

CHINESE LITERATURE



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LU HSUN'S ESSAYS

Propriety

Reading the papers is useful, although sometimes boring. For instance, China is the country with the greatest number of commemorations of national disgrace;* and on such days some accounts are published as a matter of course, along with a few articles. However, this business has gone on so long and become so repetitious that such items tend to be stereotyped and the same one can be used on different occasions: an account used last year may be used again next year, if nothing new has happened in the meantime. Even if it has, the old account can probably still be used, because one can

This essay was first published in 1933. The original meaning of propriety, *li*, was the use of rules of propriety to preserve the hierarchy of the slave-owning nobility. Later its connotation broadened to include social etiquette and moral precepts aimed at safeguarding the feudal order. The rites observed at commemorations are also called *li*.

*The humiliations and defeats inflicted on China by foreign powers during the preceding century were often commemorated as days of national disgrace.

only repeat the same few phrases anyway. So, unless suffering from a poor memory, one is liable to be bored and unable to find any new thought-provoking ideas here.

Nevertheless, I still read these articles. Today I happened to read one about a commemoration held in Peking for Teng Wen,* a hero of the anti-Japanese resistance. First the account, then speeches, and finally: "The rites at an end, music was played and the gathering dispersed."

From this I hit on the new idea: All commemorations are nothing but "rites".

China has always been "a land of propriety and righteousness". Three big works exist on the rites** which have even been translated in other lands; and I really have the greatest admiration for the translator of *The Book of Etiquette*. We need not speak now of the service to a sovereign;*** as for serving parents, of course that calls for filial piety, but the measures to be taken after their death are already included in the sacrificial rites with their separate rules, such as the sacrifices offered on the days of the birth or death of parents and ancestors. When new commemorations are added, the older commemorations pale a little; for "new ghosts are larger than old ones"****. The same applies to commemorations — the older ones are celebrated with less gusto while for the new ones to be passed

*An army officer in north China who resisted Japanese aggression but was assassinated at his post in 1933.

**The three Confucian canons: *Chou Li* (*The Chou Rites*), *Yi Li* (*The Book of Etiquette*) and *Li Chi* (*The Book of Rites*). *Chou Li* contains the rules governing the official ranks and state organization of the Chou Dynasty (11th century to 771 B.C.). *Yi Li* is a record of rites and etiquette for marriages, funerals, sacrifices and social relations in the Chou Dynasty. *Li Chi* is a collection of writings on propriety by Confucian scholars before the Chin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.). An English translation of *Yi Li* by John Steele was published in London in 1917.

***In 1911 China became a Republic and thereafter had no more sovereigns.

****This saying comes from *Tso Chuan*, a work containing anecdotes of events mentioned in the *Spring-and-Autumn Annals* of the state of Lu. It was believed that the ghosts of the newly dead were bigger than those of people who had died long ago; hence sacrifices to them should come first.

over in silence is something that will have to come in the future, just as in the case of sacrifices to one's parents after death. It has been said that in China the family is the basis for the whole country, and this is truly an acute observation.

China is also a land of "propriety and compliance". Having propriety, we are bound to be compliant; while the greater our compliance, the more intricate our rules of propriety. Still, this is something we had better pass over.

In ancient times, the country was ruled according to the Way of the Yellow Emperor and Lao Tzu,* or by means of filial piety.** Now, I suppose, we have reached the age for ruling by means of rites.*** Once this is clear, we can see that it is wrong to blame the people for taking so little interest in these commemorations; for as *The Book of Rites* says: "The rites do not extend to the common people."**** It is also wrong to begrudge the loss of anything material, for didn't Confucius say: "Tzu Kung, you may prize the sheep, but I prize propriety!"*****

*The mythical Yellow Emperor and the philosopher Lao Tzu were believed to be the founders of Taoism which advocated laissez-faire government.

**Ruling by means of filial piety meant using Confucian virtues to govern the country.

***Ruling by means of rites meant using the Confucian doctrines which preserved the existing feudal order and the patriarchal system. In the spring of 1933 the Kuomintang reactionaries launched the so-called New Life Movement advocating the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and the Confucian virtues of propriety, justice, scrupulous conduct and sense of shame. They hoped in this way to suppress the revolution and further enslave the minds of the people who were resisting Japanese aggression.

****In the ancient slave society which Confucius tried to preserve, the rules of propriety were for the nobles only, while punishments were confined to the common people.

*****This saying comes from *The Analects*. Confucius' disciple Tzu Kung saw that the ruler of the state of Lu had given up going in person to make sacrifices in the ancestral temple at the start of each month and only had one sheep sacrificed there. He therefore considered that even the sacrifice of this sheep could be dispensed with. Confucius, however, believed that some ritual should be preserved.

“Do not look at, listen to, speak of or touch anything which does not accord with propriety.”* Just wait quietly for others to “perish of themselves” — the sure end of all evil-doers,** for this is in accord with propriety.

September 20, 1933

Forgetting Meat and Forgetting Water

This year's worship of Confucius is the second great celebration that has been held since the establishment of the Republic;* and everything possible was done to make a fine display. Though the Chinese territory in Shanghai adjoins the foreign (barbarian) settlements, its residents too heard the Shao music which in ancient times made Confucius “forget the taste of meat for three months”. Thus the *Shen Pao* of August 30 tells us:

On the twenty-seventh, different circles in Shanghai commemorated the birth of Confucius at the Confucian Temple. This ceremony was attended by more than a thousand representatives of the Kuomintang Party, government organizations and various

This essay was first published in 1934, when the sentences in italics were deleted by the Kuomintang censors.

*The first great celebration was held in 1914, when Yuan Shih-kai, president of the northern warlord government, ordered a sacrifice to Confucius to be made in ancient costumes.

*A saying of Confucius in *The Analects*.

***Tso Chuan* records that Duke Chuang of Cheng declared: “Evil-doers must perish of themselves.”

walks of life. The Tatung Music Society performed two movements of the ancient Shao music. In order to increase the volume of the music, all Chinese instruments both ancient and modern were used, totalling forty in all. The score was the traditional one, unchanged. The tempo, dignified and serene, quite out of the common, instilled into its hearers a sense of awe as if they were listening to the songs of the peaceful reign of the three early dynasties;* and this is evidence of our nation's ardent love of peace.

The use of all Chinese instruments, both ancient and modern, must have made this very different from the Shao music played in the Chou Dynasty. But this was necessary "to increase the volume". Besides, this is quite consistent with modern Confucian worship. "Confucius was a sage who followed the fashion of the times."** In other words, "he was a modern." To make him forget the taste of such present-day delicacies as shark's fin and bird's nest, forty musical instruments would probably be needed. Moreover in his day, though China had foreign invaders, there were as yet no foreign settlements.

But this shows that things are rather different now. Although the "volume" was "increased", the music could not be heard in the countryside. On the same day the *Chunghua Daily* reported an item of news which somewhat impaired the dignity of these "songs of the peaceful reign" and "the evidence of our nation's ardent love of peace". Unfortunately this incident also occurred on the twenty-seventh.

From our correspondent in Ningpo: All this summer Yuyao has been suffering from drought, the rivers have dried up and the local people have been sinking wells by the rivers to get water, often fighting for first place and coming into conflict.

*The Hsia, Shang and Chou Dynasties during the period of slave society in China. The "Ya" and "Sung" sections of the *Book of Songs* became known as songs of the "peaceful reign".

**This was said by Mencius in praise of Confucius.

On the morning of the twenty-seventh, at Houfangwu in Langhsia Township forty *li* from the city of Yuyao, Yang Hou-kun and Yao Shih-lien quarrelled over a well and came to blows. Yao struck Yang over the head with his pipe and, having felled him to the ground, proceeded to batter him with a club and stone till he killed him. By the time those near by heard the uproar and came to the rescue, Yang was already dead. Yao, realizing that he had committed a crime and could not escape the penalty, ran away....

Shao music belongs to one world, thirst to another. Meat-eaters who forget the taste of meat belong to one world, thirst and fights for water to another. Of course, we have here the great difference between gentlemen and the lower classes; but since "gentlemen need mean men to feed them", the latter must not be allowed to kill each other or to die of thirst.*

I hear that there are places in Arabia where water is so precious that blood must be spilt in exchange for it. Our nation with its "ardent love of peace" should not go to such extremes. *But this incident in Yuyao is rather shocking. So in addition to the Shao music which makes meat-eaters forget the taste of meat, we need another type of "Shao music" to make thirsty men no longer thirst for water.*

August 29, 1934**

*The *Book of Mencius* says: "If there are no princely men, there will be no one to govern the mean men; if there are no mean men, there will be no one to feed the princely men." This is the reactionary Confucian theory that the labouring masses are born to toil for the exploiting class and the latter are born to control the labouring masses.

**This essay was probably written in the evening of August 30. Lu Hsun appears to have slipped up on the date here.

On Lu Hsun's Essay "Propriety"

Li, meaning rites or propriety, was one of the reactionary moral concepts advocated all his life by Confucius in his attempt to preserve the declining slave system. His political programme for reviving the old order was summed up in the words: "exercise self-restraint and return to the rites". During the two thousand years and more of feudal society in China, this maxim was utilized by every reactionary ruling class to keep the exploiters in power and to fetter the masses. In modern times Chiang Kai-shek, who seized power by slaughtering Chinese Communists and other revolutionaries, was another faithful follower of Confucius. In 1928, his hands still dripping with the blood of those he had murdered, he hurried to sacrifice to Confucius in the Confucian Temple at Chufu, Shantung, the old home of Confucius. He lauded Confucius as "the teacher of humanity and justice for all time" and "the model for proper human relationships for all generations", thus making it clear that he was a disciple of the Confucian school. In the early thirties the Chiang Kai-shek clique, while launching repeated military campaigns to

"encircle and annihilate" the revolutionary base under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, at the same time knuckled under to foreign aggression and pursued a policy of "non-resistance" towards the Japanese militarists who were encroaching on Chinese territory, abandoning the north-eastern provinces and part of north China to them. Then, to cover up their treacherous crimes and divert the people's attention in order to consolidate their fascist rule, Chiang Kai-shek's clique loudly advocated the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. They claimed that the Confucian concepts of "humanity and justice", "the Kingly Way", "benevolent government", "the Doctrine of the Mean" and the "Four Cardinal Principles and Eight Chief Virtues" were moral precepts to "enlighten the minds of the people". And Chiang Kai-shek himself staged the "New Life Movement" based on these Confucian maxims in the vain hope of using them to cover up his crimes and his capitulation to the enemy.

Lu Hsun, the most courageous standard-bearer of the new culture, was one of the vanguard opposing this revival of Confucianism. For by this time he had mastered Marxism. Firmly taking the stand of the proletariat and the toiling masses, he used dialectical materialism, historical materialism and the method of class analysis to raise the criticism of the Confucian Shop to a higher level. During this period he wrote a number of essays, brilliant with Marxist-Leninist ideas, to repudiate Confucianism, one of the best of these being *Propriety*.

This profound and hard-hitting essay of less than seven hundred characters is a splendid piece of polemics. It ruthlessly exposes the reactionary nature of Chiang Kai-shek's attempt to "rule by means of rites" and the hypocrisy of the concept "propriety" which forms the core of the Confucian doctrine.

Written two days after the Kuomintang diehards had commemorated the occupation of the north-eastern provinces by the Japanese on September 18, 1931, the essay starts with the subject of "national disgrace". Lu Hsun caustically describes China under the Kuomintang regime as the "country with the greatest number of commemorations of national disgrace", where "on such days some accounts are published as a matter of course". He points out that "this business has gone on so long and become so repetitious that such items tend

to be stereotyped", and the same one can be used year after year. Thus people are bored and "unable to find any new thought-provoking ideas". The only conclusion possible is that "all commemorations are nothing but 'rites' ". "First the account, then speeches, and finally: "The rites at an end, music was played and the gathering dispersed". It was always the same old empty stereotyped show. Though the Kuomintang reactionaries conducted these anniversaries with great gusto, the more they "commemorated", the more "national disgraces" there were. For these commemorations had no effect whatsoever on the Japanese imperialists who were set on subjugating the whole of China.

Thus Lu Hsun continues: "China is also a land of 'propriety and compliance'. Having propriety, we are bound to be compliant; while the greater our compliance, the more intricate our rules of propriety." By "compliance", Lu Hsun means the Kuomintang policy of non-resistance and their willingness to cede large tracts of territory to the Japanese imperialists. Since he cannot state this outright he says: "This is something we had better pass over." However, his meaning, though not explicit, was clear enough for everyone to grasp.

By analysing the true nature of these commemorations of national disgraces and describing China as a land of propriety and compliance, Lu Hsun cuttingly exposes the viciousness of the Kuomintang reactionaries who posed as devoted to the national interests while actually betraying their country. The last paragraph which refers back to the opening theme trenchantly refutes the Kuomintang's excuse for capitulating to the enemy.

"Do not look at, listen to, speak of or touch anything which does not accord with propriety." This maxim met the needs of Confucius' retrogressive programme "self-restraint and return to the rites". In other words, all conduct must be within the bounds of what the slave-owners considered proper, and must never go beyond those bounds. The Chiang Kai-shek clique used this precept to restrict the actions of the masses and carry out their policy of capitulation. They quoted the saying from a classical canon that "evil-doers must perish of themselves", implying that the Chinese should sit tight and

wait quietly for the Japanese aggressors to meet their doom, and there was no need for resistance. This accorded with their rules of propriety. Any call for resistance, however, would run counter to these rules and would be improper, in fact it would be high treason. Thus the Chiang Kai-shek clique claimed that to resist Japanese aggression was a crime and that those who advocated resistance "should be killed without mercy". Here Lu Hsun thoroughly exposes Chiang Kai-shek's capitulationist line.

After debunking "propriety and compliance", Lu Hsun goes on to attack the Kuomintang reactionaries for "ruling by means of rites", laying emphasis on their internal policy. On the one hand, he says it is wrong to blame the masses for their lack of interest in commemorations of this kind; on the other, he voices a protest against the diehards' corruption, decadence and cruel exploitation of the people.

The Chinese Communist Party had already exposed the reactionaries' policy of national betrayal, and the masses also saw it fairly clearly, which was why they took little interest in bogus commemorative ceremonies. When the reactionaries then blamed them for their lack of enthusiasm, Lu Hsun retorts: You claim to rule by means of rites, but "the rites do not extend to the common people", so how can you blame them for their apathy? In fact, the masses had seen through those tricks to cover up capitulationist tactics, hence their lack of interest was only natural. Furthermore, behind this apparent apathy the people were seething with honest indignation. And in this essay Lu Hsun exposes the irreconcilable contradiction between the Chiang Kai-shek clique who surrendered to the aggressors and the masses who were for resisting Japan.

While reproaching the people for their lack of interest in these commemorations, the Kuomintang diehards called on them to tighten their belts and supply more material to the government, to satisfy their own insatiable greed. The day before this, the Shanghai newspapers had published a speech by the traitor Chiang Kai-shek reprimanding the people for complaining about the economic blockade of the revolutionary base, and urging them to "put up with temporary difficulties in order to plan a lasting peace". In other words,

the people were expected to accept all restrictions and exploitation cheerfully. Another leading member of the Kuomintang in his speech at the commemoration of September 18 blatantly urged the people to "sacrifice personal interests and devote all their strength and wealth to the state". These men wanted the people not to begrudge the loss of anything material but, even if starving, to give all they had to those man-eating monsters and traitors. Lu Hsun therefore relates how Confucius prized spiritual "propriety" above material sheep, to show up the hypocrisy of the reactionaries who ordered the people to observe the rules of propriety while they themselves were corrupt and avid for more wealth. Of course, the reactionaries' exhortation not to begrudge material things also served as a justification for their surrender of large tracts of territory to the enemy, and Lu Hsun aims a thrust at that as well.

While scathingly criticizing the Kuomintang's internal and foreign policy, this essay makes a thorough exposure of the true nature of Confucianism. By showing up the hypocrisy of the commemorations of national disgraces organized by the Kuomintang reactionaries, it also shows up the hypocrisy of Confucian "propriety". By exposing the Chiang clique's policy of non-resistance, it exposes the same feature of Confucianism. Paying homage to the dead, the belief that new ghosts are bigger than the old, prizing propriety more than sheep, making virtues of propriety and compliance... all these deceitful old Confucian tricks were used by the Kuomintang to oppress and exploit the people and surrender to the foreign aggressors. As for such Confucian precepts as "Do not look at, listen to, speak of or touch anything which does not accord with propriety" and "Evil-doers must perish of themselves", these, too, were used as fetters to enslave the people.

Though this essay was written forty years ago, the passage of time has not dimmed its splendour. In those days, the Kuomintang reactionaries used the rules of propriety as a moral support for their counter-revolutionary regime and to facilitate their surrender to the enemy. Forty years later, the renegade and traitor Lin Piao took over this line from Confucius and the Kuomintang reactionaries, advocating Confucian tenets and reiterating the need to "Exercise

self-restraint and return to the rites". The criminal aim of Lin Piao and his followers was to overthrow our dictatorship of the proletariat and restore capitalism, to establish a feudal, fascist rule under the dictatorship of big landlords and capitalists, and to sell out the country, making China a colony of the Soviet revisionists. Today as the mass movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius unfolds in depth, the study of this essay can help us to a better understanding of the ultra-Rightist character of Lin Piao's revisionist line.

This essay was written in the thirties during the darkest period of modern Chinese history. In order to pass the censors, Lu Hsun could not speak outright but had to write in veiled terms, fighting with sarcasm and innuendo. This essay about propriety is an attack on Confucianism which repudiates it with words from the Confucian classics, paying Confucius back in his own coin. Every blow here drew blood from the enemy, yet the essay succeeded in being passed by the Kuomintang censors, who allowed it to be published and serve its purpose. This illustrates Lu Hsun's brilliance as a satirist.

On Lu Hsun's Essay "Forgetting Meat and Forgetting Water"

Forgetting Meat and Forgetting Water is one of Lu Hsun's militant essays exposing and condemning the Kuomintang reactionaries' worship of Confucius.

This essay was written in August 1934. At that time the Kuomintang reactionaries headed by Chiang Kai-shek were following a policy of non-resistance and capitulation to Japanese aggression, while mobilizing large forces to carry out counter-revolutionary "encirclement and annihilation" campaigns on an unprecedented scale against the revolutionary base in Kiangsi which was under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. The natural calamities in China's vast countryside were intensified by the Kuomintang's cruel exploitation and oppression. In 1934 serious drought afflicted three hundred and sixty-nine counties in sixteen provinces, while two hundred and eighty-three counties in ten provinces suffered from flood. Drought and flood were aggravated by incessant local fighting, plagues of locusts, hurricanes and epidemics, as well as exorbi-

tant taxation and levies, so that the labouring masses of China were reduced to desperation.

To cover up their crimes, pose as "peace-lovers" and maintain their reactionary rule, the Kuomintang diehards resorted to Confucianism and made a great show of worshipping Confucius. They passed a statute enjoining the "worship of Confucius and sacrifice to the sage", repaired Confucian temples throughout the country, made the birthday of Confucius a state anniversary and promoted the reactionary "New Life Movement" based on Confucian precepts. On the birthday of Confucius, a commemoration was held in the Confucian Temple in Shanghai at which the ancient "Shao music" was played with some forty different instruments to "increase the volume". As Lu Hsun pointed out: "This year's worship of Confucius is the second great celebration that has been held since the establishment of the Republic; and everything possible was done to make a fine display." Taking the stand of the Chinese working class and the masses, Lu Hsun saw the sinister purpose behind the farce put on by the Kuomintang reactionaries, and wrote this and other essays to debunk Confucianism.

In this essay Lu Hsun caustically ridicules this ludicrous worship of Confucius, pointing out its reactionary character. This "Shao music" attributed to the time of the legendary sage king Shun was later used by the ancient slave-owning class. And Confucius took it up as a means of restoring the past, to save the moribund slave system from its doom. He extolled this ancient music as "most beneficial and most beautiful". *The Analects* records that when Confucius heard the Shao music in the state of Chi, for three months he forgot the taste of meat. He also told his disciples that to govern a country they should use the Shao music. It is clear that his fervent praise of this music was entirely based on his political need to oppose social reform and revert to the old order.

Similarly, more than two millennia later, when the Kuomintang reactionaries turned this antiquated music into a grand symphony played by forty instruments "both ancient and modern", this was based on their political need to oppose the revolution. Lu Hsun in his essay quotes from a reactionary newspaper article, "The tempo,

dignified and serene, quite out of the common, instilled into its hearers a sense of awe as if they were listening to the songs of the peaceful reign of the three early dynasties,” pointing out that all this fulsome praise was an attempt to present that infernal society as a realm of peace and its butchers, parasites and traitors as dignified gentlemen, in order to preserve their reactionary rule.

