the Peking opera *Song of the Dragon River* demonstrates to members of the Liaoning *Pingchu* Opera Company

and made a serious study of the experience gained in the production of the revolutionary model Peking operas. In line with Chairman Mao's instructions to make the past serve the present, make foreign things serve China and evolve the new from the old, they have introduced many innovations, notably in their singing and musical accompaniment. Discarding the dross and keeping what is good, they have composed new tunes and music which reflect the revolutionary spirit of our age while retaining the special features of local opera. The

changes brought about in this way are profound. So the transplantation of model Peking operas has helped to revolutionize local operas and ensure their sound and healthy development.

Huaku opera popular in Hunan has a history of nearly two hundred years. Its modes of expression were limited, however. The melodies were restricted to local folk tunes and there were only three characters: a young man, a young lady and a clown. The contents were usually domestic affairs. When the Hunan opera artistes adapted the model Peking opera *Shachiapang*, they made a careful study of it and spared no pains to depict proletarian heroes and convey the true feeling and spirit of our age. To do this they had to abandon the sentimental singing style and monotonous melodies of the old *huaku* operas and devise whole sets of new tunes for the chief heroic character Kuo Chien-kuang, presenting him as a resourceful intrepid company political instructor of the New Fourth Army, a man devoted to the Party and Chairman Mao, filled with revolutionary optimism and armed with revolutionary ideals. In this process of adaptation the *huaku* opera has been transformed.

Pingchu opera is popular in north and northeastern China. Its traditional tunes are simple and rather insipid. When the *Pingchu* Opera Company of Shenyang in Liaoning Province put on their own version of *Song of the Dragon River*, they created new arias for the chief heroine Chiang Shui-ying, adding variety and expressiveness to the singing.

The *chuangchu* opera of the Chuangs in Kwangsi used to lack polish and musical variety. While adapting *Fighting on the Plain*, the Kwangsi *Chuangchu* Opera Company kept the distinctive features of their traditional art but supplemented them with local folk tunes and melodies chosen with discrimination from other schools. This has widened the expressive range of the music. Some of the acrobatics of Peking opera have also been introduced, heightening the splendour of the heroic characters.

Yuechu opera was formerly performed entirely by women, so that the male characters sang with women's voices. This was one of the first things to be changed. When the *yuechu* artistes of Shanghai transplanted the Peking opera *Song of the Dragon River*, they followed

the example of the model operas in breaking with old conventions and composed vigorous tunes for male characters, now played by men. The best traditional *yuechu* melodies have also been improved and given greater strength and dignity.

Other local operas in this festival, by learning from the model Peking operas, have also introduced innovations in musical accompaniment, singing and dialogue.