Then by way of contrast Lu Hsun cites a contemporary incident to further expose the vicious character of the Chiang Kai-shek regime which took cover behind the worship of Confucius. He quotes a typical newspaper account of the same day about a man killed in a fight for water, comparing this with the anecdote of how Confucius forgot the taste of meat, and declaring with indignation: “Shao music belongs to one world, thirst to another. Meat-eaters who forget the taste of meat belong to one world, thirst and fights for water to another.” These two completely different worlds reflect sharp class antagonism, forming a strong and vivid contrast. Thus the Kuomintang’s sham worship of Confucius, study of the Confucian canons and show of peace are debunked, while the harsh reality is revealed to us: on the one side, those who live in wanton luxury as if in paradise; on the other, those who fight for water and are killed, for whom life is a hell on earth. It was the Kuomintang diehards who created these two different worlds. During their reactionary rule they exploited the people so ruthlessly that they even levied land tax for thirty years in advance and broke the dykes to flood large areas. At a time when the people were ravaged by drought, unable to obtain a drop of water, they went on enjoying shark’s fin and other delicacies; and in 1934, the year in which Lu Hsun wrote this essay, they stepped up their consumption by one third. Lu Hsun comments trenchantly: “Of course, we have here the great difference between gentlemen and the lower classes; but since ‘gentlemen need mean men to feed them’, the latter must not be allowed to kill each other or to die of thirst.” This lays bare the reactionary nature of Confucian morality. Confucius and his like regarded the toiling masses as inferior beings

Their New Home (traditional Chinese painting)
by Ku Yuan, Feng Chao-min and Hsueh Shan



and themselves as "gentlemen". They claimed that "gentlemen" should rule over others while those below should be ruled, alleging that this was an inviolable law. Thus even when the people were dying of hunger and thirst, they should not rise in revolt but obediently submit to the rule of these "gentlemen". This is the true essence of Confucian "human-heartedness". Lu Hsun also points out that the Kuomintang reactionaries made such a show of venerating Confucius to cover up their despicable betrayal of the country to foreign aggressors. They played the Shao music in Shanghai close to the "foreign settlements", and this was the "evidence of our nation's ardent love of peace". With his trenchant pen Lu Hsun tears off the mask of these worshippers of Confucius and shows the hypocrisy and deceit of the Confucian doctrine.

After using parallel incidents to expose the real political motive of these Kuomintang reactionaries so assiduous in worshipping Confucius, Lu Hsun concludes: "So in addition to the Shao music which makes meat-eaters forget the taste of meat, we need another type of 'Shao music' to make thirsty men no longer thirst for water." This was another sharp attack on those diehards. At the time of publication, this last paragraph was deleted by the Kuomintang censors, showing that this short essay like a javelin or dagger had dealt a telling blow to the reactionaries.

Lu Hsun once explained the function of his essays as follows: "The task of the writer is to supply an immediate response or resistance to what is harmful. His writing should be sensitive as the nerves, able as the limbs to attack or to defend." This essay is a good example of this militancy of Lu Hsun's writings. Written on the thirtieth of August, it quotes two items of news occurring only a couple of days previously about two sharply different events which had happened on the same day. Though this seems fortuitous, it was no mere coincidence. It shows the inner relationship of things. By seizing upon these two incidents and writing this essay, Lu Hsun makes these events a sharp weapon to lay bare the inner nature of society. From this sharp contrast his readers derive much food for thought, and the concealed truth is at once disclosed.

LOU YAO-FU

Her Father's Daughter

It was still very cold but the workers packing the auditorium were flushed and hot as if a warm current had just passed through. The thin layer of ice on the window panes was melting in strange patterns.

A worker had just finished expressing the determination of his group. Five people immediately rushed on to the platform to grab the microphone.

"We in the forging shop are determined to fulfil the task assigned to us by the plant Party committee!" Concluding his speech, Ling Ta-pao, leader of Group One in the forging shop shouted into the microphone in his deep baritone, slapping his big calloused hand on his chest vigorously for emphasis.

Just turning fifty, he was a robust man of medium height, all muscles and no fat, as if he had been forged on an anvil. Under his thick bristly hair, his swarthy square face appeared solid and strong as though it too had been processed by quenching in a heat treatment shop.

The Cultural Revolution had promoted production immensely in their plant and output figures had soared as if on wings. Quality had also improved greatly. Remembering all this as he stood on the platform, Ling Ta-pao was so pleased that his heart sang. Now the Party committee had given them a new task. That meant a new battle before them and he was excited. We workers have guts, he thought. Stirred by the campaign to criticize Confucius and Lin Piao, we must push production even more and make it fly like a rocket. But can we do it? His train of thought was interrupted by a young worker who jostled him to one side and snatched the microphone from his hand. Ling fell back a pace. Raising his clenched fist over his head, he thundered without the microphone, "Whether we fulfil the task or not depends on this!"

It was Ling's habitual gesture. When his fist shot up, and his voice boomed out, he meant to say we'll let action speak for itself. The audience of a thousand workers broke into cheers and laughter as he strode off the platform.

After the meeting, Ling Ta-pao hurried to his shop over thick white snow.

"The key problem lies in Group Two," Ling muttered under his breath. Were it not for this he could have gone on much longer with his speech. He had been worrying about Group Two, a new group and mostly young workers headed by his daughter Ling Yun. They might let him down.

The tops of the plant buildings were covered with a silvery crown of snow. In the setting sun they glistened. Machines hummed merrily in the shop. The sound reminded Ling Ta-pao of his daughter Ling Yun who had just recently finished her apprenticeship.

After she graduated from middle school, Ling Yun had been sent to this heavy industry unit. Not bad, the old man had figured. The girl could learn to operate a grinder or a milling machine. But she had insisted on the forging shop. Since she was a girl, the shop chief assigned her to operate a steam hammer. But she wanted none of that. She pleaded, "Let me take on my dad's job — handling the tongs."

"Fancy that," her father said to her. "A little bamboo chip wants to become a steel rod, eh?"

"Who's a bamboo chip? Who's a steel rod?"

"A girl like you handling the tongs? Never heard of such a thing."

"Never? Today, women pilot planes, women are ship captains. Did you ever see such things in the past? Times have changed, dad!"

"But you must admit you aren't as strong as men. Handling the tongs takes a firm grip, you know."

"Is a man born with a firm grip, dad?" Ling Yun retorted.

Ling Ta-pao couldn't answer. He paused for a long time. Then abruptly his fist shot up over his head and he bellowed, "Talking big is no use. We'll see whether you turn out to be a bamboo chip or a steel rod!"

"Yes, we'll see," gulped Ling Yun, but a great resolve was forming in her head.

Since then, Ling Yun had always been the first to arrive at the shop in the morning. She swung a hammer at the anvil, beginning her exercises with an eight-pound hammer, determined to build up her arm muscles. Before long, she replaced it with a twelve-pound one and soon an eighteen-pounder. Now she was able to use a twenty-four-pound hammer. Every evening after some reading and writing her diary, she would take out a pair of dumb-bells from under her bed and do her exercises. At first, the exertion made her face red. But now, she could lift the dumb-bells easily. The girl not only built up her arm muscles, but also became expert in her forging work. She was now a fine master worker and had taken on an apprentice herself.

"Everybody praises my girl for her resolve," Ling Ta-pao mused as he walked. "But I'm worried. It's going to be a hard nut to crack this time, is she able to do it?" Anxiety made him walk faster.

Suddenly he heard a familiar voice announce, "Can do!"

Ling Ta-pao looked up and saw half a dozen young men and women standing around a sturdy girl at a table — his daughter in a blue cotton-padded jacket.



"That'll do," said Ling Yun. "Send it to Group One!" She banged the table with her clenched fist.

Ling Ta-pao looked at his twenty-three-year-old. Ruddy cheeks and clear-cut features. Her sparkling eyes looked you square in the face with a dauntless air. Her hair tied with rubber bands into short pigtailed curved upward stubbornly. Somehow Ling Ta-pao always found his daughter's outright manner annoying. Though this was actually one of his own traits, he seemed to think it unbecoming in his daughter.

As she finished speaking, Ling Yun deftly took up the red paper with the black ink still wet, and laughing and talking with the other young people, came toward the door.

"What are they sending us?" Ling Ta-pao wondered. He tried to see what they had written on the paper.

At the gateway, Ling Yun thrust the red paper at her father. Throwing her chest out, her eyebrows dancing, she said point-blank, "Dad, we challenge your group to a competition."

"Challenge?" The man's heart missed a beat. How dare she challenge our group, he thought. That's an unexpected thing. It took him quite a while to open his mouth again.

"Fine! Fine!" he managed. "We'll certainly accept the challenge. What's your target?"

"Target?" the girl replied casually. "It's all written down on the paper."

Ling Ta-pao screwed up his eyes to read their challenge word by word: "... must race against time to thwart the attempts of the imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries and make our contribution to world revolution!"

"Doesn't mention any target," he thought. His puzzled look made the youngsters burst out laughing again.

"I was worrying about their ability a moment ago, now they've thrown down the gauntlet at us," he thought. He shook his head and grinned at the irony of the whole thing.

Still, are they really capable enough? He doubted it.

He was just on the point of raising his clenched fist when his daughter, imitating his habitual gesture, thrust her fist into the air. "We'll have to see, eh, dad?" she teased.

Ling Ta-pao chuckled. Quite right. But his eyes remained on his daughter's clenched fist, his heart still in doubt.

2

Though the northwesterly let up a bit at dawn, the wind was still sharp and cold. On the river bank, the poplars quivered in the freezing air, but a row of green pines stood proudly erect.

Ling Yun was on her way to the plant. Her crunching footsteps on the icy road seemed to knock on the frozen ground as if to wake

it from its dreams. Since that meeting, she had gone to the plant at this hour every morning.

"Ling Yun! Ling Yun!" an excited voice called behind her. Ling Yun halted beside a pine tree and looked back. It was her apprentice, Fang Hsiao-ping, a plump girl with round rosy cheeks and a face so candid one could always tell whether she was happy or annoyed.

"What's the matter, Fang?"

"Bah! Do you know some people look down on our group?" Fang muttered angrily.

"You can't expect old ideas to be swept away thoroughly in one revolutionary storm," Ling Yun said thoughtfully. "Even now there are remnants of old ideas such as belittling young people and scorning women workers."

This only seemed to pour oil on the fire of Fang's grievances. "Old ideas!" she snorted. "Your father is a typical case!"

"What did he say now?" Ling Yun asked, eyes grave.

"He told the veteran workers of Group One, 'Most of Group Two are youths and women. So it's up to us to fulfil the task.'"

"What's wrong with youths and women?"

"He also said, 'Go all out now. What a disgrace if we come out behind those youngsters!'"

"What? Should young people stay behind then?" Ling Yun's heart blazed too. Confucius' blather that "women and inferior men are hard to keep", and Lin Piao's slander of women as "backward" and "of no use" rushed to her head. Indignation surged in her and she struck her palm with a fist. "We must criticize this!"

"Criticize your father?" Fang was dumbfounded.

"Criticize the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius! Criticize the remnants of the poison Lin Piao spread," Ling Yun emphasized every word.

"That's right!" Fang shot an approving glance at the master worker and nodded vigorously. "Your father can't see us women in the proper light and gets the wrong impression. I'll write a critical article after our shift."

Ling Yun's hand touched the manuscript in her own pocket. It was a criticism of Confucius and Lin Piao which she had drafted. Putting her hand on Fang's shoulder, she said, "We must also criticize old ideas with our actions. Let them see our high goals. Tempered in the Cultural Revolution, we young people are strong as steel."

Ling Yun raised her head proudly. Though the north wind howled around her, her heart was radiant. She and her apprentice strode in the direction of the morning sun.

3

The sun was high in the sky when Ling Ta-pao woke up. The intense work of the past few days had left a slight ache in his arms and back.

"It's Sunday and I'll have a good rest," he thought. "The work is progressing fine and we'll easily fulfil the task assigned by the Party committee. Simple, like picking up an oyster with three fingers." Smiling, he turned over on his side and closed his eyes. But he couldn't sleep any more, for the vision of dense smoke and leaping flames sprang up before him. He could even hear the sound of hammers on steel. His mind was still in the grip of their exciting battle for production.

Suddenly he remembered his daughter. He wanted to urge her to relax too since the work was going on so well. "Yun!" he shouted in the direction of the balcony.

No response.

"Little Yun!" He called again.

Still no answer.

"Where is she?" Ling Ta-pao climbed out of his warm bed. He put on his cotton-padded trousers, wrapped himself in a cotton-padded overcoat and went out to the balcony. His daughter always sat there on Sunday mornings, reading a book and mulling over what she had read. He knew she was reading Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Had she changed her habit this time? There was not a soul on the balcony. Queer. "Yun, Little Yun," he called loudly.

Ling Yun's mother was a housewife who had become a worker in 1958, the year of the Big Leap Forward. Today she was enjoying her Sunday too. At the moment she was busy in the kitchen. Hearing the old man's voice, she could hardly suppress a smile.

"She went to the plant before it was light," she said, poking her head in the half-open door.

"On Sunday?" asked Ling Ta-pao, planting himself before his wife.

"Doing a spot of work."

"Work?" The man was astonished. "I don't understand. We've nearly completed our task. Why should they do extra work now?"

His wife knew the old man's hot temper only too well. Though she did not work in the forge, she understood the necessity of waiting for the right time to strike. So she just kept her mouth shut and let him talk himself out.

But half way through he stopped short as though something important had hit him. Hurriedly, he buttoned his overcoat, jerked open the door and sped out like an arrow.

"Where are you going?" his puzzled wife called.

"To the plant!" he roared without a backward glance.

"Have your breakfast. . . ." Before she could finish her sentence, Ling Ta-pao was lost among the bustling people in the street.

What made him rush out in such a hurry? It was like this: On the morning shift the day before, Ling Yun and her group had set a record in hammering decelerating gear blanks for heavy trucks — fifty-two in one shift! When the news reached Ling Ta-pao and his crew on the afternoon shift, everybody was raring to go, determined to beat the youngsters' record.

An hour before the shift ended, however, the workers discovered a slight hollow had appeared in the bottom die. They had only finished fifty blanks. Should they take down the die and fix it or should they go on anyway? They couldn't agree. Some said that if they continued working, the quality of the products would be affected. Worse still, it might not be good for the hammer. Others argued that they were bound to surpass the morning shift if only

they could go on for another hour, besides, to hammer out another three or four blanks could neither lower the quality nor shorten the life of the hammer. Both sides argued with reason and neither would give in.

Since their emulation started, Ling Ta-pao thought, the two groups had come out more or less even both in quantity and quality, neither lagging far behind the other. He did not want to be outmatched this time. Most of the workers in Group Two were youngsters, it would be unbearable to be beaten by them. Ling Ta-pao favoured going on with the hammering and so the decision was made. He pointed out, however, that all of them should come in the following afternoon, Sunday, to take down the bottom die and plane it smooth so the next week's work would not be affected.

"Who'd think Group Two would go to work on Sunday and at such an hour?" Ling Ta-pao muttered angrily as he ran like the wind to the plant. "Those hotheads might be hammering away right now and completely overlook the defect in the die."

In the shop a fiery battle was going on. Tongues of flame in the furnaces danced like fluttering red banners, the roar and hum of the machines blended into a mighty call to arms, while red-hot steel blocks shuttled back and forth, glowing like flares signalling an attack.

Ling Yun's canvas overalls, soaked with sweat, dried in the heat and were soaked again.

"Ling Yun," Fang Hsiao-ping shouted as she planted her tongs on the ground to pull her canvas cap lower. "We have to beat Group One!"

Ling Yun's eyes swept over the stalwart group around her. "We'll try to hit a new record today. Have you got the guts?" she demanded.

"Sure!" they yelled. So powerful was the sound that it drowned the roaring of the machines.

Helped by Fang Hsiao-ping, Ling Yun, one leg curved and the other straightened, took up a heavy steel block with her tongs and plunked it on the die. Then she nodded at the slim girl-operator to start the steam hammer. Up and down went the hammer like a huge fist, stamping the gear blank with great thuds.

When he arrived, Ling Ta-pao was stunned to see such an exciting scene. He stood rooted for quite some time before he remembered his own mission and why he had been running so breathlessly.

"Little Yun. . . ." Anxiety filled his voice.

But his call was drowned in the roar.

He walked nearer, cupped his hands around his mouth and called again, "Ling . . . Yun. . . ."

Fang Hsiao-ping heard him this time. She nudged the other girl and Ling Yun, dripping with sweat, looked up into her father's anxious face. There must be something urgent. She threw down her tongs. They fell into a pool of water with a hiss. Instantly bubbles surfaced and blue smoke swirled up.

"Break!" she called, her arm sweeping down like a commander. Then pulling Fang Hsiao-ping by one arm, she rushed up to Ling Ta-pao.

"Who told you to come to work?" her father bellowed as soon as the two girls came near. Why was he in such a rage? Ling Yun was astonished.

His face set, Ling Ta-pao demanded, "Don't you hold yourself responsible for the quality of the products? Don't you care about the equipment?"

Ordinarily, Ling Yun would have hurled back these harsh words and let her temper loose, but this time she didn't.

Fang Hsiao-ping could not hold herself back. "What's happened? What have we done wrong?" she inquired sarcastically.

"What about the hollow in the bottom die?" Ling Ta-pao demanded.

Fang Hsiao-ping flew into a rage. "Don't you yourself have any sense of responsibility towards the quality of products and equipment?"

"Well. . . ." Ling faltered.

"Dad," Ling Yun stepped up to him and said, "it's not for showing off that we started this emulation, is it?"

This stung. Words failed him and he stood abashed as he stared at the perspiring face of his daughter.

Silence fell for a moment. Then Ling Ta-pao asked, "So you. . . ."

"Go and look for yourself!" Fang interrupted him.

Ling Ta-pao made for the machine. The bottom die had been planed and was glistening like silver. He looked around and discovered that the hammers too had been cleaned and greased. In the glow of the furnaces, they gleamed.

Gazing at Ling Yun and the others, Ling Ta-pao's heart warmed. "You. . ."

Suddenly Fang Hsiao-ping's face burned. Shyly, she stammered, "I . . . I was also. . ."

Fang was a girl who didn't know what shyness meant. But why did she get red then?

A moment later, she told Ling Ta-pao what they had done. That morning, the shop had been very quiet. Furnaces sat in a row. Hammers, forging presses all squatted noiselessly in their places as though they wanted to get up a bit later than usual since it was Sunday.

Ling Yun pulled open the door of a furnace with a loud clang. "Make a fine fire, Fang!" she urged.

Fang took off her coat and put on her overalls. She quickly lit a fire in a furnace. As the flame flared up in the furnace the glow lit up the whole shop.

Ling Yun was checking over the machines one by one and making preparations to start work. Suddenly she called, "Come here, Little Fang!"

"What's the matter?"

"Look, there's a hollow in the bottom die!" Ling Yun said anxiously.

"What can we do?"

"Take it down and plane it smooth."

"Dismantle it?"

Ling Yun nodded without any hesitation.

"It will take us two hours!" Fang exclaimed. "How can we beat Group One?"

"Got to do it!" Ling Yun said.

"But we young people must have high goals!" Fang reminded her. "How can we show it if we fail to beat Group One?"

"Goals?" Ling Yun's eyes narrowed. She looked pensive. She paused, then gripped Fang's hand and asked, "Tell me, in what way should we show that we have high goals?"

"Beat Group One!" Fang replied instantly.

"Not correct." Ling Yun shook her head.

"Well, what then . . . ?"

"Do you still remember our challenge?"

"Our challenge?" repeated Fang in a low voice.

Ling Yun led Fang to where the challenge was posted on a wall outside the shop. "Look!"

Fang read: ". . . must race against time to thwart the attempts of the imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries and make our contribution to world revolution!"

That line shone in the morning sun. Fang Hsiao-ping read it again. Ashamed, she turned to look at Ling Yun's severe face. Now she began to understand — this was the sole reason they had challenged Group One. A worker should take the whole world in his view, that was the real revolutionary goal. After a moment's silence, she asked, "What about beating Group One then?"

"We will!" Ling's answer was crisp.

"Can we?"

"Of course!"

The reply was so resolute that Fang was puzzled again.