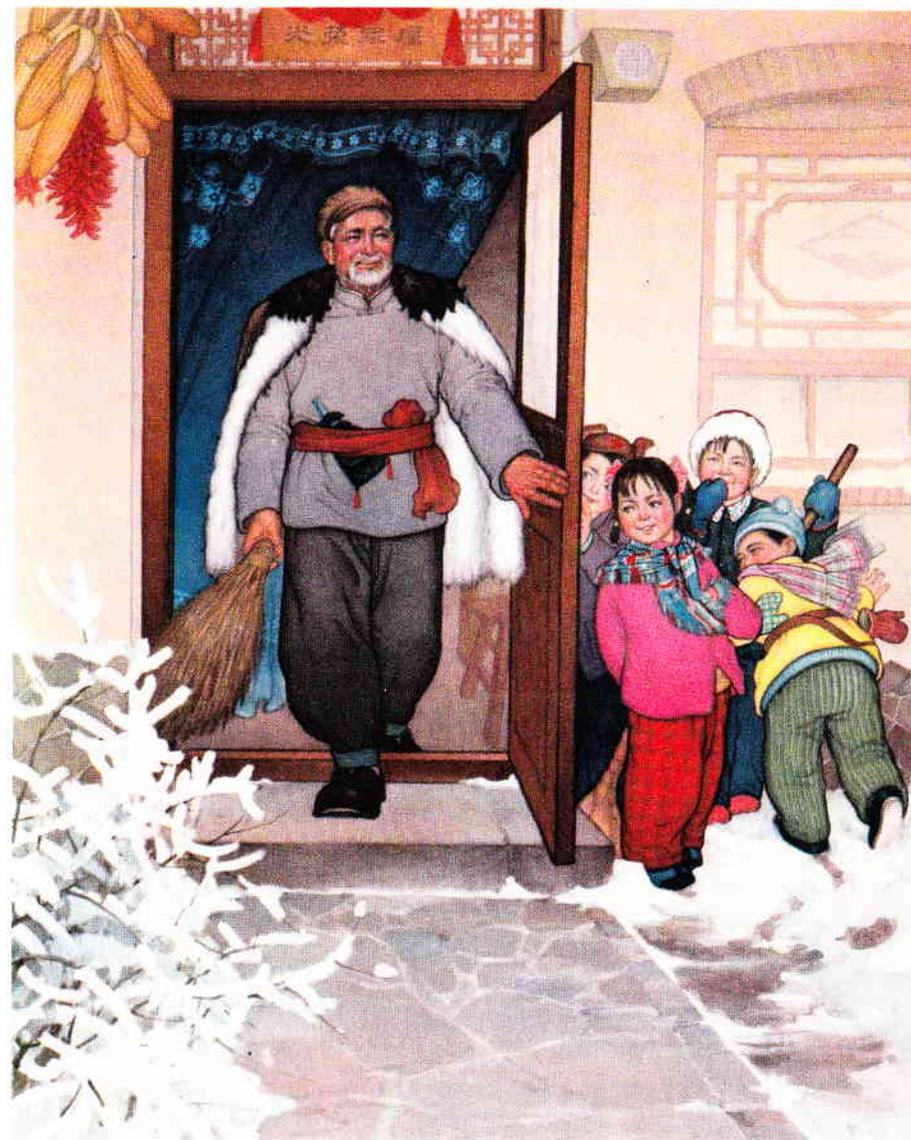
Learning from and adapting the model Peking operas has brought new life to local operas. This struggle has also steeled and developed the artistes in local operas. During the last few years, in order to transplant the model Peking operas successfully, local opera companies have carefully studied Chairman Mao's works, repudiated the revisionist line and gone among the masses to learn from workers, peasants

Members of the Hunan *Huaku* Opera Company rehearse a passage from their adaptation of the Peking opera *Shachiapang*



and soldiers. This has raised their political consciousness and strengthened their determination to carry out Chairman Mao's proletarian line. By performing in revolutionary operas and striving to become revolutionaries themselves, they are remoulding their ideology and there is greater unity between the veteran artistes and the young ones. To enable more people to see revolutionary model operas, they often perform in factories, communes and army units where the workers, peasants and soldiers acclaim them as artistes taught by Chairman Mao.

During this festival, artistes and scenario writers of the China Peking Opera Troupe, the Peking Opera Troupe of Peking and the Peking Opera Troupe of Shanghai, who were the first to produce revolutionary model operas, gave much friendly help to the local opera companies who were transplanting these works. Together they analysed scripts and characters; the Peking opera troupes gave demonstrations for the local opera artistes, helped them rehearse and watched their performances. In this way they made a new contribution towards popularizing the model operas and raising the artistic level of the local opera artistes.



Who Swept the Snow for Me? (traditional Chinese painting) by Liu Hsiao-li

How the Piano Concerto “Yellow River” Was Composed

Last winter I went with some of my colleagues in the Central Philharmonic Orchestra to work in a commune not far from Peking. There we gave four performances of the piano concerto *Yellow River* to over seventy thousand workers, peasants and soldiers in the neighbourhood. The enthusiastic reception we received is a stirring memory.

This piano concerto written during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was based on the *Yellow River Cantata* composed by the late revolutionary musician Hsien Hsing-hai in 1939 during the War of Resistance Against Japan. Produced in Yenan, cradle of the Chinese revolution, the cantata comprises eight parts: “Song of the Yellow River Boatmen” (chorus); “Ode to the Yellow River” (male solo); “The Yellow River Pours Down from Heaven” (recitation); “Yellow River Folk-song” (female duet); “A Dialogue by the River Shore” (singing dialogue); “The Sorrow of the Yellow River” (soprano solo); “Defend the Yellow River” (chorus); and “Roar,

Yellow River!" (chorus). Taking as its theme the heroic struggle of the people in the Yellow River Valley, this work sings the praise of our great motherland and our industrious and courageous people. The whole cantata, powerful, vigorous and concise, has clear Chinese characteristics. By adapting it into a piano concerto we have brought it closer to the spirit of our present age. Its historical background is still the War of Resistance, but the roaring torrents of the Yellow River surging swiftly and irresistibly on and on are used here to symbolize the whole Chinese nation, our heroic people's irrepressible fighting spirit and the mighty victories achieved by carrying out Chairman Mao's teachings on people's war. This concerto's appearance marked a revolution in piano music during the Cultural Revolution.

The piano is a western instrument. After its introduction into China it was monopolized by bourgeois musicians who played works on such abstract themes as life and death, love and hate. It was thus an alien instrument to the common people of China. Today, however, our workers, peasants and soldiers have taken to the piano and this concerto is playing a militant part in uniting and educating the people and for attacking the enemy. This profound change is the outcome of a prolonged and complex struggle.

After Liberation in 1949 the followers of the renegade Liu Shao-chi and the counter-revolutionary revisionist Chou Yang carried out a revisionist line in literature and art. They claimed that western piano music was "the pearl on the crown of music", hailing the classical piano works of western bourgeois composers as masterpieces which could never be surpassed. According to them, to serve our workers, peasants and soldiers all we needed to do was to take over this inheritance in its entirety and try to approach its height. When the Chinese masses showed no interest in bourgeois music, they accused them of lacking discrimination. Later on, after it was repeatedly pointed out that pianists too should follow Chairman Mao's instructions and integrate with the workers, peasants and soldiers in order to create works welcomed by them, these revisionists went to the other extreme. They proposed abandoning piano music altogether, on the grounds that the piano could not be "carted round to factories,

villages and army camps". In brief, they tried in every way to obstruct the revolution in piano music and to take the revisionist path of wholesale acceptance of western traditions, attempting to hold the position occupied for so long by the bourgeoisie to facilitate a capitalist restoration.

Ten years ago, under the pernicious influence of the revisionist line then dominant, I devoted myself heart and soul to studying and playing piano works by western bourgeois composers in the belief that mastering their technique was the way to serve the workers, peasants and soldiers. The later proposal to scrap piano music thoroughly dismayed me, for I saw no way to make it serve the workers, peasants and soldiers. But the splendid victory of the revolution in Peking opera in 1964 put fresh heart into me. I thought: If they can revolutionize Peking opera and make proletarian heroes take the place of feudal characters on the stage, why can't we do the same with piano music? Why should the piano created by the labouring people be monopolized by the bourgeoisie to serve the needs of their class? Why can't we reclaim it to serve the working people?

It so happened that year that we went to the countryside to take part in the socialist education movement, and I took my piano along. During the day we worked in the fields with the peasants; in the evening I played them *yankuo* folk tunes and songs from *The White-Haired Girl* which I had adapted for the piano. And the eagerness with which the peasants listened was a revelation to me. I realized that the future of the piano depended on whether or not we could compose works which expressed our people's feelings and which they loved to hear. So my colleagues and I wrote the piano concerto *New Song for the Countryside* reflecting some new features of our socialist villages, and the peasants approved it.

Then came the Cultural Revolution which educated and steeled me, strengthening my determination to revolutionize piano music. In order to hear the masses' views on the subject several of us in the Central Philharmonic Orchestra organized a small concert team. We took our piano to Tien An Men Square in Peking and to factories, villages and army units, where we played songs from *The White-Haired Girl* and other piano compositions such as *The Days After*

Liberation. These were quite well received by the workers, peasants and soldiers. When we performed in Tien An Men Square some workers suggested that we should play a piano accompaniment to arias from modern revolutionary Peking operas. Then, torn between excitement and apprehension, I wrote a piano accompaniment for a solo in the opera *Shachiapang*. When I played this in Tien An Men Square, some of the audience commented: "In the past you played nothing but western bourgeois music which we didn't like; now you're using the piano to accompany our new revolutionary Peking operas. We like this music — it's fresh and spirited." Many of them crowded round after the performance to congratulate and thank us, and helped us to lift the piano back on to the truck. Some even asked where we would be performing next as they wanted to hear us again.

With this encouragement from the people and helped by the concern and leadership of the Party, I co-operated with Hao Liang and Liu Chang-yu of the China Peking Opera Troupe who played the parts of the hero Li Yu-ho and his daughter Tieh-mei in *The Red Lantern*, to write a piano accompaniment for the important arias of this opera. Naturally there were some initial difficulties. For instance, piano music has fixed scales, and I found it difficult at first to transpose the accompaniment played with strings in Peking opera. I had to pay many visits to the Peking opera troupe to study their arias and orchestral accompaniment before finally overcoming that difficulty. On the basis of the revolution in Peking opera and with a view to carrying out the basic task of socialist literature and art — the creation of proletarian heroic characters — I adopted the techniques of Peking opera musical accompaniment which support, supplement and stress the singing parts, co-ordinating my piano accompaniment with the distinctive style of Peking opera. By creating this new form combining the piano and Peking opera, I was able to project more forcefully the noble image of the proletarian hero Li Yu-ho.