Ling Yun thought for a short time before she said, "If we forge continuously without a break, we'll be able to raise efficiency." She picked up a small rod and illustrated on the sandy ground.

As Ling Yun explained, Fang Hsiao-ping's knitted eyebrows began to smooth out. She broke into a smile and finally hugged the other girl, saying, "Right! You've a point."

"Let's go!" Ling Yun poked Fang in the ribs and took her over to the hammer. "Now we'll take down the bottom die," she said.

Ling Ta-pao was greatly stirred by Fang Hsiao-ping's story.

Soon the hammer was singing again with a rhythmic clang and smoke drifted upward. In the red glow, people moved deftly about.

Like a dauntless commander, Ling Yun was skilfully manipulating the tongs which held a fiery steel blank in their grip. Her eyes fastened on the steel piece, she ignored the sweat running down her cheeks.

Ling Ta-pao felt a lump in his throat. Walking up to his daughter he said, "Take a rest now. We'll reach the target easily, you can rest assured about that. So why do you still..."

"But there's another target — one without figures."

"A target without figures?" Ling Ta-pao's jaw dropped. He had never heard of such a term.

"That's written in our challenge." Fang Hsiao-ping cut in.

Ling Ta-pao's vision cleared. His eyes sparkled and once again those black-ink words in Ling Yun's bold hand appeared before him: "... must race against time to thwart the attempts of the imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries and make our contribution to world revolution."

"Yes, they have high goals all right!" Warmth surged up within him. He gazed at Ling Yun's clear-cut features as if he was seeing his daughter for the first time. Suddenly, he said out loud with no explanation whatsoever, "A steel rod. A genuine steel rod."



After lunch that day, the veteran workers of Group One gathered in the shop. At Ling Ta-pao's suggestion, they too worked an extra shift and so the task of making decelerating gears was completed. By the time they left for home it was almost midnight.

The moon was bright. There was not a bit of wind. All was tranquil. The workers' houses slumbered.

Ling Ta-pao opened his door and was surprised to see his daughter still up. Ling Yun, an old blue cotton-padded jacket over her shoulders was poring over *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, so engrossed she did not notice her father's entrance.

"Still reading?" Ling Ta-pao asked gently.

Turning her head, the girl said with a smile, "I must make up for the reading I missed this morning."

"Good," the father nodded thoughtfully and went on, "I should learn from you and make up for what I missed too."

Ling Yun smiled without a word.

"Really!" he said. "Don't laugh at me though. I was thinking on my way home that you see things clearer than I do. Will you help me write an article criticizing those who tend to look down on new emerging forces? You just take down what I dictate. What do you think?"

Suddenly Ling Ta-pao's wife, who had been lying in bed with her eyes half closed, sat up. "You're right. Criticism is necessary. One thing I think needs to be added is to criticize the nonsense of saying man is superior and woman is inferior."

"Are you really going to do it, dad?" Ling Yun laughed.

"I promised to learn from you a moment ago," her father chuckled. "I've that much resolve."

"Dad," the girl teased as she waved her clenched fist over her head. "We'll have to wait and see."

"Sure!" Ling Ta-pao replied nodding vigorously.

Their laughter rang out together and was carried off into the still midnight air.

Illustrated by Wang Wei-bsin

A Miner's Son

Swarthy was now fourteen. It pained him to see his mother, so old and frail, dragging herself out every day to beg for food. As the man of the family he felt it his duty to support the two of them by going down the mine. However, his mother insisted that she would rather beg for food all her life than let him slave in the pit like his father and grandfather. Although Swarthy understood her anger and grief, he thought if he could persuade Uncle Sun to take him down the mine she might agree to it.

So one day he climbed Red Rock Mount and found Sun 'Ta-shan squatting by his door on the lookout for someone. Swarthy accosted him cheerfully and remarked: "Now that Mountain Wolf's knuckled under to us he'll have to eat humble pie for a while, won't he, uncle?"

The excerpts published here are taken from *The Miners Fight Back*, a novel dealing with the struggle of some Chinese miners during the War of Resistance Against Japan (1937-1945) and, in particular, with the adventures of a boy called Swarthy who grew up in those stormy years. The book was published in 1972.

"Eat humble pie? Him? Not likely."

"Anyway, he won't dare to hold back the men's pay again."

"Wolves eat meat, dogs eat dung — that's their nature. You can't expect him to have a change of heart. We must fight him to the finish."

"How can we do that, uncle?" asked Swarthy.

Sun clenched his fist. "Join together and fight those bastards: the Japanese aggressors, Mountain Wolf, Donkey. . . ." He broke off as some other miners came up. Patting Swarthy's head he said: "You must grow up quickly. There's work in plenty waiting for you to do." With that he went inside.

Seeing that Sun was busy, Swarthy went to enlist Madcap's help. He found the sturdy miner squatting by the roadside with one eye on the passers-by while he polished his lamp with a stone.

"What are you doing, brother?" Swarthy asked.

"What am I doing?" boomed Madcap. "Mountain Wolf and the foreman keep flashing their lamps in our eyes to make us stumble and fall. I mean to pay them back in their own coin."

"Do you need more men in the mine?" inquired Swarthy.

"Sure. We're short-handed."

"I want to work in the mine. Will you take me along?"

Madcap stopped what he was doing to stare at Swarthy, as if he were seeing him for the first time. Then he asked: "How old are you?"

"Fourteen. . . . Is it true that your foreman keeps beating boys?"

"Don't worry. By the time I was your age I'd already been working two years in the mine. You needn't be afraid of the foreman. If he lifts a hand to you, I'll deal with him. Tomorrow I'll wait for you at Locust Hill."

Swarthy had never expected Madcap would agree so readily to help him. In high spirits he went home to his mother. He wanted to tell her that from tomorrow onwards he would be earning enough to keep her, but he refrained for fear of her disapproval. Taking down his father's acetylene lamp from the beam where it always hung, he started polishing it the way Madcap had done.

"Put that down, Swarthy. Leave it alone." The sight of the lamp stirred painful memories, reminding Swarthy's mother of her husband's cruel death.

That night Swarthy did not sleep as soundly as usual. He was afraid his mother would be upset if she knew he was going down the pit, and also afraid that he might oversleep. He was out of bed before dawn.

"Where are you going?" his mother asked.

"To collect cinders." Swarthy had his answer ready.

"Wait till it's light. The mine's at sixes and sevens."

"There's someone waiting for me," countered Swarthy quickly.

When his mother made no further objection, he picked up the lamp and slipped out while her back was turned.

"Swarthy!"

The boy halted, his heart beating fast. Hiding the lamp under his jacket he walked back to ask: "What is it, mother?"

"There's a corn dumpling in the pan. Eat before you go."

Since he would be out all day, Swarthy felt he might as well take some food along. But when he went over to the stove he found only one dumpling in the pan. He picked it up, then put it down again. What would his mother eat if he took it? He was used to going hungry, it wouldn't hurt him to do without food for one day. Besides, he could have a good supper out of his earnings. He protested: "It's so early, mum, I'm not hungry."

"Take it to eat when you are," his mother urged.

The boy made some inaudible answer and slipped out, only to hear his name called again when he reached the bend in the road. Swarthy felt a pang. He would be out all day, and if he took no food his mother would worry; but if he went back to explain she would find out that he meant to work in the mine. With a lump in his throat, he gritted his teeth and left.

When he reached Locust Hill, Madcap was there waiting for him. They set off together for the mine.

"Did your mother agree?" was the first question Madcap asked.

"Did your mother agree when you first went to work in the mine?"

"I had no one to care what I did. . . ." Madcap had never spoken about his family. Now, however, he started telling Swarthy his story.

As far back as Madcap could remember, his father worked as a hired hand for a landlord. When that life became more than they could

bear, his father and mother, taking their small son with them, started begging their way towards the northeast where they heard there was plenty of wasteland. On the way they ran into the Japanese aggressors. After begging for food one day, the little boy heard gunfire as he trudged back to the village where they were to spend the night. He saw villagers running and crying: "The enemy's here!" They warned him: "The enemy's killing folk. Run for your life!" But this only made him more desperate to find his parents. In the village the houses were going up in flames and corpses strewn the ground. His own father and mother were among the dead. After this he became a lonely waif, wandering from place to place, living from hand to mouth. Finally he came to this mine and worked in the pit. The boss treated him like dirt, like a beast of burden; but the boy was stubborn and when beaten he fought back, although he knew he was no match for the foreman. The crack of the bosses' whips only made him see red. Some miners advised him: "You're still a nipper; grit your teeth and take it. You'll only make things worse for yourself if you resist." However, instead of taking this advice he always fought back — that was how he came by his nickname Madcap. Later Sun 'Ta-shan taught him how to defend himself; and as he grew older and stronger the foreman, finding him a tough nut to crack, no longer dared bully him. . . .

Swarthy was stirred by this tale. And Madcap's eyes were still blazing with anger as they reached the main gate of the mine. A small door beside the gate was the miners' entrance and here Japanese sentries, fierce as famished wolves, stood guard with bayonets. When miners entered or left, they had to bow to these sentries. Those who refused to submit to this were liable to be severely punished, forced to kneel for hours with bricks piled on their heads, or thrown to the Japanese wolf-hounds. The miners called this entrance the Gateway to Hell.

Swarthy was wondering how to avoid bowing to the sentry when Madcap shoved him quickly through the gate. The Japanese yelled at them to come back, but as other miners were streaming after them the sentries could not but return to their posts.

"Aren't you afraid of them, Brother Madcap?" asked Swarthy.

"Why should I be? There's only a handful of them. If not for all the puppet troops, we could easily finish them off."

Madcap took Swarthy to the registrar's office to get a pass for the pit. The man in charge, bald-headed, in black-rimmed glasses, looked down his nose at the boy.

"What's your name?" drawled Baldy.

"Swarthy."

"Age?"

"Sixteen." Madcap spoke up for him.

"Speak for yourself," ordered Baldy. "How old are you?"

"Sixteen. Born in the Year of the Tiger." Swarthy pulled himself up to his full height.

"You'll pull a crate. Mind you don't spoil it." Baldy issued Swarthy a child-labourer's pass and doled him out some acetylene for his lamp. Then Madcap took the lad to join the queue by the pit.

Miners were already lining up. The foreman, Donkey, a cigarette in his mouth, prodded them with the handle of his hammer, growling: "Get a move on, quick!" When he saw Swarthy he asked with a sneer: "What's this beggar's brat doing here?" In a temper, Swarthy pushed away the hammer which thudded to the ground.

"Pick it up!" bellowed Donkey, glaring.

When Swarthy made no move, Donkey lunged at him. But the boy, prepared for this, gave the foreman a shove which sent him staggering.

"Tough are you?" Donkey's blood was up. "I'll show you who's master here."

At that, Madcap rolled up his sleeves and stepped to Swarthy's side, while another miner urged: "Have a heart, foreman. He's just a child."

"You mind your own damn business." Donkey pushed the miner aside and pointed at Swarthy. "Go on, pick up that hammer," he ordered. "If you don't, I'll soon settle your hash." Before he could grab at Swarthy again, the miner pulled the boy to the cage and Madcap promptly followed, barring the way. The signalman rang the bell three times, and the car went down the shaft.

The rush of air caused by this swift descent made Swarthy close his eyes. His ears buzzed as if he were swimming deep under water. He reached out for something to help him keep his balance, but the only thing he could clutch at was Madcap's waist.

The car jerked to a halt. When Swarthy looked around, he saw a dark passage like some ancient tunnel oozing water everywhere. A dim lamp in the distance enabled him to glimpse the shadowy figures of men. Swarthy had lost his bearings. He called out rather nervously: "Brother Madcap!"

"Here I am," Madcap reassured him. "Turn up your lamp." Swarthy raised the catch so that the flame shot up a whole inch. "Keep going slowly along this passage," said Madcap. "I'll run ahead to get us a good place." With that he hurried off.

As Swarthy inched forward he noticed that the flame of his lamp was too high. What if he were to run out of acetylene? He tried to turn the flame down, but only succeeded in putting the lamp out. This was a real dilemma. All the other miners had gone on ahead. The only light to be seen was a glimmer at the entrance. He slowly groped his way back and asked the man there to help him relight his lamp.

"What happened? How did your lamp go out so soon?" The miner passed Swarthy a light, but still the boy was unable to make his lamp work.

"You've too much water in it," explained the miner. "Here, let me fix it for you."

He made Swarthy hold his lamp. By its light the boy recognized him and exclaimed: "Grandad Ching-shan!"

To his surprise, the old man seemed not to have heard him — his eyes were fixed on the cracked, disfigured lamp. He was recalling that day when the ceiling had collapsed, injuring his old friend and knocking the lamp out of shape. It was he who had mended it later. That was why he recognized it at a glance.

"Grandad!" Swarthy repeated.

"What are you doing here?" the old man asked.

"I want to earn my living. . . ."

As they were talking, Madcap came back. "Why are you still here?" he panted.

"So it's you who brought him here. Why did you run off and leave him on his own?" asked the old man reproachfully.

"He went ahead to get us a good place," said Swarthy.

"Come on!" Madcap took Swarthy's arm to hurry him off.

"Wait a minute," cried Grandad Ching-shan. He took off his wicker helmet and put it on Swarthy's head, then cautioned Madcap: "It's his first day in the mine. You must make allowances for him." Madcap nodded and led the boy away.

Grandad Ching-shan had worked with Swarthy's grandfather and father. He had seen how his friend and his friend's son met their death at the hands of the bosses. Now, watching the boy's receding back, the old man heaved a sigh.

Led by Madcap, Swarthy stumbled along over the uneven ground. There were wooden props jutting out at all angles from both sides of the passage, which in places was knee-deep in water. If he slipped he would get a soaking. Though Swarthy tried to speed up, he could not go very fast. He kept tripping over obstacles and bumping his head.

"Don't get the wind up. We're nearly there," said Madcap.

"Who's that?" called out a man ahead of them who was holding a bright lamp.

It was the foreman. Not until they drew level with him did Madcap answer: "It's me."

"Showing up late, aren't you? It's already half-time."

"Half-time is it? Will you give me half pay if I go up now?" Madcap retorted.

"None of your lip! I've kept a good place for you — Devil's Nose. One of you can get coal, the other pull the crate. Get cracking!" Devil's Nose was the most dangerous place in the mine. That was where the foreman sent miners when he had his knife in them or they disobeyed orders.

"All right, it's all the same to us where we work." Though Madcap knew that the foreman was out for their blood, he did not turn a hair. He would work himself to death sooner than grovel. Taking up a pick and a crate, he went off with Swarthy.

As if this was not bad enough, who should come along at this moment but Mountain Wolf and Donkey. At sight of Madcap and

Swarthy, Donkey whispered something to his boss, who warned Swarthy: "See here! You must haul twenty crates of coal per shift. If you're one load short you won't get any pay."

Madcap had wanted to protest when the other foreman assigned them such a bad job; Mountain Wolf's interference added to his fury. However, this was Swarthy's first day on the job and Grandad Ching-shan had entrusted the boy to his care. If they started a row, Swarthy might suffer for it. So without a word he led Swarthy off towards the sloping passage in front.

This passage was too low for them to walk erect. Many of the props had broken and never been repaired, while those remaining sagged so badly that in places they could only crawl. Fortunately the helmet lent him by Grandad Ching-shan saved Swarthy from many knocks. Groping their way along the props, at long last they reached their destination halfway down the passage — a deep, half-excavated pit which threatened to cave in at any moment. When his lamp lit up this fearful spot, Swarthy shrank back. One slip and he would surely plunge to his death in that chasm gaping wide and dark at his feet. Many miners had met their death or been maimed for life in this place. The quality of the coal was so good, however, that the Japanese commander Kameda and Mountain Wolf were unwilling to give it up. Instead of spending money on maintenance, they squandered the lives of the miners.

So much water had collected in this pit, it seemed that no work had been done here for several shifts. The acrid smell of rotten timber set them coughing. The lack of oxygen made it hard to breathe. The least movement made them sweat.

When Madcap had drained off some of the water he told Swarthy to wait outside where the air was better. "Mind you don't slip," he warned. "If you fall over Devil's Nose you're done for."

"How about you?" asked the boy.

"I'll start work there." Madcap pointed to a coal-face in the pit.

"Can't I help?" Swarthy didn't want to idle while his work was done for him.

"This isn't a job you could tackle." Madcap stripped to the waist and, taking the crate and pick, went in and started work.

Presently Swarthy held up his lamp to have a look at the pit. Madcap, half immersed in water, was straining his muscles as he swung his pick. The coal was so hard that sparks flew at each stroke. But humming a work-chant Madcap hacked swiftly and steadily, so that soon a big pile of loose coal took shape beside him. He knew that in order to satisfy the foreman he must do the work of two men. Sweat was pouring off him.

After squatting outside for a while, Swarthy crept in and pleaded: "Let me work with you!"

"No. Go back and wait outside."

When Swarthy insisted, Madcap relented. "All right then. You can help by holding the lamp."

As Swarthy held the lamp, water dripping from the roof drenched him from head to foot. He started shivering.

"Cold, Swarthy?" asked Madcap.

"No, no," answered the boy, though his teeth were chattering. He mopped his streaming face.

"Go and get some fresh air. It's time to haul the coal out."

Putting down his pick, Madcap took Swarthy outside the pit to rest. Fanning himself with his coat he asked the boy: "Hungry?"

"Not a bit," said Swarthy.

"I don't suppose you brought any grub with you, did you?"

When the boy made no answer, simply lowering his head, Madcap took a bun from his pocket. "Here, take this."

Swarthy refused at first, but Madcap insisted. Then the miner started filling up the crate. Since this coal was for the Japanese army he said: "Come on, Swarthy, let's add something to this." They adulterated the coal with stones and mud.

When the crate was full Madcap told Swarthy: "You wait here. I'll haul this up." He slipped his arms through the straps and, holding his lamp between his teeth, started crawling on all fours out of the pit and up the sloping passage.

Hauling the coal was to have been Swarthy's job, but since it was beyond his strength Madcap had to do both the digging and the hauling. The ascent was so steep and slippery that even crawling without a load was difficult enough for Swarthy. How could Madcap

manage such a heavy crate? The boy did his best to push the crate from behind, deaf to all the miner's protests.

By the time they struggled to the top of that slippery ascent both of them were pouring with sweat and Swarthy was parched. He followed Madcap's example, scooping up water from the ditch to drink. It was black with coal-dust, but he was so thirsty that he did not care. However, there was so much alum in this water that a few gulps set his teeth on edge, just as if he had been eating unripe persimmons.

As they were slaking their thirst a sudden dazzling light half blinded them. Madcap turned his well-polished lamp on the man approaching, till the latter halted and swore: "What the hell are you doing?"

"Quick, Swarthy, let's move on," whispered Madcap. "It's the foreman."

"Who's that?"

This time Swarthy recognized Donkey's voice. He could see Mountain Wolf standing behind the foreman. Before they could make off, Donkey came up to them.

"So it's you again. What do you think you're doing? Mining coal or having a picnic?"

"Can't one have a drink of water?" answered Madcap, pulling the crate.

"If you don't fulfil your quota of twenty crates, you can't leave. . . ."

Before he could finish, Mountain Wolf cut in: "Why waste words on them? Give the young bastards a lesson."

"You dogs!" Donkey raised his hammer. Madcap promptly freed his arms from the strap of the crate and prepared for battle. But the foreman afraid to take him on single-handed contented himself with kicking the crate and ordered: "Go on! The little runt do the hauling. I'll keep count. If you fall short of your quota, look out!"

Swarthy pulled Madcap away then and the two of them went back with the crate to the pit.

"What shall we do, Brother Madcap, if we can't deliver twenty crates?" Swarthy asked.

Still furious with the foreman, Madcap answered: "Don't you worry. There's not much he can do to us. I must teach the swine a good lesson one of these days."

By the time Madcap had filled another crate and hauled it back with Swarthy, Donkey was still waiting there. Seeing Madcap was pulling the crate, he stepped forward and planted one foot on it. "This won't do. It's the boy's job, hauling. We can't have idle hands in our mine."

"All you want is twenty crates of coal. Right?" Madcap retorted.

"If a willing ox does more, fine. But you can't do that young fellow's work for him."

"You've gone too far. This is the limit!" fumed Madcap pulling his arms out of the straps in order to deal with Donkey.

"So you want to start another strike, eh?" snarled Mountain Wolf who was standing near at hand. With a vicious kick he toppled the crate over. Madcap, thrown off his balance, stumbled backward and fell. Down he plummeted into the dark abyss which lay under Devil's Nose. With an ugly laugh Mountain Wolf wheeled round and left, followed by the faithful Donkey.

Swarthy crawled forward fearfully to peer down into the chasm. It was pitch black. And the sides were too steep and slippery to climb. He called Madcap again and again at the top of his voice, but no answer came back from the darkness. Then crying with fright he hurried away as fast as he could for help.

Other miners came rushing when they heard his shouts, among them Sun Ta-shan. Swarthy ran up to him sobbing: "Mountain Wolf kicked Brother Madcap down Devil's Nose!"

Without a word Sun dashed to the scene with several other miners. He turned up his lamp, tore one of the sleeves off his jacket and, having dipped it in water, wrapped it round his nose and mouth. Two other miners followed suit. Then these three men crawled down the pit, while Swarthy held a lamp to light their way. Before long Sun climbed up again. On his back was Madcap, badly injured. Another miner quickly took him over and carried him off to where the air was fresher.

Apparently Madcap in his fall had clutched at a prop which saved him from hurtling to the bottom of the pit. But he had been badly hurt and half asphyxiated by poisonous gas. Crouching by his friend, Swarthy gazed at him anxiously until Madcap opened his eyes and looked around.

"Brother Madcap, are you all right?" the boy exclaimed.

Madcap stirred. Helped by Sun and Swarthy he sat up. Then struggling to his feet he staggered forward.

"Rest a bit," urged Sun. "What's the hurry?"

Madcap took an axe from one of his mates and swore: "I'm off to have it out with the swine!"

Sun laid constraining hands on his shoulders and made him sit down. "Of course we must settle accounts, but the day of reckoning hasn't yet come," he said. "This way will get you nowhere." He paused to glance around the crowd which had gathered. Since all were men whom he trusted he continued: "The Japanese and Mountain Wolf need coal desperately for the army of occupation. Our job now is to cut down the supply of coal. We'll settle with the devils later."

Sun helped Madcap home, leaving Swarthy to go up at the end of the shift with the other miners. By then the boy was so famished that on the way to draw his pay he thought: "I'll get mum to make steamed buns spiced with garlic from the corn meal I've earned today. One bun for Madcap, one for Hung-hai, the rest for mum and me. She'll be so pleased, she won't mind my working here."

In this cheerful frame of mind he reached the window where the colliers were issued with their payment in kind. Following the example of the older miners, he took off his wicker helmet and pushed it through the window with both hands.

"Name?" Baldy glanced at him from beneath his glasses.

"Swarthy." Standing on tiptoe by the window, Swarthy feasted his eyes on the sacks of corn meal inside.

"You've got a nerve coming for payment! You chucked a big crate down Devil's Nose. Count yourself lucky we don't make you pay for it."

At first Swarthy was speechless with anger. Then he burst out: "But that's not right!"

"How does a puppy like you know what's right or wrong? Stop making trouble here. Scram!" Glaring balefully at him Baldy rapped out: "Next!"

Nearly bursting with indignation as he left, Swarthy swore to himself that if he had a sword he would kill all these vicious bastards.

2

One day Swarthy was scooping up bucketfuls of water outside the pit where Sun and his comrades held their secret meetings. Sun had told him to thump three times on the bucket to warn them of anyone's coming. Now Swarthy saw two men getting out of the cage. After standing there for a while conferring in whispers, one of them slipped away while the other lit a cigarette. The flaring match showed that it was Mountain Wolf. Swarthy's heart seethed with fury. He remembered the harrowing account Grandad Ching-shan had given him only the previous day of how his grandfather had been killed in the mine and his father driven to drown himself in the river. And Brother Madcap had nearly died falling down Devil's Nose... Burning to kill the boss with his own hands, Swarthy forgot that he was on sentry duty.

After a few more drags on his cigarette, Mountain Wolf strode into the small cave near the end of the passage which was fitted up as a rest-room for him and the Japanese soldiers when they went down the mine. As soon as he had gone in, Swarthy set down his bucket, seized a pick and tiptoed towards the cave. Before he reached it Mountain Wolf reappeared and flashed his torch around. Swarthy instantly dodged behind a wooden prop. Since the boss remained standing there as if waiting for someone, Swarthy slipped back to his post where he found two of his friends Hung-hai and Erh-keng, who had just started work in the mine, busy draining the passage. As they were about to greet him Swarthy held up a warning hand, then leaned over and whispered something in their ears.

Erh-keng rolled up his sleeves and said: "Fine! Just lead the way."

Hung-hai after a moment's silence replied: "All right. We must be careful, though. He's got a pistol."

As they were talking together in low voices, Mountain Wolf sauntered towards them with his torch. Swarthy jumped between the shafts of an empty cart and started pushing it forward, while the two other boys also helped push from behind. When the boss flashed his torch on them they kept their heads low.

"Steady!" whispered Swarthy. But in fact all three of the boys were a little scared.

Now the cart was barring Mountain Wolf's way. He ordered them to stop and let him pass.

They pulled up. But at a sign from Swarthy all three together suddenly pushed the cart forward, knocking the boss off his feet. Swarthy promptly kicked the torch out of his hand, then snatched the white towel from Mountain Wolf's neck and wrapped it over his eyes, after which the three boys fell on him and pummelled him with their fists. As soon as Mountain Wolf recovered his breath he tried to call for help, but Erh-keng instantly filled his mouth with coal-dust, and although he struggled the youngsters pinned him down. When they had beaten him senseless, Swarthy wanted to drag him to a derelict pit and finish him off for good. But since at that moment they heard steps approaching, they gave him a few last punches and dumped him in the ditch. Then Erh-keng and Hung-hai went away to continue their draining while Swarthy also returned to his sentry post.

The elation Swarthy now felt was mixed with tension. If Mountain Wolf died as a result of his beating the consequences would be far more serious than if some foreman succumbed to an accident. The Japanese would not just let the matter drop. On the other hand, if Mountain Wolf recovered he certainly wouldn't take this lying down.

As Swarthy was wondering what to do, a man approached rather stealthily and made for the derelict pit. Thinking it was Sun Tashan whose meeting had ended, Swarthy hailed him: "Uncle, uncle!" But this only made the man put on a spurt. At once Swarthy ran over calling out: "Who's there?" The other made no reply. Sun, hearing the commotion, came out of the pit dragging a rotten prop.

"Who's that?" he asked. "Why aren't you working?"



His escape cut off, the man faltered: "It's me . . . just taking a look round. . . ."

It was Mo Cheng-tsai, a suspicious character who had not been down the pit for quite a time. Sun was puzzled by his sudden reappearance and worried lest he had overheard the discussion between him and his comrades. Laying down the prop, Sun said to him casually: "The boss won't give us any timber, Old Mo, so how are we to work? The roof in our pit may cave in any day. I've been searching through the pits which have closed down, but all I can find is this old rotten prop."

Mo grunted. "Of course. You can't work without props."

"I hear you've been promoted," continued Sun.

"I'm not up to heavy work," mumbled Mo. "Can't swing a pick. So I'm doing clerical work."

"Sure. You're our superior now," retorted Sun. "If you work hard at your new job, Kameda may promote you again."

"I'm just earning my keep. . . . Here, let me give you a hand." To cut short this conversation, Mo bent down to pick up the prop.

"No need. I'll carry it myself." Sun shouldered the prop and walked on, followed by Mo. The other miners who had attended the meeting had meanwhile left by different passages.

After Mo's departure, Sun came back to Swarthy. Conscious that he had fallen down on his job, the boy lowered his head, but Sun did not reproach him. By this time the next shift had started coming in, among them Grandad Ching-shan.

The old miner hurried up to Sun and asked in a low voice: "Who beat him up?" When Sun looked blank, Grandad Ching-shan explained that Mountain Wolf had been beaten up and left for dead.

Sun glanced at Swarthy and put two and two together. "Did you do it?" he demanded sternly.

Swarthy nodded.

Madcap, hearing this, was delighted. "Good for you!" he exclaimed. "If Uncle Sun hadn't stopped me, I'd have done in that swine myself."

"He deserved a beating, that's certain," said Grandad Ching-shan. "But now there may be trouble. Puppet troops have surrounded the entrance."

"Where did you beat him up?" asked Sun with a frown.

Swarthy described exactly what had happened.

"He may not have seen who you were," said Sun thoughtfully.

"Besides, Erh-keng and Hung-hai only started work today. So nobody will suspect them."

"If he finds out, we'll drag him to hell with us!"

"That's no way to talk," said Sun. "We must think of a plan."

On Grandad Ching-shan's suggestion they smeared some coal-dust on Swarthy's face to disguise him.

When they reached the top of the shaft there were puppet troops all around, and the miners working there had been lined up. Swarthy spotted Mountain Wolf slumped limply in an armchair with his head in a bandage and one arm in a sling.

The miners exchanged puzzled glances as Donkey made them file past Mountain Wolf for identification, but as each man passed the boss simply shook his head. When it came to the turn of Erh-keng and Hung-hai, the two boys were allowed to pass because it was their first day at the mine. Then Donkey caught sight of Swarthy. He shoved him forward saying: "This must be the one."

Mountain Wolf squinted at Swarthy from his unbandaged eye, but failed to identify him. He asked: "Where were you working?"

"At the parking lot."

"On what job?"

"Draining off water."

"How come your face is so black then?"

Swarthy, taken by surprise, did not know how to answer.

"I sent him down a derelict pit to look for timber. That's when he blackened his face," put in Sun quickly.

"Did we ask you?" demanded Donkey, glaring at Sun.

"It's the truth I'm telling you, Foreman Wang. Ask Old Mo." Sun called on Mo Cheng-tsai, who was nearby, as a witness.

"Quite right. I saw the boy myself." Mo's job was to keep an eye on Sun, and he felt that coming forward now as a witness would prove that he had not been wasting his time. However, this did not suit Donkey's book. The foreman had been Mountain Wolf's favourite, and had therefore felt slighted when the boss had passed over him to give Mo Cheng-tsai this job.

"Well, if Old Mo vouches for you, you can pass." With his mind on other things, Donkey lost interest in tracking down the culprit. When they had checked up on some other miners and discovered nothing suspicious, they let the matter drop.

The road home was unusually quiet that day since most of the miners had already gone. Sun made his comrades go on ahead while he had a talk with Swarthy. He asked the boy: "Why did Mountain Wolf agree to our demands and distribute grain when we staged the strike last time?"

"For fear we wouldn't work for him," the boy answered.

"Was he particularly afraid of any one worker?" Sun asked.

Swarthy thought this over. There was no one bolder than Mad-cap, yet Mountain Wolf had kicked him down Devil's Nose. He could not think whom the boss was most afraid of.

When Sun saw that the boy could not answer he said: "He isn't afraid of any single one of us. If one worker downs tools or puts up a fight, Mountain Wolf doesn't turn a hair. We won our strike because we were united." He paused before driving the lesson home. "Grandad Ching-shan has told me the story of your family, Swarthy. I know you want to take your revenge on Mountain Wolf, but can you do it single-handed? You're not the only one who wants revenge. Everyone in the mine wants to settle scores. So you must rely on us all. Besides, just killing Mountain Wolf isn't enough. He's only a dog working for the Japanese. If we don't overthrow the aggressors, all miners, all poor peasants, all factory workers in China will still be oppressed and exploited, still live as slaves. Right?"

"I understand, uncle. . . . I want to ask you something. Are there Communists in our mine?"

"Why do you ask that?" Sun halted, pleased to know that the boy was growing up.

"Who are the Communists?" Swarthy persisted.

"They're the men leading us, the people of China and the Eighth Route Army, to fight the Japanese invaders. They're leading us poor folk to win freedom. . . ."

"Are you a Communist, uncle?" Swarthy looked up at Sun with shining eyes.

"What do you think?"

"I think you are. Aren't you leading us to fight the Japanese and Mountain Wolf?"

Sun smiled. "That's only guess-work." He patted Swarthy on the head and said, "The enemy is very crafty and up to all sorts of tricks. You must be more careful in future."

Swarthy nodded.

They were now approaching the village, and Sun remembered Snow Plum, the slave girl in Mountain Wolf's house who had passed on important information to them. She could do very useful work for them there. He told the boy he should be friends with her and help her all he could.

3

Before long Sun Ta-shan received secret intelligence of a Japanese plan for new mopping-up operations. The enemy meant to thrust into the mountains to destroy the anti-Japanese base there and carry off the coal supply for their own use. Sun decided that the Eighth Route Army units up in the mountains should be informed at once.

Swarthy got up and had something to eat at the crack of dawn. Then, taking a basket with him, he set out according to Sun's directions.

It was so early that there were few passers-by as the boy hurried down Stone Tiger Valley. He had not gone far when he heard shots ahead. Soon two fellows came scurrying towards him in alarm. Swarthy ducked into hiding in a sorghum field. When the two men had passed they slackened their pace and he recognized them as two lackeys of Mountain Wolf — Chou Heng and Liu Tai.

"That was a close call!" snorted Liu. "Where did that sneaky little Eighth Route spring from? If I weren't a champion runner, I'd have kicked the bucket for sure."

"Are you positive that what you saw was coal? No mistake, eh?" asked Chou.

"What else could it be? Pitch-black coal, whole piles of it!"

"I was in the lead but I didn't see a thing. How could you, behind, see so clearly? If the Japanese come and find no coal, watch out!"

"Hell! How can I guarantee that the Reds won't move it away now they know we've spotted it? But I bet the Imperial Army would have to back out before ever reaching there."

Swarthy realized that the place the two flunkies were discussing was the one he was heading for. And as soon as Kameda heard their report he would surely dispatch troops there. The boy was very worried.

Poor working folk often find summer days too long, but to Swarthy that particular day seemed too short. The sun was setting before he began to feel hungry. When he had covered sixty *li* or so, a mountain loomed before him. Its two peaks, one high the other low, gave it the appearance of a slice of water-melon from the middle of which a few bites had been taken.

Swarthy mopped his perspiring forehead. Then he heard a brook running through the rocks and went over to cup his hands and take a drink. The water, so refreshingly cold, quenched his thirst. After washing his face he had a few bites of the steamed corn-bread he had brought with him. Then picking up a stick he went on his way.

After speeding along for some time Swarthy caught sight of several villages at the foot of a range of mountains. Over the villages hung smoke from the kitchens. The terraced fields on the slopes were green with crops: millet bowed down by plump ears and sorghum crowned with crimson. The furrows and edges of the fields were planted with string beans and runner beans.

While Swarthy was enjoying this sight, two boys of about twelve, each armed with a red-tasselled spear, darted out suddenly from the sorghum fields. They stationed themselves in the middle of the road and demanded, "Hey, where are you from?"

"Front Village," replied Swarthy, not being sure who they were.

"Where are you going?"

"Rear Village."

"What for?"

"To graze sheep."

"There's no Rear Village hereabouts," said one of the boys with a dubious glance at Swarthy.

"Well then, I'll look somewhere else," responded Swarthy in an off-hand way, not taking the two youngsters seriously.

The young sentries, however, were not to be so easily fobbed off by Swarthy's casual answer. The other one stretched out his hand and asked for papers.

"What papers?" This was something new to Swarthy.

"If you've no papers, you must come along with us to the village government," announced his interrogator pointing the way with his spear.

The word "government" at once put the wind up Swarthy. Since there was nobody else in sight, he brushed past the boys and sped off. One of them whistled and shouted, "Stop him! Stop him!" Instantly people converged from every side — from the fields, from the bypaths, from the nearby village — carrying guns, hoes and sickles. Swarthy was surrounded. Just as they started marching him to the village government a man ran over. One hand on the revolver at his waist he asked: "Whom have you caught?"

"Another enemy spy, most likely," said a peasant with a hoe on his shoulder. "Yesterday we let two spies give us the slip; today they've sent another."

The man, squeezing through the crowd, caught sight of Swarthy. "*Aiya!*" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here, lad?"

It was Uncle Chang Pao-shan, who had often come to the mine to see Sun Ta-shan.

"He's one of us. Go back to work, comrades," said Uncle Chang to the other villagers.

As the crowd dispersed, the two boy sentries walked up to Swarthy to apologize, "Sorry, comrade, but we didn't know who you were."

Swarthy smiled at them while Uncle Chang said, "He won't blame you. Go back to your post and keep a good watch."

The young scouts skipped back to the field.

Uncle Chang led Swarthy into the village. They stopped at a gate flanked by jujube trees which gave access to a small courtyard. Facing south stood a little thatched house. When they entered they found sitting under the lamp a middle-aged man with square shoulders, an impressive figure in his yellow army tunic and cap. His



brows were knitted in thought as he read a book, and in his hand was a pencil.

"Commander Liao!" Chang called. The man raised his head, and Swarthy saw that he had a kind face and intrepid eyes. Before Chang could finish introducing the boy, the commander stepped forward to take Swarthy's hands in his and scrutinize him from head to foot.

"A tough lad, a true miner's son," he remarked.

Then Commander Liao ordered his men to prepare a meal for the young visitor. Pouring a cup of water for the boy, he asked what brought him to the mountains. Swarthy delivered the message from Sun Ta-shan.

"Good. We knew the enemy's scheme but not when they would strike," said Commander Liao. "Your information comes in the nick of time."

"The Japanese soldiers keep the mines sewn up tight. Who's managed to slip out?" asked Swarthy in wonder.

Chang explained that the day before two spies for the Japanese had come that way. "But as soon as they reached the border of our base area, they were discovered by our guards," he said. "A new young recruit was so keen to catch them alive that he showed himself before we could round them up, and so the rascals were able to scamper off. From this we guessed that the Japanese would soon be coming into the mountains for another 'mop-up'."

This reminded Swarthy of the words exchanged between Mountain Wolf's two hangers-on, Liu and Chou. He told Commander Liao what he had overheard and asked anxiously: "Did they really spot your coal?"

"Those two guys took to their heels like rabbits before even entering our base," put in a guerrilla fighter who had just come in. "As to the coal, we've already turned it into 'ammunition and gunpowder'. Let them come and try to take it!"

"They not only came to bring us information, they've gone back to send the Japanese soldiers into a trap," said Commander Liao. "We can expect a visit from them tomorrow." He told Chang to make another inspection of the preparations for the coming battle,

ordered the sentries to heighten their vigilance, and instructed the cadres responsible for civilian work to prepare the villagers for a possible evacuation.

Swarthy had a hearty meal, after which he was given hot water to wash his feet. The warmth of his reception made him feel very much at home.

Commander Liao told Swarthy to rest well that night and leave the next morning. But the boy, far too excited to turn in, insisted on having a good look round the village. He even volunteered to take part in the coming battle, to help the Eighth Route Army kill more Japanese soldiers!

Commander Liao, who had taken a great liking to this plucky lad, assigned a girl nurse, Little Chiang, to show him around.

As Little Chiang led the way out of the courtyard, Swarthy looked carefully at her. Not more than sixteen, she was pretty and smiled when she talked. Her full-size army cap covered her ears completely while her yellow army tunic hung loose on her slender figure, reaching right down to her knees. She had a fancy way of winding her puttees. Round her waist was a leather belt, and from her shoulder hung a first-aid kit. As they walked along she called out greetings right and left.

A group of girls with books under their arms swept past Swarthy laughing and chatting. The boy gazed after them wondering what they were doing, and Little Chiang explained: "They're going to the night school." Presently the sound of singing drifted towards them:

The Liberated Area's sky
Is a bright sunny sky...

There was no highway through the village, only lanes. Every house had its own courtyard and in almost every courtyard stood a trellis hung with white gourds big or small. The pear, jujube and hawthorn trees surrounding the houses were laden with fruit. Some of the more prominent walls were plastered with slogans: Long live the Chinese Communist Party! Long live Chairman Mao! Swarthy, although he could not read, felt that here indeed was a totally different world.

Presently Swarthy saw a group of people, some young and some middle-aged, on their way to the fields. They were carrying what looked like a big iron ball. One of them joked: "We'll let the enemy taste our 'iron melon' tomorrow."

When they had made a tour of the village Little Chiang urged Swarthy to go back and sleep. But stirred by the militant life in the base, the boy would not hear of going back.

"I don't want to waste this chance. Let me see some more," he begged.

"That won't do. Orders are orders," said Little Chiang.

"Orders can wait," pleaded Swarthy.

"Who says orders can wait?" asked a deep bass voice behind them. Swarthy and Little Chiang turned round and found themselves confronting Commander Liao just back with several fighters from an inspection of the mountains.

"Report! Swarthy refuses to go back to sleep," said Little Chiang.