In 1969, under the personal guidance of Comrade Chiang Ching, some members of our orchestra formed a team to compose the piano concerto *Yellow River*. The political content we aimed at expressing was Chairman Mao's concept of people's war. To reflect this we

broke with the old western conventions that a concerto must consist of highly formalistic movements and decided to write four organically linked sections: first, "Song of the Yellow River Boatmen" depicting the boatmen's fight against raging torrents to show the Chinese nation's fearless determination to forge ahead; second, "Ode to the Yellow River" recalling and eulogizing the long history of struggle of the Chinese nation; third, "The Wrath of the Yellow River" denouncing the heinous crimes of the Japanese invaders and showing how indignation is transformed into a mighty force to resist aggression; fourth, "Defend the Yellow River", the core of the whole theme. Here we stress Chairman Mao's glorious concept of people's war and reflect the iron determination of our army and people, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, to fight on to the end until all aggressors are driven from our land.

While at work on this concerto, my comrades and I went to live in an old revolutionary base on the bank of the Yellow River. By day we helped the local boatmen row or tow boats, the better to grasp the hard fight they had to put up against rapids and swift currents. At night, lodging in loess caves we listened to stories about the War of Resistance told by veteran Red Armymen, ex-guerrillas and old boatmen. We were all deeply impressed by the moral stature of these former fighters, and gathered rich raw material for our music. Whenever I play this piece, visions of those heroes flood my mind like the rushing Yellow River, giving me ever fresh inspiration and strength.

We made full use of the richly expressive concerto form with the piano accompanied by other instruments. Guided by Chairman Mao's directives that we should make the past serve the present, make things foreign serve China, and evolve the new from the old, in the boatmen's song we adapted the western cadenza technique to depict the tumultuous river and the boatmen's victory over the rapids. At the start of "The Wrath of the Yellow River" we played the northern Shensi folk tune *hsin-tien-yu* on a Chinese bamboo flute to build up the atmosphere of the resistance base. We also made use of traditional techniques of such Chinese instruments as the *cheng* and the *yangchin* to enliven the melodies and bring out the youthful

exuberance of the liberated area. The fingering technique of Chinese strings helped us to convey the people's furious indignation and sorrow under enemy domination, to voice their accusation. Again, in "Defend the Yellow River" we interwove certain fine passages from traditional *pipa* tunes with our piano and orchestral music to convey the growing strength of people's war with soldiers and civilians taking the field together to charge the enemy. Finally, at the suggestion of a soldier, we added the melodies of *The East Is Red* and *The Internationale* to evoke the splendid image of China's working class and broad masses fighting for the liberation of all mankind on the side of all oppressed nations and peoples of the world.

The process of writing this concerto convinced us that music can never be purely abstract and fanciful or divorced from reality, as some bourgeois musicians have claimed. All music must serve certain classes, and piano music is no exception to this rule. In class society, no art exists in isolation without a class context. Although the modern revisionists try to deny the class content of works of art by labelling them "humanist" or "popular in character" or using such empty terms as "optimistic" and "healthy" to describe music, this is metaphysical nonsense. At the same time we realize the need for revolutionary art workers to integrate with the workers, peasants and soldiers, constantly draw fresh nourishment from them and serve them whole-heartedly. If the piano concerto *Yellow River* has proved a success with the masses, this is due to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in art, Comrade Chiang Ching's painstaking guidance and the concentrated wisdom of the masses. For my part, I am resolved to make a still better study of the works of Marx, Lenin and Chairman Mao and to dedicate my whole life to the revolution in piano music.

Surveying (woodcut) by Liao Yu-kai
and Wang Mei-fang



CHRONICLE

Dramatic Festival Victoriously Concluded in Peking

The dramatic festival of new stage productions from Shanghai, Kwangsi, Hunan and Liaoning sponsored by the Cultural Group under the State Council opened in Peking at the beginning of August and was victoriously concluded on September 11.

This grand festival of new stage productions came after the theatrical festival of the north China region* and showed that fresh successes have been scored in our revolution in literature and art under the impetus of the mass movement repudiating Lin Piao and Confucius. It marks another great victory for Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line on literature and art.