"Then you haven't fulfilled your task," teased Commander Liao. He turned to Swarthy. "Haven't you seen enough yet?"

"This base area is just fine, Commander Liao," answered Swarthy naively. "If only we could move it down to our mine!"

"You couldn't do that even with a locomotive, could you?" said the commander. "And if you did, the enemy wouldn't let it stay there." After a pause he added, "It's only by fighting that we'll win a good world to live in, Swarthy. Your mines are not the only part of our country under Japanese occupation. The Japanese soldiers kill and burn everywhere they go. But led by the Communist Party and Chairman Mao, we know we can defeat our enemy. Chairman Mao says: **'Not only is it necessary for us to defeat Japanese imperialism and build a new China, but we are certainly capable of achieving these aims.'** By that time there'll be no more man-eating beasts like Kameda and Mountain Wolf in your mining area. We'll build a new society all over China with the people as their own masters and with workers running the mines."

"What a great man Chairman Mao must be!" thought Swarthy. "He not only cares for us poor folk now, he's mapped out a plan for our future. I'll do whatever he says."

From that time on Swarthy's heart was filled with hope.

To the Japanese soldiers at the mines, the guerrilla bases in the hills were like a sword hanging over their heads, likely to fall on them at any time. They knew, moreover, that the strength of the miners' resistance owed much to the support of the revolutionary bases. Since the failure of the Japanese raid on the mountains in an attempt to get the coal supply there, Kameda had been sitting on thorns. He had not enough troops to launch a new "mopping-up" campaign and at the same time suppress another revolt by the miners. So he dared not make any move. Now he received information that the Eighth Route Army had come downhill and destroyed some of his strongholds. In panic he decided to ask for reinforcements from the Japanese garrison in the city to make a fresh attack on the anti-Japanese democratic government of the revolutionary base as well as the Eighth Route Army.

The night that Kameda started for the city, Sun Ta-shan called a meeting of the Party branch to discuss their instructions from above. Their tasks were to utilize the enemy's weakness to develop their own armed forces, and to co-operate with the Eighth Route Army to frustrate enemy attacks. They decided first to capture the Japanese stronghold at Helmet Mount, as most of the troops defending it had been withdrawn to the mines.

The next day Swarthy hid near Mountain Wolf's house. When Snow Plum came out he asked her where she was going.

"Mountain Wolf has sent me to fetch that fellow Mo," replied the girl.

"Come over here, I've something to say to you." Swarthy led her to the back of the house and gave her some whispered instructions.

"What do you want to know for?" asked Snow Plum.

"Never mind. Just take good note of these things. I'll be waiting for you at home this evening."

"Did Uncle Sun tell you to come?"

Swarthy nodded and said, "Be quick." Convinced then that the matter was urgent, Snow Plum hurried off.

At sunset, a small girl appeared on the path leading to Helmet Mount. She carried a basket with three chickens in it on one arm. In her other hand she had two bottles of liquor.

Helmet Mount was a barren hill north of the mine across from Red Rock Mount. When the Japanese built a fortress there they had cut down all the saplings so that the place looked like an enormous grave-mound. On top of it stood a small compound from the middle of which rose a three-storeyed fort.

When Snow Plum was half way up the hill, the puppet sentry at the stronghold shouted: "Halt!"

The girl made no reply. Waving the bottles in her hand, she walked on. When she came to the top of the hill a puppet soldier holding a rifle came out and demanded, "What's your business here?"

"The master has sent up some chickens and liquor."

The puppet sentry realizing that she came from Mountain Wolf's house shouted over his shoulder, "Squad leader! Somebody's sent us some grog."

Without waiting for a response from inside, Snow Plum walked into the compound and straight into the small sentry house near the gate. A puppet soldier holding a Mauser was warming himself by the fire. He stood up with a grin at sight of the girl. "Your master sent you here?"

"It's for the Imperial Army," said Snow Plum, looking around. Two guns hung on the walls, two more soldiers were lying on their beds. That made four men and four guns.

"Imperial Army or no Imperial Army, those who stand sentry at night ought to enjoy these things. After all, it doesn't matter who eats them, eh?" The squad leader laid hold of a chicken but Snow Plum snatched it back.

"No, it's not for you. The master told me to give them to the Imperial Army." When the squad leader pushed her aside and grabbed the basket, Snow Plum dashed out, screaming, with the two bottles of liquor and headed straight for the fortress. Two Japanese hearing the noise came out with rifles at the ready. They jabbered something to the girl, but she did not understand a word. She simply pointed at the sentry house. As the Japanese rushed off to deal with the

sentries, Snow Plum seized her chance to slip into the fortress. She found a large stove by the door and three wooden beds piled with gear. But how could she tell what was in the two upper storeys?

Soon the two Japanese came back with two chickens. One made a thumb-up sign and commended Snow Plum: "Good. You very, very good girl." The other told her, "Bring us more tomorrow." Snow Plum was reluctant to leave without finding out how many Japanese soldiers were living there, but not wanting to arouse suspicion by hanging around she pretended to wipe her tears and walked off.

The puppet squad leader was waiting for her at the gate. Glaring ferociously he ordered her, "Tell your master to send up five loads of good coal every day, starting tonight. If he fails, he'd better look out. . . ."

"Bloody unfair, I call it!" the sentry grumbled. "Four of them get two fat chickens, four of us get only a small one without any grog."

Having learned from this that there were no more than four Japanese in the fortress, Snow Plum picked up her empty basket and left.

It was dark when Snow Plum came back. She went straight to Swarthy's house.

Swarthy lit a lamp. In no time Sun Ta-shan came in. When he saw Snow Plum waiting for him, he said, "Keep your voice down. That scoundrel Mo Cheng-tsai is still prowling around outside." Swarthy's mother at once went out, shutting the door behind her, to keep watch.

Snow Plum told Sun what she had learned about Helmet Mount.

"Who is it?" Swarthy's mother called out suddenly. Sun quickly put out the lamp.

"Just taking a stroll after supper," they heard Mo Cheng-tsai reply. Sun instantly stepped to one corner of the room and flattened himself against the wall.

"You seem to have plenty of time on your hands," Swarthy's mother remarked. Then she locked the door and went off to Hung-hai's home.

Mo stealthily tried the door and turned on his flashlight to peep through the cracks. Nothing was stirring inside. He walked away.

Swarthy's mother stayed with her neighbour until Hung-hai assured her that the streets were empty. She unlocked the door then for Sun and Snow Plum.

"Our chance for vengeance has come. Mountain Wolf's days are numbered," Sun told her. She nodded, well content.

In the quiet of the night, Sun started out with Swarthy, Hung-hai, Erh-keng and some others. They halted half way up the hill. The slope ahead was bare of undergrowth, affording the enemy a clear view of anyone who approached. From here they could see the fortress on Helmet Mount and the dim lights of the mine. From time to time enemy sentries howled like wolves, an eerie raucous sound.

This was something introduced by the Japanese at Helmet Mount after the capture of the nearby Polar Star fortress. At night all sentries had to howl from time to time and respond to the howls of others to prove that they had not fallen asleep and that their fortress was safe. This howling was supposed to embolden them.

"They're nearly finished and still howling," whispered Swarthy.

"Let them howl away. They're watchmen for us," someone answered.

"Sh-h, the coal carriers are here," said Sun.

Madcap and four other miners now appeared, shouldering carrying-poles with heavy crates at both ends. They deliberately made a loud noise as they came up.

"Who's there?" asked the puppet sentry. The Japanese sentry in the fortress picked up his rifle.

"Coal for you!" shouted Madcap.

"Why bring it so late?"

"You missed out on chickens, didn't you? To make up for that, we were told to bring you coal."

The men were now approaching the compound gate. Abruptly the sentry shouted, "Halt! How many of you are there?"

"Didn't your squad leader ask for five loads of coal?"

"Come in one by one."

The miners put down their crates outside the gate. By this time Sun Ta-shan and his men had also come up.

As soon as the puppet sentry opened the gate, Madcap seized him by the neck. His grip was so hard that the sentry flopped dead without so much as a groan. Then, Sun in the lead, they rushed into the compound.

"What's going on there?" demanded the puppet squad leader inside the sentry house. He stood up from his place beside the stove, tossed away his cigarette butt and stepped out. At once, Sun rammed the pistol into his chest. Before the man could arouse the Japanese another miner rushed up and gripped his neck. Others seized the two puppet soldiers who were still sleeping. Meanwhile outside the sentry house Madcap had started howling like a wolf. So the Japanese soldiers were totally unaware of the happenings below.

The puppet squad leader put up a desperate struggle until the miners lost patience and finished him off with a dagger. They took down the guns from the walls, tied up and gagged their two trembling prisoners and then advanced quickly on the fortress.

With four puppet sentries standing guard for them, the Japanese soldiers had felt quite secure. From time to time one of them went up to the top floor to have a look around, but at night he could not see clearly what was going on below. However, the continuous howling reassured him.

Meanwhile, Swarthy and Hung-hai, following Sun's orders to remain half way up the hill and await further developments, had no idea what was happening on top. Drawing his cutlass, Swarthy began to climb forward and Hung-hai followed suit. Not meeting any opposition the boys crawled right into the compound where Madcap, all on his own, was giving his impersonation of a wolf. When the lads started for the fortress, Madcap blocked their way saying softly, "Stay where you are." Before Swarthy could protest he started to howl again.

Ignoring his orders Swarthy made straight for the fortress. Madcap broke short a loud howl to whisper, "Come back!" Not Swarthy.

The boy reached the fortress just in time to witness the scene which followed Sun Ta-shan's noiseless entry. Three Japanese were snoring on their cots, probably under the influence of all the liquor they had drunk that day. When the miners crowded in, one of them

woke up. He immediately reached for his gun, but was pinned down by two men. The other two soldiers opened their eyes to see several men holding "rifles" draped in red cloth. Scared out of their wits, they tried to roll under their cots.

The miners trussed up the three enemy soldiers and set about gagging them, but one of the Japanese put up such a fierce struggle that Swarthy in a rage slashed him on the hip. The Japanese let out a scream of pain. Sun hurried to stop Swarthy, but it was too late — the Japanese on the third floor had heard the noise. When he clattered downstairs, ready to open fire, he was instantly shot by Sun.

That shot alerted the sentries in other enemy strongholds who promptly started firing their guns at random. Sun and his men collected the guns and ammunition, dumped their coal by the gate and picked up their carrying-poles. Then they carried out a swift and silent withdrawal.

5

All night through fierce gunfire sounded. Not a single Japanese or puppet soldier dared to venture one step out of their strongholds. It was broad daylight before a squad of Japanese soldiers crawled apprehensively up Helmet Mount. The corpses of the Japanese and Chinese traitors filled them with sorrow for the dead as well as fear for themselves. The survivors of the raid maintained that they had been attacked by a large contingent of the Eighth Route Army and blamed the Japanese soldiers in the mines for not coming to their rescue. This was all the information they could supply.

Mountain Wolf had sent Liu Tai and Chou Heng early that morning to report to Kameda on the situation in the mines. The two lackeys returned after dark.

Chou Heng said, "Captain Kameda has ordered the imperial troops in the mine area to withdraw to the mines and hold them. He wants you to produce more coal."

Mountain Wolf sprang to his feet with a cry of dismay. "First he retreats from Polar Star Peak to Helmet Mount, and now he's retreating to the mines. What's to become of us here?"

With the Japanese soldiers and the puppet troops both retreating to the mines, Mountain Wolf's home was like an egg about to be crushed between two sheets of steel. Naturally the traitor was frantic.

"Better send our sacks of banknotes and that case of gold to the city," suggested his wife Fat Sow.

"All he wants is more coal. My home'll soon be robbed and he's still making demands. . . ." Mountain Wolf's face was purple with rage.

"The Japanese are being repulsed everywhere they go in the hills. They're short of provisions but they still won't leave," said Chou Heng.

"Kameda is filling one hole by digging another. It wasn't easy for him to withdraw his men from the city, how can he come back now without achieving anything?"

"Didn't you tell him how active the Communists here at the mine have been?" asked Mountain Wolf.

"I did," said Liu. "But Kameda said to hold the mine and produce more coal. That's all. He said the Eighth Route only dispatched a small force to the mine and this was a move to draw him away from the hills."

"I don't care what you say — I'll take my money to the city."

The next day, sure enough, Mountain Wolf went to the city.

Another day passed, but Kameda did not return. The Japanese from the nearby fortresses had all withdrawn to the mines. Madcap asked Sun Ta-shan, "Why hasn't Kameda withdrawn his forces yet?"

"That's what I'd like to know," replied Sun. "Most likely the old fox is unwilling to quit because he thinks we're not strong enough to beat him and he can still squeeze some coal out of our base."

"Why not show him our strength? Let's attack the fortress by the mine entrance tonight."

"No, the Japanese have concentrated their forces there. And they're on their guard now."

"What's to be done then?"

"We'll have a discussion tonight. Why not blow up the bridge? If the coal can't be shipped out, see if Kameda doesn't come hurrying back."

That night, in the derelict pit, a secret meeting of the Party branch was held. Sun Ta-shan's proposal was unanimously agreed upon.

When it was time for their shift to knock off, Sun told Swarthy and Hung-hai to keep watch while he fetched some dynamite from the store-room. He divided this among Swarthy and several other miners to smuggle out in their lamps.

"What do you want this for?" asked Swarthy.

"To blow up the big bridge." And he went away.

Swarthy was overjoyed to hear this. As there was still space in his lamp he made Hung-hai keep watch while he himself fetched three more sticks of dynamite. When he found he only had room for two, he was reluctant to throw the third away. Just then Erh-keng came to call them to go up.

"Open your lamp, quick!" Swarthy told Erh-keng.

"Isn't that dynamite?" Erh-keng was taken aback. "What do you want this for?"

"Don't ask. Just open your lamp!" Swarthy was frantic.

"Not unless you tell me why. You go out every evening but don't tell me what you're doing," grumbled Erh-keng.

"I'll tell you when we're out."

Erh-keng opened his lamp and stuffed the dynamite in it. Just then Mo Cheng-tsai came along, smelt the acetylene and caught sight of the three boys closing their lamps.

"Playing with your lamps? If you bust them, how will you find your way down the passages?"

"Our lamps don't work well. We were checking to see what's wrong," said Swarthy.

The next day when they had stolen more dynamite and were stowing it away in their lamps, Mo Cheng-tsai came up suddenly. "I've caught you red-handed this time, you young rascals."

At a loss, the three boys looked at one another. Sun Ta-shan stepped forward then to ask, "What's up?"

"I heard yesterday that somebody was filching dynamite," said Mo. "I caught these little devils fiddling with their lamps but paid no attention. Today I came to investigate, and I find these boys are the thieves."

Sun pulled a long face and said sternly to the boys, "Who told you to steal? Put that stuff down and scram."

The lads dropped the dynamite and were starting to go when Mo stopped them. "Wait a minute. What do you want dynamite for?"

"To raise money for food — what else?" remarked Sun lightly.

The boys were often seen in Sun's company and the loss of so much dynamite must certainly involve others — so Mo reasoned. Already he had his suspicions of Sun. With a hypocritical smile he said, "It's no joke stealing dynamite. If the Imperial Army knew about this, they might lose their heads. But we come from the same village, and since you've put in a word for them I'll let them have it this time, provided that this never happens again."

Sun realized that Mo suspected him. He said to the lads, "Your Uncle Mo says you can take it, so go ahead. Your Uncle Mo is a man of authority now. If the Imperial Army finds out about this you can tell them that Uncle Mo allows it; then nobody will have a word to say."

Mo was stunned to hear Sun shifting the responsibility on to him. But he decided to let matters ride till they were out of the pit. "Let's go," he said. "It's time to quit work."

"Go on." Sun jerked his head at the three boys. Swarthy, clenching his fists, had been prepared to fight. But he did as Sun ordered.

Mo, however, did not leave the mine. He told off a special agent to trail Sun, who soon realized what was afoot. He whispered to Swarthy, "Hide in a disused pit. You can get out at night through the ventilation shaft."

Since it was time for shift-changing, many miners were coming down in the cage. Sun walked slowly, letting Swarthy and his companions go ahead. At the first opportunity, the lads turned into a derelict pit.

Sun was in no hurry to go up. He rested for a while by the pit entrance and said a few words to Grandad Ching-shan who was on duty by the cage. Only when the cage had filled up did Sun step in. The spy behind him tried to get in too, but he was too late — Grandad Ching-shan had rung the bell for the cage to go up.

"Stop the cage, quick! I've urgent business," fumed the spy. "Right you are. Come back down!" shouted Grandad Ching-shan. "Somebody has urgent business."

Of course the cage drawn up by pulleys could not stop. The old man was just having a joke at the spy's expense.

The cages worked in pairs, while one went up the other came down. On the average it took only thirty seconds for a cage to reach the ground. As the spy bolted into the next cage, Grandad Ching-shan said, "I know you're in a hurry." He rang the bell and the cage went up straight away.

Up on the surface the spy could see no sign of Sun. At the most one minute had passed, where could Sun have got to in that time? After him quick! The spy dashed towards the gate of the mine.

Where had Sun gone? When the spy stepped into the cage in the pit, Sun remained in the other cage which carried him down again.

Sun was making his way to the derelict pit when he ran into his enemy again. There came Mo Cheng-tsai walking down the passage towards him.

After sending a spy after Sun, Mo had stayed behind to see if anybody in the other shift was stealing dynamite too. He was thoroughly put out by Sun's reappearance, especially when he saw that the miner had managed to shake off the spy. Well, since Sun had seen through his scheme he had better watch the miner himself.

Sun was completely at ease. He had no fear of Mo down in the mine. He sauntered towards a pit which had closed down. Mo who dared not follow him shouted, "Stop, or I'll shoot!" When Sun entered the pit and disappeared from sight, Mo decided to go to the surface to report. But just then somebody hit him on the back of the head, snatched his pistol and dragged him into the disused pit. It was Madcap, acting like lightning. Knowing that Mo was watching the dynamite, Sun had told Madcap to warn the other miners not to take any more. Madcap did so. And when he saw Mo trailing Sun, he crept up behind the traitor.

They dumped Mo on the ground in the disused pit. When he came to, he trembled with fear.

"What directions did Kameda give you, you spy?" asked Madcap. Mo threw himself on his knees. "Let me go! Spare me. . . ." "Out with the truth — what is Kameda's plan?" demanded Sun. "Kameda intends to mop up the liberated area first and then come back here to make arrests," replied Mo.

"Who does he mean to arrest?" asked Madcap.

The flunkey dared not answer.

"Me, Madcap . . . and who else?" Sun prompted him.

"No one else. . . ."

"No one else?" asked Sun, fixing his eyes on Mo. "Then why did you send another spy to trail me instead of doing your own dirty work?"

"I wanted to see if anybody else was stealing dynamite."

"Why send that spy after me?"

"I. . . ." Mo hesitated. "The mine's under curfew now. Let me take you out."

"No need." Sun turned to Madcap. "Take him further in and keep him there."

Madcap started marching Mo off. At the first turning, Mo struggled to run away. The young miner shot and killed him. He then lugged the corpse to a deserted shed and covered it with some planks.

Under cover of the curfew the enemy searched for Sun. But as soon as it was dark, Sun, Madcap, Swarthy and the others climbed up the steep narrow steps of the ventilation shaft. Then creeping through a ditch they made their way by a bypath to Red Rock Mount.

There Chang Pao-shan was waiting for them.

"How did you come here?" asked Sun.

"Because Kameda can't get at us in the hills, he's burning down the villagers' houses in desperation and killing anyone he sees. We've got to draw him away. Commander Liao has an ambush near Polar Star Peak, ready to hit him hard," explained Chang.

"We've got dynamite ready to blow up the bridge. When the coal can't be taken out, Kameda will probably hurry back to protect his lair."

"The bridge is so strictly guarded, how shall we blow it up?" somebody asked.

Sun glanced at Swarthy. "I'll do it," the boy volunteered.

"Swarthy," said Sun gravely. "The base is the centre of our resistance against Japanese aggression. It's only because we have a strong base that we're able to fight the enemy here. We mustn't let the enemy run wild. . . ."

Swarthy listened intently in silence, fully conscious of the importance of his task.

"Let me go with Swarthy," said Erh-keng.

Sun nodded, and they discussed the details of the task.

After dark, Sun led his newly formed workers' armed force towards the bridge.

With Mausers stuck in their belts, Swarthy and Erh-keng could hardly control their excitement as they quietly made their way to their objective.

The bridge, half a mile from the mine, was closely guarded by the Japanese. At both ends of it stood forts surrounded with electrified wires.

Sun motioned his men to get ready for action. Swarthy carrying the dynamite walked with Erh-keng across a nearby pedestrians' bridge to the other side of the river. As soon as they reached the turn in the railway, they crouched down in a ditch.

"The train's coming!" exclaimed Erh-keng.

A freight train came roaring towards them from the tunnel. As it swung round the bend, its strong headlight dazzled the boys who immediately lowered their heads. Swarthy tightened his belt, made sure that his Mauser was safe and settled the dynamite firmly under his armpit. "Come on!" he cried to Erh-keng. They reached the railway as the train slowed down. Swarthy let the locomotive pass, then catching hold of the handle of a wagon he hauled himself on to the train. Soon the train was crossing the bridge. Swarthy, flat on the roof, fixed on a buttress to land on and jumped nimbly off, while the train rumbled on to the mines.

Hardly had Swarthy landed on the ground when the Japanese searchlight swept over. As he threw himself flat he saw Erh-keng by another buttress aiming his Mauser at the enemy.

Searchlights swept the bridge with almost no intermission. Swarthy could hear his heart thumping. After a long time the freight

train loaded with coal approached, whistling, from the mine. As soon as the locomotive reached the end of the bridge, Swarthy lit the fuse of his dynamite. While the fuse was sizzling, both boys jumped back on to the train.

As the train rolled on they looked back. Suddenly with a blinding flash a tremendous explosion blew the bridge sky-high.

6

Forced to retreat and beaten at Polar Star Peak by the ambushed Eighth Route Army men, Kameda scuttled back to the mine like a scared rabbit and at once ordered Mountain Wolf to arrest the Communists there. But Sun Ta-shan and his comrades had already gone into hiding in Stone Tiger Valley. Mountain Wolf arrested more than fifty miners whom he ordered to reveal Sun's whereabouts. All of them, however, insisted they did not know. To impress Kameda, Mountain Wolf reported that he had rounded up all the Communists, and Kameda sent Wang the Blind with a squad of puppet troops to fetch the captives. Snow Plum hurried to Stone Tiger Valley to give Sun this information.

The miners' guerrilla squad organized by Sun numbered over twenty men. In co-ordination with a squad of the Eighth Route Army led by Chang Pao-shan they decided to surround Mountain Wolf's house to set free the arrested miners.

At one o'clock in the morning, Chang Pao-shan's men ambushed themselves at Locust Hill ready to intercept Japanese reinforcements, while Sun's guerrillas surrounded Mountain Wolf's house.

Mountain Wolf was standing on the stone steps before the hall yelling at the miners, "I'll give you one last chance. Speak out and you'll be rewarded; otherwise you'll be handed over to the Japanese who will put you in sacks and drown you in the river!"

Glaring angrily at him, the miners kept silent.

The traitor scrutinized the crowd and spotted Grandad Ching-shan. "Old fellow, how was the bridge blown up? Who attacked Helmet Mount?" he roared.

"I don't know," answered the old man slowly.

"Where's Sun Ta-shan hidden?"

"Don't know."

"What do you know then?"

"I only know how to try and fill my stomach by working in the pit."

With a crafty leer Mountain Wolf said, "That's easy. Captain Kameda is issuing an award to anyone who will tell where Sun Ta-shan is hidden. The award is three thousand dollars. With that money you needn't go down the pit any more."

"I've never seen so much money in my long life. The sight of it would blind me. Keep your money."

"You won't speak unless you're forced to," fumed Mountain Wolf. He turned to his lackeys. "Take him to the torture room."

As Chou Heng and Liu Tai stepped forward to drag Grandad Ching-shan off, the miners resisted. Then puppet soldiers rushed out with rifles in their hands. Grandad Ching-shan was strung up.

Wang the Blind, brandishing his gun, shouted, "Look here! This is what is waiting for you if we hand you over to the Japanese. If you don't want to die, speak out quick!"

Just then a sentry came in to report to Wang, "A child outside wants to see you."

"What for?"

"He saw some men with rifles. He wants to report to you."

"Then bring him in."

"He's too timid to come in."

Wang the Blind whispered something to Mountain Wolf, then walked out.

A boy in his teens was standing outside the gate. Wang went over and asked, "Well, what have you to tell me?"

The boy leaned close to Wang. "I saw several men with rifles, and a youngster among them." As he said this he stuck something stiff in Wang's back. The puppet officer was flabbergasted. "If you yell," warned the boy, "I'll shoot. Forward march!"

Wang was compelled to walk on round the corner. The guerrillas waiting there immediately seized him.

"Do you want to live or die?" asked Sun Ta-shan.

Wang turned white with fear. "I'll d-do whatever you s-say," he stuttered.

"How many Japanese soldiers are there in the main mine?"

"About ninety. Those from town have all gone back."

"How many of your men have come?"

"About thirty."

"If you want to live," said Sun, "call the two sentries out."

Wang made no move.

"If you won't, I'll shoot you," warned Swarthy.

Madcap and some others pushed Wang back towards the gate. It was still ajar, as the two puppet sentries were waiting for him to return. "Here . . . come out!" called Wang feebly, hardly able to speak for fear.

"What do you want, squad leader?" The two sentries, swaggering out, were instantly seized by guerrillas.

Sun led the rest of his men to charge into the courtyard, shouting, "The Eighth Route Army is here. Hand over your weapons."

The puppet soldiers, imagining that this was a large force from the Eighth Route Army, were too scared to put up any serious resistance. And the miners emboldened by the guerrillas' arrival at once went into action. They fell upon the puppet soldiers and seized their rifles.

Meanwhile Mountain Wolf and his henchmen had fled into the tower and locked the door behind them.

This tower, built of massive stones, had only one small window. Standing at the foot of it Sun shouted, "Throw out your weapons! Surrender!" Mountain Wolf, however, was confident that he could stay safely in this tower until his Japanese masters came to his rescue.

For the time being the guerrillas were indeed baffled. They could neither scale the stone walls nor could they smash the door which was covered with sheet iron. They could not afford to wait either, because with daybreak the Japanese troops would come.

How Swarthy wished he could slash the tower with his cutlass. "If you don't come out, you dogs, we'll burn you alive!" he shouted.

"Go ahead and try, you beggars! We're not afraid," Chou Heng yelled back.

"You stinking dogs, you're finished this time," shouted Madcap.

"Come up if you can!" Liu Tai fired through the small window.

Grandad Ching-shan who had been set free by the miners came up to Sun and surveyed the stone tower with him. "Ta-shan," he said presently. "Why not drill some holes and blow this damn thing up?"

An excellent idea! Sun immediately gathered several men to cover the window of the tower with their guns. Mountain Wolf and his lackeys dared not put their heads out, but they heard from below the sound of hammering.

"The paupers are trying to hack their way in," said Chou Heng.

"Hacking and digging is all those damn miners can do," responded Mountain Wolf. "We needn't worry. If they do make a hole we can stop them with our guns."

The miners were adept at drilling. In no time they had made a score of holes, put dynamite in them and lit the fuses. This done, they all withdrew to a safe distance.

"Blast the dogs to hell!" somebody shouted.

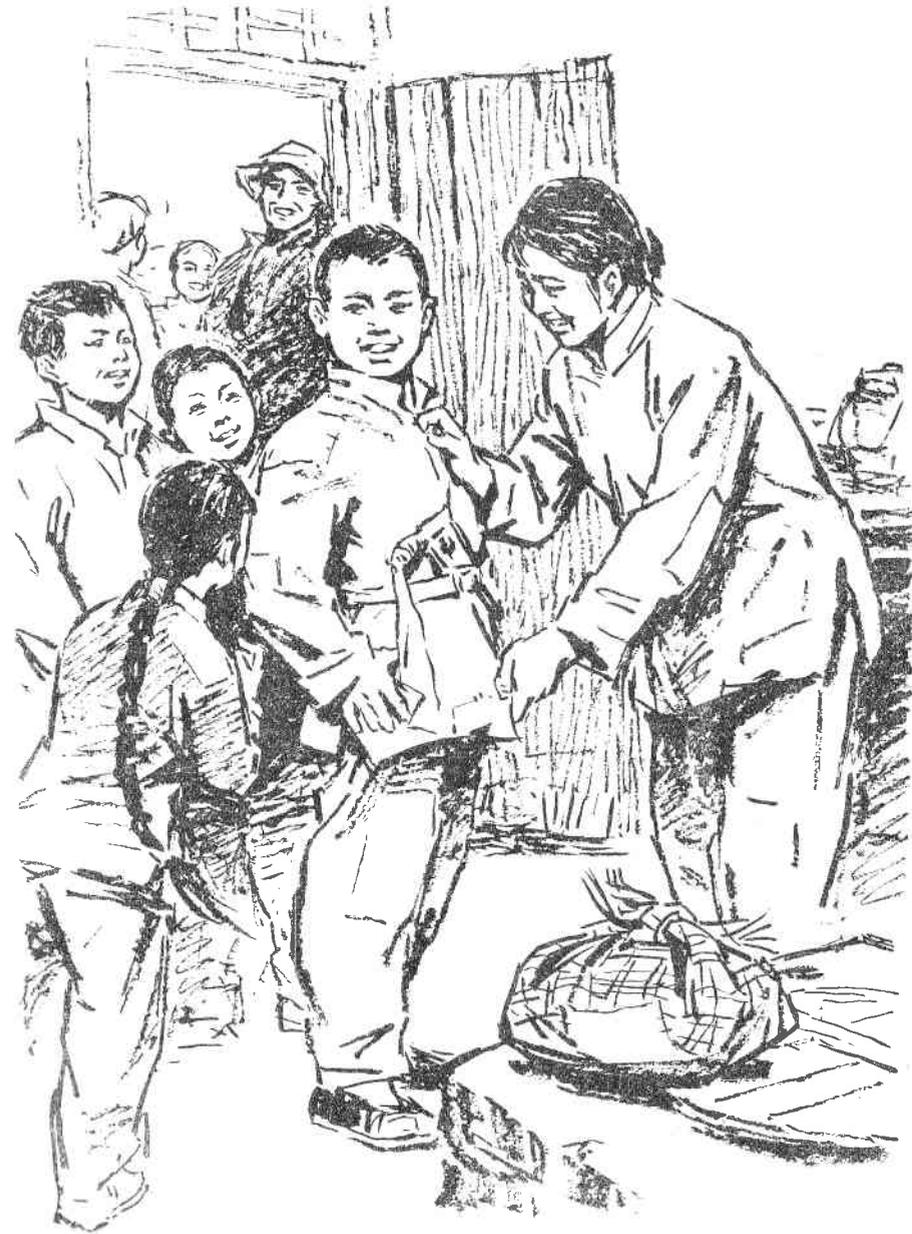
Only then did Mountain Wolf awake to his danger. Boom! One side of the tower collapsed. Mountain Wolf, unhurt, made haste to scramble out. Liu Tai whom he pushed ahead of him was immediately shot dead by the guerrillas. Under cover of the thick smoke Mountain Wolf and Chou Heng slid down to the ground, then ran for dear life in opposite directions through the darkness of the night.

Soon Mountain Wolf, running with all his might, grew aware that somebody was following him. Assuming that it was Chou Heng he felt no fear. The sound of gunfire on Locust Hill made him head for Helmet Mount.

"Quick, Chou Heng," he called back over his shoulder.

Now the way lay uphill. Mountain Wolf caught hold of a rock but it toppled down, holding him up. The man after him overtook him and, lifting a cutlass, shouted, "Mountain Wolf, do you know Swarthy?"

Mountain Wolf wheeled round in alarm, the cutlass struck down. He averted his head but the blade chopped through his ear and into his shoulder. Piercing pain shot through him, making him drop his



pistol. Not daring to pick it up he kicked it away and blindly turned to run. But Swarthy darted forward to pick up the pistol and shot Mountain Wolf through the heart.

The miners, hearing the attack on Mountain Wolf's house and seeing Eighth Route Army men coming down the hills, had now clustered in the streets. Sun Ta-shan addressed them on the need for resistance. And Madcap urged them, "Comrades, join the Eighth Route Army. Let's drive the Japanese invaders out of China!"

The people's army had mustered before moving on. Swarthy hurried home to see his mother. Snow Plum, who was hiding in his home, said to him, "I want to join the Eighth Route Army too."

"No," said Swarthy briskly. "You're too young to fight."

Snow Plum pouted. "Won't I grow up?"

"When you've grown up, you can join." Swarthy turned to his mother. "Ma! Please let me go!"

His mother, after thinking for a while, nodded. Smoothing the boy's clothes she said, "Of course I shall miss you, but the enemy won't let us live in peace. Go along. Mind you do as Uncle Sun says."

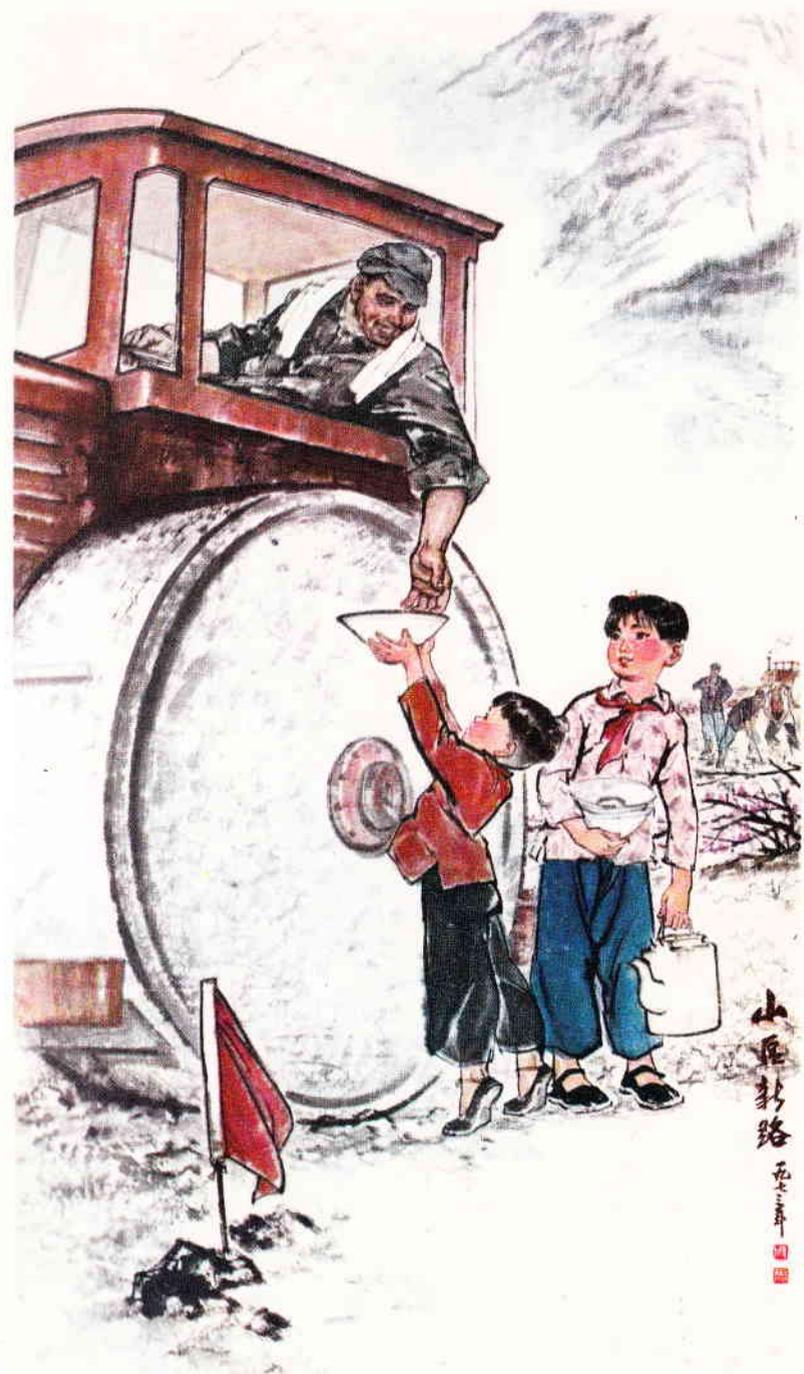
Swarthy jumped for joy. "You're the best mother in the world! We'll be around the mining area. I'll come and see you whenever there's a chance."

The army began to set off. Swarthy hastened to join the ranks. His mother stood by the gate watching and as he marched away with the Eighth Route Army a boundless joy filled her heart. Several young miners, too, gazed after their work-mate with admiring eyes as they waved goodbye to him.

The army ascended Polar Star Peak. Day was breaking in the east. As Swarthy stood at the top of the peak, breathing in the mountain air, it seemed to him more refreshing and more exhilarating than ever before.

Illustrated by Huang Chia-yu

New Road in the Mountains (traditional Chinese painting) by Chou Szu-tsung



山
兵
新
路
五
年
春

POEMS

TSAI LO

Ninety-nine Lyres Facing the Sun

Countless are the birds in our Liangshan forests,
As countless the melodies we play on our lyres;
In our best songs we turn to Peking,
To thank Chairman Mao, who has led our Yi people
To such great joy and happiness.

Everywhere all over our far-flung mountains
Like bright clouds lie masses of buckwheat flowers;
Riding on ninety thousand phoenixes
and nine thousand horses,
We shall invite Chairman Mao to visit us,
We shall invite Chairman Mao to visit us.

Along eight hundred *li* of mountain roads,
Bright lamps with silver wires hang on golden posts;
Travelling over ninety thousand golden bridges,
 playing nine thousand lyres,
We shall invite Chairman Mao to visit us,
We shall invite Chairman Mao to visit us.

The music from our lyres floats across the mountains,
Coming from the very hearts of our Yi people;
With ninety-nine lyres held facing the sun,
We wish Chairman Mao a long, long life.



KAO YU-CHAO

The Miners' New Village

Around our emerald green mountains
There's a new stream flowing.
Where are the ramshackle huts of yesterday?
Fine new brick buildings have replaced them,
Where flowers deck the balconies,
Bringing spring right to our windows.

Through one of them I glimpse a fine picture,
A girl trying on a miner's hat before a mirror;
I can hear her laughing gaily.
As her mother helps to push her heavy braids
Under the hat, she says to her daughter,
"Now even a girl like you works in the mine!
Times have certainly changed."

Rows of brick buildings face each other,
From one balcony, a miner calls
To his apprentice on the opposite one,
“How much did you do last night?”
With a broad grin the youngster answers,
“You’ll never guess,
We exceeded all your calculations!”

At the end of our village on the basket-ball court,
There’s a great to-do, cheering and clapping
For the game has ended in a draw.
But the young players on both sides shout,
“We’ll compete with you again,
But down in the mine!”

There’s an approach to a tunnel
At the foot of our mountain,
Where children fill their toy carts with earth.
To mimic the miners they pull their caps down low
And smear dirt over their sweet young faces.

In the old days this place was called “the gateway to Hell”,
Now rows of young willows wave in the wind.
Red and green buses shuttle to and fro,
Loaded with miners going and returning from work,
All singing gaily as they go.

Under an ancient maple tree we’ve hung a painting.
As he points to a row of tumbledown mud huts,
An old white-haired miner explains,
“These were here by the mountain thirty years ago,
While among rank weeds growing there,
Many a miner’s corpse lay rotting in the gullies.
Now, after many earth-shaking events,
Our whole village is completely new.”



LIANG SHANG-CHUAN

Our Bare-foot Doctor

I, old Musu, who have long been blind,
Can now once more see the light of day.
For scores of years I lost my sight,
Now tears of joy fill my eyes.
The darkness in which I groped for many years
Has been swept away for ever.
When first I regained my sight, I asked,
“Which doctor has done this for me?”

Ah, it's you, our bare-foot doctor,
The new doctor who has come to help our Yi folk!
Though only now I see you for the first time,
Long has my heart felt your kindness.

Although your looks were quite unknown to me
I knew and recognized your voice quite well;
But I had no clear picture of you in my mind,
Till you gave me back my sight!

As I gaze at you, my dear young girl,
It reminds me of my daughter's bitter end.
When once the slave-owner's son was ill,
The *bimo** said a ghost was haunting him and that
To appease the ghost, another child must die.
The slave-owner chose my young daughter for his victim.
Powerless to avenge my poor murdered child,
Burning rage and grief blotted out my sight.