During the festival each region presented at least one model Peking opera adapted into local opera forms. This was the first time that nine different local opera companies, including national minority troupes, staged adaptations of Peking opera for worker-peasant-soldier audiences in the capital. This attests to the growing popularity of the model Peking operas and shows the notable results local operas have achieved by learning from them. These new productions, while keeping close to the original Peking operas, have retained their own special features, their music and singing, successfully combining local colour with the spirit of our age.**

*For an account of this see *Chinese Literature* No. 5 this year.

**See the article "New Life for Local Operas" on p. 90 in this issue.

Some fairly good new productions appeared in this festival. The new Peking operas *The Rocky Bay*, *Investigation of a Chair* and *Struggle on the Stormy Sea* presented by the Peking Opera Troupe of Shanghai were warmly acclaimed. The new plays *Battle in the Shipyard* by the Modern Drama Company of Shanghai, *Maple Bay* by the Hunan Modern Drama Company, and *The Main Lesson* by the Kwangsi Modern Drama Company also had a very favourable reception. Local operas reflecting present-day life, the new Peking opera *Spring in the Yao Mountains* produced by the Kwangsi Peking Opera Troupe and *Seething Mountains* a play put on by the Liaoning Modern Drama Troupe, reached a fairly high standard too. There were good items as well in the way of other stage items, including the chorus *Battle of the Hsisha Archipelago* from Liaoning and the dance *The Lumbermen's Song* from Kwangsi. Based on a serious study of the experience of the model Peking operas and guided by the Party's basic line, these works reflected class struggles and struggles between two lines in different periods of Chinese history. Some of them gave warm praise to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and successfully projected heroic characters of our own time. Hence the festival was well received by our worker-peasant-soldier audience.

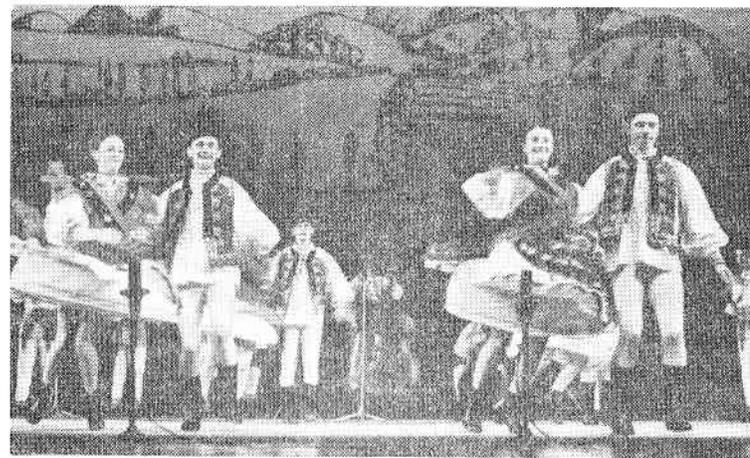
This festival embodied the Party's directive to "let a hundred flowers blossom; weed through the old to bring forth the new". Many items reflected our socialist revolution and socialist construction on various fronts, while others dealt with our revolutionary past. They covered a great variety of forms: Peking opera, modern drama, local operas, songs, dances and other stage items, full-length shows as well as short items. The prevailing impression was one of the rich variety of styles of the stage art of different nationalities and regions.

This festival reflected not only the new achievements of our revolution in literature and art but also the new spirit of our artistes educated by the Cultural Revolution and the present movement to repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius. A big contingent of writers and artistes is steadily gaining in strength, and this includes a large number of vigorous young artistes.

Maramures Folk Song and Dance Ensemble in China

The Maramures Folk Song and Dance Ensemble from the north-western part of Romania came to China in the later part of August and gave performances in Peking. The Romanian artists presented splendid programmes of songs, dances and instrumental music, all with vivid and distinctive national features. These items, very true to life, portray the Romanian people's love for their motherland and their delight in their work. The original *Miners' Dance*, for example, shows how enthusiastically the miners go about their work in the mine. The *Dance of Cribalma Maidens* depicts carpet weavers, its rapid graceful movements miming their hard work and dexterity in handling the flying shuttles. Also impressive are the female solo *My Brother Is an Advanced Miner* and the male solo *My Father Sends Me to the Factory*, the former expressing the people's respect for outstanding workers and the latter conveying the eagerness of youngsters to work in industry. The instrumental music *Sirba Concert* sings the praise of a fine harvest of fruit.