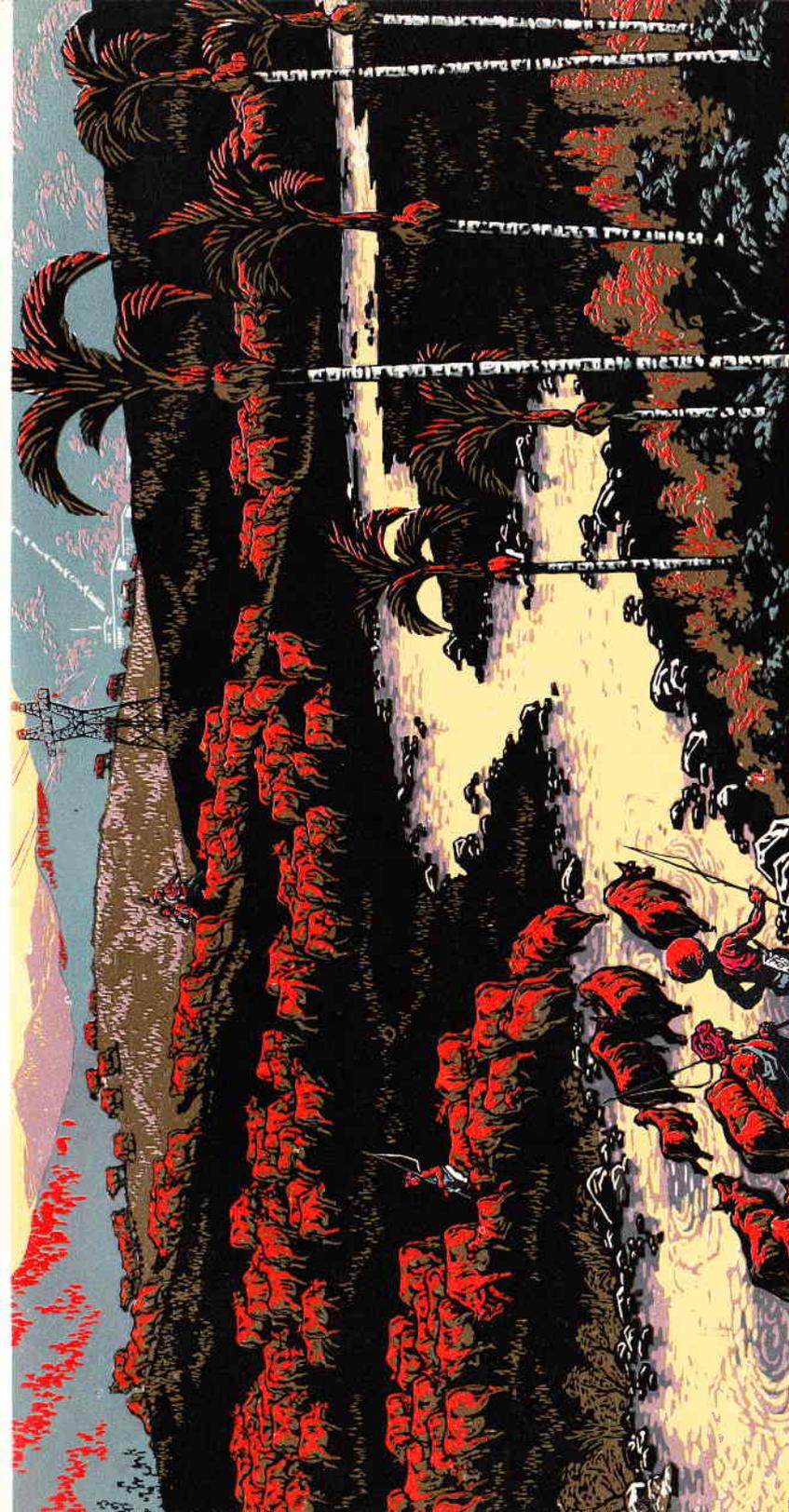
At our meeting to denounce the past, you wept with us;
Together we found the root cause of all our woes.
With the sorrows of us slaves imprinted on your heart
Even when unsolicited, you still go to cure the sick.
Seeking healing herbs, you've climbed our mountains,
Braving frost and snow or the darkest night,
You always go where you're most needed.
Your medical kit you carry everywhere,
Your lantern is always filled and ready.
All our Yi folk are full of praise for you,
You have become one of our own flesh and blood.

*The Yi people's name for the local sorcerer.

With bright eyes and light of heart,
Old Musu gazes fondly at the young girl,
Saying, "Truly, you are one of our own Yi folk,
A good doctor sent to us by the Party."



Pasturing on the Mountains (woodcut)
by Teng Tzu-ching



NOTES ON ART

CHU LAN

A Decade of Revolution in Peking Opera

Led by the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao and under the guidance of Chairman Mao's proletarian line in literature and art, revolution in Peking opera has gone through ten years of struggle and development. Ten years is not a long time, but in this period tremendous and fundamental changes have taken place on China's literary and art front.

Ten years ago, the revisionist line in literature and art, pushed by Liu Shao-chi and Chou Yang and their ilk, dominated China's literature and art. Under their domination, the entire field of literature and art was permeated with the murky atmosphere of stressing the past rather than the present, venerating what was foreign and negating what was Chinese, praise for the dead and contempt for the living. Literature and art in China was peopled either by emperors, princes, generals, ministers, scholars and beauties, or by ghosts and monsters. Almost all were feudal, bourgeois or revisionist. The

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anomaly was that the landlord and bourgeois classes, which had been overthrown politically, were still swashbuckling their way through our literature and art, while the workers, peasants and soldiers, the masters of the country, were ignored. This state of affairs was seriously undermining the socialist economic base and was harmful to the fundamental interests of the proletariat and the revolutionary people.

Today, after ten years of effort, this state of affairs has been fundamentally changed. After a decade of hard struggle, the proletarian revolution in literature and art, which began with the revolution in Peking opera and was marked by the creation of model revolutionary stage productions, has been crowned with success. China now has 17 model revolutionary stage productions which were created and cultivated by the proletariat itself. The first eight model revolutionary stage productions came into being in the early years of the Peking opera revolution, and like spring thunder, they announced a shining victory of the revolutionary line in literature and art formulated by Chairman Mao in his *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*. They ushered in the new era of socialist literature and art in China and brought to an end the domination of the stage by lords and ladies and their pampered sons and daughters of past centuries, marking the birth of the worker-peasant-soldier heroes in proud and full display of their role on the stage. This is a change of great importance in the history of Chinese literature and art. The eight model stage productions were followed in recent years by a number of new model revolutionary works, including selections from the Peking opera *The Red Lantern* with piano accompaniment, the piano concerto *The Yellow River*, modern revolutionary Peking operas *Song of the Dragon River*, *Red Detachment of Women*, *Fighting on the Plain* and *Azalea Mountain*, modern revolutionary dance dramas *Ode to Yimeng* and *Children of the Grassland* and the revolutionary symphonic music *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*. These works helped consolidate and develop the fruits of this great revolution and further promoted the vigorous development of the nation-wide creation of socialist literature and art. A great number of good and comparatively good works have emerged in literature, drama, film,

music, fine arts, photography, dance and *chuyi* (ballad-singing, story-telling and cross-talk) and, in the years to come, more and better works are sure to come into being. The developments in the past decade show that our socialist literature and art are bound to flourish more vigorously year upon year.

The tremendous changes of the last ten years are by no means accidental. The occurrence of this revolution in Peking opera was determined by the reality of the existence of classes, class contradiction and class struggle in the historical period of socialism. It is an essential product of the struggle between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism, and a strategic proletarian measure to prevent capitalist restoration and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat under the guidance of the Party's basic line.

The facts of class struggle within and outside China show that after the entry of proletarian revolution into the socialist stage, the overthrown classes, unwilling to resign themselves to defeat, always utilize their influence in the sphere of ideology, formed over a long period, to corrupt and destroy the economic base of socialism and unleash an attack on the proletariat. They use the field of literature and art as a bridgehead for propagandizing the reactionary world outlook and restoring capitalism. The Soviet revisionist renegade clique, in the course of its over-all capitalist restoration, used literature and art as an important field for creating counter-revolutionary opinion. In China, representatives of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, such as Liu Shao-chi, Lin Piao and their like, desperately seized on ideology and literature and art for the same purpose. All these facts illustrate that a socialist system is still unconsolidated if socialist revolution is confined to the economic front and no thoroughgoing socialist revolution is carried out on the political and ideological front, including literature and art; the bourgeois dream for a restoration may then be turned into reality. The proletariat, in order to smash the class enemy's plot for restoration and carry socialist revolution through to the end, must stand in sharp opposition to it, firmly occupy the art and literary front, attach importance to class struggle in the ideological sphere and exercise all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the realm of the superstructure, including the various spheres of culture.

Chairman Mao has always attached major importance to the socialist revolution in ideology; he initiated and led the past important struggles on the literary and art front. At the working conference of the Central Committee at Peitaiho in August 1962, and at the Tenth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Party in September of the same year, Chairman Mao summed up the historical experience of the Chinese revolution and the international communist movement in a deep-going way, comprehensively put forward the basic line of the Party for the historical period of socialism and called on the people never to forget class and class struggle. The open polemics between the Marxist-Leninists and the modern revisionists internationally and the nation-wide socialist education movement at home in 1963 pushed to a new stage the proletarian struggle to oppose and prevent revisionism. With the intensified class struggle and two-line struggle at home and abroad, the struggle for restoration and counter-restoration in the literary and art field became still sharper. Within this historical framework and with regard to the questions arising from revisionist control over China's drama and other arts, Chairman Mao specifically stated: **"The social and economic base has changed, but the arts as part of the superstructure, which serve this base, still remain a serious problem. Hence we should proceed with investigation and study and attend to this matter in earnest."** This set the task for the proletarian revolution in literature and art and the orientation of the revolution. In response to Chairman Mao's call, the proletariat launched a revolution in the Peking opera, the ballet and symphonic music. In July 1964, Comrade Chiang Ching made a speech "On the Revolution of Peking Opera" at the forum of theatrical workers participating in the festival of Peking opera on contemporary themes. This speech was important for its Marxist spirit of daring to go against the tide, and was a declaration of war against the revisionist line on literature and art. During the past decade, it has stood as an encouragement to the revolutionary literary and art fighters in their struggle for the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Old Peking opera is a stubborn fortress of landlord and capitalist ideology. The main content of its former repertoire may be sum-

marized as fanatical ideas springing from the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. These reactionary concepts clothed the characters eulogized in Peking opera in the past. They included: the "three cardinal guides", namely, ruler over subject, father over son, and husband over wife; the "five constant virtues", namely, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and sincerity; the women's "three degrees of dependence" namely, on the father before marriage, on the husband after marriage, and on the son after decease of husband; the "four moral obligations" for women namely, good character, good manners, good appearance and good handiwork; and "loyalty, filial piety, chastity, righteousness" and "loyalty, forbearance, benevolence and love". Precisely because of this the reactionary rulers in the Ching Dynasty (1644-1911 A.D.) and, later, the northern warlords and Kuomintang reactionaries honoured old Peking opera as "national essence" and "national drama"; as for saying they honoured it, it would be more appropriate, perhaps, to say that they made use of it. They used old Peking opera to corrupt and poison the minds of the Chinese people to enslave them. From their reactionary class stand, Liu Shao-chi, Peng Chen, Chou Yang and company turned Peking opera circles into an impenetrable "independent kingdom". While using the stage to poison the minds of the people with the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, they fashioned one poisonous arrow after another against the Party and socialism through the medium of the Peking opera. Could this be allowed to go on? The answer is no. To tolerate this would mean to tolerate the undermining of the foundations of socialism and to permit retrogression to the semi-colonial and semi-feudal, dark society. This the Chinese people would never tolerate. The Peking opera was chosen as the sector at which a breakthrough was made by the proletarian revolution in literature and art. This in itself is an important struggle in the criticism of Confucius and Mencius, the aim being to destroy the spiritual pillar used for centuries by the reactionary classes to make the people's lives a hell on earth. By capturing this stubborn fortress of the old Peking opera, we can accumulate experience in struggle, propel forward the revolution in various fields of literature and art and in the whole superstructure so that it will conform to the socialist economic base, and help to consolidate and develop it.

The tremendous changes this decade in Peking opera have not been easily won. The revolution in Peking opera is the first great campaign in the socialist revolution in the superstructure in the past ten years. The difficulties and obstacles met in this struggle were unusually great as were the efforts exerted to overcome them. This is a thoroughgoing revolution to destroy the literature and art of the exploiting classes and foster proletarian literature and art, the first of its kind in history. We must realize that the landlord and capitalist classes fostered the Peking opera for some two hundred years, developing it from among a great variety of Chinese operas into a theatrical form demanding exceptional skill. The proletariat wants to remould it, surpass it and achieve outright supremacy over it in the shortest possible time. This is not at all easy.

Is it possible or not for the proletariat to take firm hold of the position of literature and art? The key link lies in creating model theatrical works with **“unity of revolutionary political content and the highest possible perfection of artistic form”**. Only when we have such model works can we convince people and firmly hold the position against reaction. From the very beginning, therefore, in the Peking opera revolution the struggle for occupation and counter-occupation centred around the model revolutionary theatrical works. Faced with this revolution, Liu Shao-chi, Peng Chen, Chou Yang and their ilk, who represented the interests of the bourgeoisie, were panic-stricken as if a great disaster had befallen. Using the power they had usurped, they tried in a hundred and one ways, by open measures and covert tricks, leaving no stone unturned to prevent this medium from being taken out of their hands. The revolution had to struggle for each step of its advance. Each model revolutionary theatrical work was born in the midst of soul-stirring battles. But the new is invincible. For the proletariat to triumph over the bourgeoisie in the field of literature and art is an irresistible historical law. Shouldering this historical mission, the Marxists have led an extremely arduous struggle against the reactionary literary and art workers both politically and artistically, pressing boldly forward, blazing the way. Each model theatrical work has been repeatedly polished and careful-

ly revised, from script writing to stage production and from the rhythm of each melody to each dance movement.

The core of the issue in creating model revolutionary theatrical works rests on enthusiasm in trying a thousand and one ways to depict typical proletarian heroes. Viewed historically, the question of which class's heroic characters are portrayed and which class's representatives dominate the stage is a reflection, in a concentrated form, of the political struggle in literature and art. It can be answered only by analysis of which class's political line in literature and art is being served. Revolutionary Peking opera aims at portraying with artistry typical proletarian heroes, and turning the stage over to workers, peasants and soldiers in order to reverse the centuries-old reversal of history by the landlord and capitalist classes and restore historical truth. The proletariat has unequivocally put forward as a fundamental task of socialist literature and art the portrayal of typical proletarian heroes. Fundamentally, this draws a clear line between our literary and art movement and the literary and art movement of all exploiting classes in history. The practical experience in the Peking opera revolution proves that only when we portray well typical proletarian heroes can we apply Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to criticize the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius in literature and art and mould the world in the image of the proletariat. Only by portraying well typical proletarian heroes can we re-enact on the stage the revolutionary struggles of the Chinese people, led by the Chinese Communist Party, sing the praises of the great victories won by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in various revolutionary periods and on various fronts, and encourage the people in their role of advancing history. Only by portraying well typical proletarian heroes can we bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie in the field of literature and art. By adhering to this fundamental task, literature and art will succeed in truly serving the workers, peasants and soldiers.

Closely connected with the portrayal of typical proletarian heroes is the important question of how to solve the problem of inheriting the Peking opera art form and introducing changes in it. As Peking opera art had all along been used to present the past and people of the

old type, it is comparatively easy to use this art to depict negative characters, but quite difficult to depict new times and new people. The revolution in the ideological content of Peking opera inevitably calls for radical changes in the Peking opera art form itself. To apply the reformist method of “putting new wine into old bottles” obviously runs counter to the revolution. If the worker-peasant-soldier heroes of our era were made to sing the old tunes and melodies of the ancient people and mimic the behaviour and movements of the dead past, this would inevitably distort the portrayal of new life and the new people. However, to cast off altogether the special artistic characteristics of the Peking opera, to adopt a nihilistic attitude and start from scratch would also lead nowhere. If we intend that the artistic presentation of Peking opera — singing, acting, dialogue and acrobatics — should all serve the portrayal of proletarian heroes, we must, proceeding from life, do away with old tunes and melodies while critically assimilating and remoulding whatever is useful.

In the last decade the revolution in the Peking opera has been carried out on the principle of **“making the past serve the present and foreign things serve China”** and **“weeding through the old to bring forth the new”**, that is, correctly solving the problem of critically taking over the Peking opera art form and creating something new. The past and the present, foreign and Chinese, weeding through the old to bring forth the new, are examples of the unity of opposites. They are also a manifestation of the principle that destruction comes first and construction comes in the course of destruction. In Chairman Mao’s words **“there is no construction without destruction. Destruction means criticism and repudiation, it means revolution”**.

The creation of the music and dancing representative of the heroes in the model revolutionary theatrical works results from this process of critical assimilation and remoulding the useful in the old Peking opera art and creating something new. The composition of arias for each heroic character has revolutionized traditional melodies and singing skills. They bring out both the powerful spirit of our era and give play to the special artistic characteristics of the melodies of Peking opera. Today, our people — men and women, old and young,

connoisseurs and amateurs alike — like to sing the melodies of the model revolutionary theatrical works. The powerful and melodious tunes used to portray our heroes ring out from every corner of our country. Facts have eloquently proved that in art, our model revolutionary theatrical works have triumphed over old Peking opera, become overwhelmingly superior and opened for the proletariat the revolutionary road of critically inheriting and remoulding this classical art form.

A contingent of proletarian literary and art workers has gradually been formed from the revolution of Peking opera over the past decade, through acute class struggle and arduous artistic practice. They have worked shoulder to shoulder with the other literary and art workers in the field of music and dance and with the masses of worker-peasant-soldier amateurs have combined to become the main force of the proletarian revolution on literature and art. These contingents of proletarian literary and art workers have been formed in the practice of revolution and artistic pursuits. Developing in the course of revolutionizing the Peking opera, they have attained a political-ideological level and artistic level beyond the reach of those trained in the old art colleges and schools of the past. This shows that **“to learn warfare through warfare”** is our best method. In future, we must persist in forming, uniting and expanding our contingents in the course of struggle. So long as we pay close attention to building up through struggle the contingents ideologically and organizationally, remoulding their world outlook and conception of literature and art, attaching importance to the correct ideas guiding creation, we can surely develop and expand the ranks of proletarian literary and art workers.

The past decade may be called a pioneering period for proletarian literature and art. If we review the history of the literature and art of mankind, we see how many years the exploiting classes took to create a literature and art of their own. Under feudalism, it took thousands of years and under the bourgeoisie hundreds, yet only a limited number of representative works have been handed down. By the time it reached the stage of imperialism, capitalism was in its decadence and decline. The stage became a platform for the “modernist school”, fauvism, strip-tease and other degenerate rubbish. The works are

numerous and varied but share the common characteristic of poisoning or lulling the minds of the people. The Soviet revisionist renegade clique, as well as continuing to develop this vicious rubbish, have in recent years tried to elicit writing on the "theme of military patriotism" to boost militarism to serve its expansionism and aggression against territories of other countries and to create public opinion in favour of its world hegemony. The literature and art of imperialism and social-imperialism, like their social and ideological systems, resembles a patient, sinking fast on his deathbed; they can no longer produce works of stature. Contrasting our decade with the thousands of years and hundreds of years of the landlord class and bourgeoisie, we find that "The landscape here is beyond compare", as Chairman Mao's line runs.

Although the proletariat has smashed the interference and sabotage by Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao, occupied the dominant position in Peking opera and won great victories, the struggle between occupation and counter-occupation in the sphere of literature and art is not at an end. At present, among those who are attempting to negate the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, are a handful of reactionaries who are directing the spearhead of their attacks against the Peking opera revolution.

That class enemies slander and attack the revolution in Peking opera is not a cause for wonder. It is an inevitable reflection of the class struggle. Their reactionary cries prove from the negative side that our Peking opera revolution is correct and good, and hits them where it hurts. The more savage the enemies' vilification, the more we should persist in our struggle to popularize and develop the model revolutionary theatrical works, consolidate and develop the victorious gains of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and carry our revolution in literature and art through to the very end.

Harvesting Coconuts in Hainan (woodcut)
by Wang Chun-hsiung



Three Young Artistes in the Revolution in Peking Opera

During the last ten years in the course of the revolution in Peking opera a contingent of proletarian cultural workers has gradually been formed through fierce class struggle and hard practice in art, bringing forward a number of promising young artistes. They have succeeded in depicting the life and struggle of our workers, peasants and soldiers and in creating heroic images of the Chinese proletariat. Li Kuang, Li Ping-shu and Yang Chun-hsia are three of these fine actors.