The Romanian artists also performed the Chinese songs *I Love Our Great Motherland* and *Great Peking*, as well as *Song to the Friendly Chinese People* which they had composed specially for this visit. Their per-



performances fully demonstrated the sincere feeling of the Romanian people for the Chinese people.

Exhibition of Art Works by Workers in Shanghai

The Shanghai Worker's Fine Arts Exhibition, with more than 270 exhibits including traditional Chinese paintings, woodcuts, oils, serial pictures, posters, gouache, sculptures and scissor-cuts, opened on July 1 and has been warmly acclaimed by visitors.

Since the Cultural Revolution many spare-time artists among the Shanghai workers have made a careful study of the principles according to which the revolutionary operas were produced and the experience of the peasant artists of Huhsien County in the province of Shensi. Guided by this, they have actively engaged in creative art work in their spare time. The present exhibition is a demonstration of their achievements.

Portraying grand revolutionary events and the images of workers, peasants and soldiers, the exhibits are militant, breathing the spirit of our age. Most of them are the work of new artists who grew up in the Cultural Revolution.

Revolutionary Model Operas Performed in the Mountains

The Spare-time Art Propaganda Team of Miyun County near Peking has been very active in performing revolutionary model operas for the poor and lower-middle peasants in the mountain areas. In the past few years they have given more than 500 performances and have been called a "Shock Team" in popularizing the revolutionary model theatrical works.

This spare-time propaganda team was formed during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution when such revolutionary model operas as *The Red Lantern*, *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* and *Shachiapang* were produced one after the other. To enable the local poor and lower-middle peasants to enjoy these works as early as possible, the team first rehearsed scenes and arias from *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* which they performed in the mountains. The warm welcome

they received encouraged them to rehearse the whole operas *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* and *Song of the Dragon River* and they have performed these to eager audiences throughout the county.

During the past four years the team has also performed selections from *Shachiapang*, *Raid on the White Tiger Regiment* and *Azalea Mountain* and adapted parts of *The Red Lantern* and *On the Docks* to perform as local opera. In addition, they have produced many short items about outstanding people and stirring events in their county.

Coloured Stoneware Figures of Anti-Confucian Heroes

During the present movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, coloured stoneware figures have been produced by the workers and technicians of Shihwan Pottery in Foshan, Kwangtung Province, to praise the opponents of Confucius in different periods of history. They include *Chih Refutes Confucius*, Chih being the leader of a slave uprising towards the end of the Spring-and-Autumn Period (770-475 B.C.); *Revolt*, a depiction of the peasant insurgents led by Chen Sheng and Wu Kuang at the end of the Chin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.); and *Hung Hsiu-chuan Denounces Confucius*, a scene from the Taiping peasant revolutionary war led by Hung Hsiu-chuan in the second half of the nineteenth century. This stoneware statuary, so compact, colourful and vivid in theme, is popular with the broad masses of workers, peasants and soldiers.

More Cultural Relics Unearthed

Recently China's archaeologists and antiquarians, having previously excavated an old tomb of the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 8) at Mawangtui on the outskirts of Changsha, Hunan Province, have made an investigation of the nearby tombs Nos. 2 and 3 and from them recovered a large number of valuable relics. Especially noteworthy among the new finds from Tomb 3 are ancient books copied in Chinese ink on silk in *hsiao chuan* (lesser seal style) and *li shu* (clerical style) calligraphy. Over ten books were found, totalling more than 120,000 characters. Some of these works had been lost for 1,000 to 2,000

years. Among the books are *Lao Tzu*, a collection of important Taoist writings; *Records of the Warring States*, a collection of speeches by diplomats, statesmen and others arranged according to states and covering the period 475-221 B.C.; the *Book of Changes*, a treatise on divination in ancient times; and other works from before the Chin (221-207 B.C.) and Western Han Dynasties. Some of the books contain fairly clear ideas of the Legalist school which are of value in studying the development of this school from the Warring States Period to the Western Han Dynasty.

A map of the upper reaches of the Hsiangchiang and Lichiang Rivers and another of the disposition of troops in the Changsha area were discovered. These are the earliest maps yet found in China.

Also unearthed were more than 600 inscribed bamboo slips, four paintings in colour on silk, beautifully made lacquerware, weapons and silk fabrics.



Preparing for Customers (woodcut)

by Ko Sha



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