Li Kuang, who comes from a family of Peking opera artistes, is thirty-three this year. He plays the part of Chao Yung-kang, a platoon leader of the Eighth Route Army in the modern revolutionary Peking opera *Fighting on the Plain*. Recently we called on him to ask his views about the revolution in Peking opera. He told us that Peking opera has received a new lease of life and fresh vitality from the revolution, in its form and content, by following the orientation pointed out by Chairman Mao in the *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art* that literature and art must serve the workers, peasants and soldiers. He also described the profound education which he himself had received in this transformation of Peking opera.



Li Kuang in the role of the Eighth Route Army platoon leader Chao Yung-kang

In 1960, when Li Kuang graduated from the China School of Traditional Opera and joined its experimental Peking opera company, he thought his traditional training would enable him to serve the masses. Recalling that time he said: "Ten years ago, under the domination of the revisionist line in literature and art, nearly all the characters in the operas we put on were feudal emperors and princes, generals and ministers, talented scholars and young ladies. Usually we played to half empty houses. And when, occasionally, we went to perform in factories, communes and army units, the workers, peasants and soldiers used to comment: Why do you always put

on these shows about people of old times who are dead and gone? They don't interest us.

"In traditional Peking operas, the 'heroes and heroines' occupying the stage were princes and high officials, young literati and upper-class beauties. It was through these ugly images of the exploiting class that old Peking opera fanatically spread the reactionary ideological content of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. After Liberation Liu Shao-chi and his followers seized upon the traditional Peking opera in their attempt to restore capitalism in China. They told us to put on the old operas without making any reforms, and they made use of Peking opera to slander our society and attack the working class. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, this revisionist line in art was finally smashed by the revolutionary masses and our revolutionary Peking opera artistes.

"The revolution in Peking opera began with the modern Peking opera festival held in 1964. After ten years of hard struggle, it has won great victories. The heroic images of workers, peasants and soldiers in these revolutionary new operas are now well-known and loved by our people, inspiring them in their advance towards socialism."

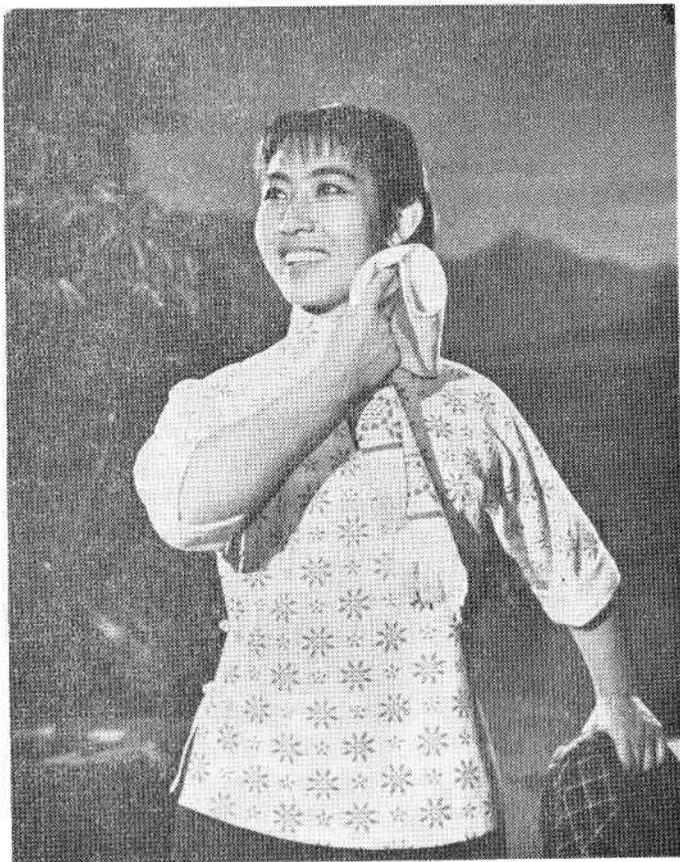
Fighting on the Plain presents people's war on the north China plain during the War of Resistance Against Japan. Its hero Chao Yung-kang has many singing passages as well as difficult acrobatics and dancing movements to perform. Li Kuang was originally trained as an acrobat. In order to portray this hero of the proletariat successfully he had to train hard in singing, elocution and acting as well, and he gained a better understanding of his part by discussing it with his colleagues. Together they evolved new methods of expression such as fighting the enemy with a whip and a sack of grain to bring out the revolutionary courage and quick-wittedness of the hero.

The woman artiste Li Ping-shu was also brought up after Liberation. In the new opera *Song of the Dragon River* she plays the part of Party Secretary Chiang Shui-ying, who is utterly devoted to the public interest. The opera shows the communist spirit of Dragon River Brigade in sacrificing its own interest in the interest of the

whole country. It helps a neighbouring brigade by blocking the river to let the water flow to the drought area. The opera extols the splendid love for socialism of the poor and lower-middle peasants and the advantages of the collective economy of our people's communes. Li Ping-shu told us how she had succeeded in depicting the noble character of this woman Party secretary.

Li Ping-shu when a girl studied the *ching-yi* role in traditional opera. In other words, she played the parts of upper-class young ladies.

Li Ping-shu in the role of Party secretary Chiang Shui-ying



At the start of the revolution in Peking opera, she assumed that it would be easier to play in the new revolutionary operas than in the traditional ones, for all she would need to do would be to act and speak as in ordinary life. She found, however, that this was not the case. She told us: "When I first rehearsed *Song of the Dragon River*, when I went on stage I had no idea what to do with my hands and feet. I felt completely lost. In the traditional operas, we had simply imitated the conventional movements taught us by our instructors, never stopping to ask whether they were lifelike or not, because none of us had ever seen those feudal characters in real life. But now that I was acting the part of a woman Party secretary, I had to create an image which would be true to life and the requirements of the drama. The masses, the peasants in particular, had their own idea of how the heroine Chiang Shui-ying should behave. If I didn't act in accordance with their idea, the image wouldn't be lifelike and they wouldn't approve it. For my own part, however, I had no clear picture of this character."

Because she had long been cut off from the life of the labouring people, Li Ping-shu could not understand the thoughts and feelings of the heroes among the workers, peasants and soldiers; hence she could not have a vivid mental picture of them. The only way to remedy this was by following Chairman Mao's instruction to workers in literature and art: they "**must go among the masses; they must for a long period of time unreservedly and whole-heartedly go among the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, go into the heat of the struggle, go to the only source, the broadest and richest source. . .**"

Between 1969 and 1970 Li Ping-shu went five times to the countryside with the rest of her company. She gradually came to realize the paramount importance of Chairman Mao's directive, the need to share the life of the people for a long period of time, unconditionally and whole-heartedly. And the key to this was having the conscious desire to integrate with the workers, peasants and soldiers.

The first time she went to the countryside, instead of trying to understand or learn from the fine qualities of the peasants, she just looked for a ready-made model of a woman Party secretary whom she

could copy. At that time a trial performance of *Song of the Dragon River* was put on for the peasants, but they complained that she presented Party Secretary Chiang Shui-ying more like an intellectual than a village woman. For, being unfamiliar with the character, she had inadvertently based it on her own preconceived ideas.

What really changed her, Li Ping-shu said, was her last three visits to the countryside when she went to Kehlung Brigade, an advanced brigade in the outskirts of Shanghai. The hard work of the poor and lower-middle peasants there and their determination to grow more crops for the revolution greatly impressed her and taught her a profound lesson. By making friends with many peasants and living in the village, she saw countless touching examples of their love for the people's commune and their collective economy. In turn she came to love the poor and lower-middle peasants as well as the opera's heroine, the village Party secretary Chiang Shui-ying. Their high ideals and wonderful spirit helped her to understand that the workers, peasants and soldiers are the masters of our new age, and that it is the glorious duty of all revolutionary artistes to give unstinted praise to such characters.

In Kehlung Brigade there was a woman Party secretary who belonged to a poor peasant family. The villagers confided in her and consulted her whenever they had problems. Although Party work and meetings kept her busy, she never gave up working on the land. Utterly sincere and deeply concerned for each family in the village, she spared no pains to win over the more backward among them. In all these respects, of course, she was typical of many fine cadres in our countryside. After staying with this woman for some time, Li Ping-shu came to have a clearer picture of the Party secretary in her opera. She realized that to portray such a heroine she must make her completely sincere and unaffected, with none of the complexity of an intellectual. When she next performed in *Song of the Dragon River*, the villagers approved of her portrayal. Old poor peasants seeing her in the fields would remark: "Here comes Party Secretary Chiang Shui-ying."

Li Ping-shu concluded: "To act the part of a heroine, one must first learn from heroines. While rehearsing *Song of the Dragon River*



Yang Chun-hsia in the role of the Party representative Ko Hsiang

I received an education and began to change my world outlook. The whole process helped me to mature ideologically as well as in my art."

Another actress Yang Chun-hsia, who plays Ko Hsiang in the new opera *Azalea Mountain*, is thirty-one this year. Ko Hsiang is a woman Party member sent by the Party to Azalea Mountain in the spring of 1928 to reorganize a peasant force and incorporate it into the Worker-Peasant Revolutionary Army led by the Chinese Communist Party which has high political consciousness and strict discipline. Resolutely carrying out the Party line and Party policy,

she struggles against the reactionary landlord forces and some saboteurs within the peasants' contingent, as well as against wrong ideas among the ranks of the revolutionaries. Ko Hsiang is a proletarian heroine loved by the masses.

Since *Azalea Mountain* comprises many innovations in singing, elocution, acting and acrobatics, we asked Yang Chun-hsia how she had tackled the problem of critical assimilation of tradition and the introduction of innovations. She explained to us how she had approached the singing and elocution so important as a means of projecting the heroine. She had started singing *kunchu* opera when only eleven, but in 1960 took up Peking opera and studied the *ching-yi* role. In both these traditional schools, by means of acting, singing and elocution the actress aims at conveying a sense of cultured elegance and gentility. The natural voice used in *kunchu* is more mellow but less ringing and clear than the falsetto voice used in old Peking opera, which has greater volume but tends to sound effeminate. The new revolutionary Peking operas call for a combination of both types of singing, while the spoken passages are delivered in a natural voice. Yang Chun-hsia told us that this combination makes the voice carry further, increases its expressiveness and clarity, and helps to bring out the revolutionary fervour of the heroic characters.

In order to depict Ko Hsiang both as a Party secretary and an ordinary worker who puts on no airs, she is made to carry two baskets of rice on a shoulder-pole. She comes on stage with quick steps, deftly shifts the pole from one shoulder to another, walks to the store-room and easily lowers her load on to a pile of baskets, then takes the towel from her shoulder to wipe her perspiring face and dust herself off. Yang Chun-hsia goes through all these motions with consummate skill. When first learning to carry a shoulder-pole, she loaded each basket with fifty catties of bricks, not dispensing with these until she was adept in the movements. This is how she succeeds in making the empty baskets appear like heavy loads. All her audiences comment that in this scene she looks like a real peasant.

Since Ko Hsiang has to fight, the actress must not only sing and speak but also perform feats of acrobatics. This was something

Yang Chun-hsia had never learned. To portray Ko Hsiang fighting with a bayonet, she worked hard to master difficult acrobatic movements performed only by warriors in traditional operas. As a result, we see Ko Hsiang dancing with manacled hands and leaping with skill and ease. Yang Chun-hsia told us: "These dancing movements come from traditional opera but we didn't copy them in their entirety. We followed Chairman Mao's instruction to critically assimilate what is useful, then introduced modifications and innovations on the basis of real life and the needs of characterization. This enriched our means of expression and also made our movements more realistic."

In this opera Ko Hsiang does some mending for the soldiers with the needle and thread which she carries with her, and makes straw sandals for them. These and other similar actions were distilled from real life and learned from the labouring people. By performing in this opera, Yang Chun-hsia has gained a deeper understanding of Chairman Mao's dictum: **"The life of the people is always a mine of the raw materials for literature and art."**

These three opera artistes Li Kuang, Li Ping-shu and Yang Chun-hsia are acutely aware that it was Chairman Mao's revolutionary line for literature and art which rescued them from the revisionist blind alley and set them on the right path of serving the masses. The heroic characters Chao Yung-kang, Chiang Shui-ying and Ko Hsiang are the first proletarian images they have portrayed. They are making a fresh departure in their art, fully determined to keep to the path of integration with the workers, peasants and soldiers, and to devote their whole lives to further revolutionizing Peking opera.

I Painted the Heroic Taching Oil Workers

The heroic workers who built the Taching Oilfield, a red banner in our industry, are a fitting subject for works of art. I went to Taching twice in 1972 with other artists from the Peking Studio of Painting, and, doing as Chairman Mao has called upon us to do, we worked with the oil workers for several months.

The local Communist Party organization arranged for us to visit the place where the field's first well was drilled by the late Wang Chin-hsi, known as the "Iron-man", and his comrades. We also visited the museum with displays on incidents from his life and talked to veteran workers and other people who worked with him. Veterans are proud and eager to talk about their famous team leader and the path blazed by Taching. They told us how the field began: In 1960, the Soviet revisionists tried to strangle us while our country was strained by temporary difficulties, and we were in great need of oil. When Wang Chin-hsi and other workers heard that a great oilfield had been located, they were elated and immediately applied to work there. Undeterred by the cold which was thirty degrees

below zero, they began drilling as soon as they arrived in this land of snow and ice. Wang Chin-hsi did not leave the drilling site for days, eating cold food when he was hungry, dozing off beside the drill when he was tired. This is when he won his "Iron-man" name. "He was truly a model for us to emulate!" the old workers say.

Our group went to live and work with Drilling Team 1205 which Wang Chin-hsi formerly led. Our main job was cleaning up the work-site. Once I had to climb forty metres above an oil well. The vibration of the machinery made the derrick shake so much I found it hard to move about. I clung to the railing and dared not let go. A worker called up to me that the platform was quite safe, and that the derrick shook much more during winter snow-storms. But he sent me up a safety belt just in case. Those workers are up on these derricks all year round, I thought, but here I am worrying about my own safety when I was only going to be there a few minutes. I was rather ashamed of myself and felt even greater admiration for the workers' spirit. They never left the spot even during the fiercest storms. How much better they were than I. In this way we gradually learned to know the Taching oil workers through living and working with them. They also came to know us and they gave us a great deal of help and education.

My two visits to Taching gave me the opportunity to learn the truth through practice. I began to have a deeper and more concrete understanding of what Chairman Mao teaches about relying on our own efforts and striving hard to overcome difficulties. The spirit of the "Iron-man" is the embodiment of this idea. Such a man is a shining example of the Chinese working class, and the Taching workers are models in carrying out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. After re-education by the Taching workers I found the way I thought and felt about things beginning to change. I began seeing things I had never noticed before. I came to see the lofty spirit of the Taching workers. With new love and respect for them, I became determined to put this into paintings of them.

If one wants to faithfully depict heroic characters, one must first have a correct understanding of them. At first when I saw those workers, their jackets covered with ice and faces smeared with mud

and sweat, I thought I could capture their image very well with the brush technique of traditional ink painting. And, provided I painted them realistically, the effect would be quite moving. But when I took my preliminary sketches to the workers for their opinions, they said, "Don't make us look like scarecrows. Make our clothes and faces cleaner." Their remark startled me and made me realize how different their ideas were from mine. I liked to paint them spattered with mud, feeling that only that way did they look like oil workers. I had not tried to reflect the spirit of the working class. Instead, from the petty-bourgeois point of view I wanted something exotic to add colour to my painting.

A revolutionary artist should consider himself a faithful spokesman for the working class. If he does not think and feel like the workers he will never be able to do this. Invariably his petty-bourgeois thoughts and feelings will overrun those of the proletariat. Then he is bound to distort and slander heroic proletarian figures. I thought of the character Li Yu-ho in the revolutionary model opera *The Red Lantern*. The creators of that opera did not limit themselves to real life. They did not emphasize how the hero, brutally tortured by the enemy, was covered with wounds. They only showed a wound on his temple and a few bloodstains on his clothes. They emphasized his lofty spirit and his courage. I concluded that since our art is for the workers, peasants and soldiers, I must get rid of my old ideas and depict heroic characters from their point of view. They must be based on real life but on a plane higher than real life.

When I did my painting *The Taching Workers Know No Winter*, (see opposite page) I did not make the workers' faces and clothes so grimy. There are five persons in the picture with emphasis on the three in the foreground, particularly on the "iron-man". My idea was through him to depict the revolutionary spirit and hard struggle of the working class at Taching. Though I never met him myself, through living with these workers I began to get some feel of his life and his spirit and it was with an intense desire to depict his extraordinary heroic spirit that I applied myself to paint and brush.



The other people in the picture are young workers. Through them I wanted to convey the idea that his spirit is carried on from generation to generation, which makes it even greater. I decided to paint them at work in a freezing snow-storm as a contrast to their own inner fire.

My two visits to Taching convinced me that if an artist does not share the life of the workers, his mind remains empty of ideas and he will not have a real understanding of Chairman Mao's teaching. After he has gone among the masses, if he sees only superficial things and does not use Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought as his guide, he will still not have a real understanding of their life and be unable to grasp its essence, so he will still be getting nowhere. Only when he strives hard to remould his world outlook by living and working with the workers, peasants and soldiers, and to change his class stand and the way he feels about things can he truly recognize life and understand it. Only then can he reflect real life in a profound way.

MIN MING

Impressions of the Albanian Folk Song and Dance Ensemble

The National Folk Song and Dance Ensemble of Albania, after travelling thousands of miles, arrived in China on a performance tour at a time when our movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius was winning a fresh series of victories. They brought with them profound friendship from the Albanian Party of Labour as well as from the people of Albania. Their whole repertoire was full of revolutionary militancy. Whether paying tribute to Albania's revolutionary history or reflecting her present-day struggles, the powerful performances left a deep impression on Chinese audiences.

The dance *Freedom Fighters* fully displayed the Albanian people's glorious tradition of defending their motherland, their fearless and valiant resistance to foreign aggressors. As the curtain rose, intrepid fighters in battle array marched towards the flaming battlefield. Their well-coordinated steps showed their singleness of purpose and the strictness of their discipline; while their quick agile leaps vividly



The Dance of Brightness sketch by Miao Ti

expressed the Albanian people's confidence and power to bury the invaders. This indomitable fighting spirit was yet more strongly conveyed in items reflecting their current struggles. The male chorus *Comrades, Chairman Mao Has Spoken* sings of the support the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao gave in a cablegram to Albania when she announced her withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact in September 1968. This song voices the determination of the Party and the people of Albania to guard Marxist-Leninist principles and hold fast to the proletarian philosophy of struggle, as well as the revolutionary friendship and militant solidarity of the Chinese and Albanian people. The female solo item *Gjirokastra Stands Firm Atop High Mountains* lauds the Party of Labour and its founder Comrade Enver Hoxha by conjuring up the magnificent scenery of the native village of the people's leader who "has brought Albania everlasting joy and prosperity". In highly original style *The Dance of Brightness* depicts the successful electrifying of all the villages in Albania. By portraying the joint efforts of workers, peasants and

soldiers to build an electric network and illuminate the mountainous regions, the dance symbolizes the brightness the Party of Labour has brought to the Land of Mountain Eagles and her people.

The performances of the Albanian National Folk Song and Dance Ensemble reveal a distinctive national flavour and superb artistry. The dance *Mountains Are Roaring* retains rich traditional colour — its brisk drumming steps and supple knee movements demonstrate the accomplishment of the classical folk art of Albania. In praising the new socialist way of living, *The Dance of Brightness* takes as its basis the people's life and work. Giving full play to the special features of folk dancing, it embellishes these to make them even more evocative, vividly conveying the collective wisdom and strength of the people. Other dance items such as *Albania in Festival* are new folk dances which have been improved upon by the artistes of the ensemble so that they have reached a new height in ideological content and artistic power. This accounts for their wide popularity.

Solo Peking — Tirana sketch by Chou Szu-tsung



The performances of the visiting soloists were marked by political fervour combined with a high degree of technical brilliance. They gave us a picture of the cheerfulness, humour, strength and fearlessness of the Albanian people. The well-known tenor Ibrahim Tukiçi is a virtuoso in singing folk songs. His rendering of *Brilliant Light Goes Far and Wide* and several other items instilled a new quality into each folk song and graphically brought out every subtle difference between them. When Shqipe Zani, a young soprano, sang *The Song of People's Hero Pal Melyshi* she displayed her boundless love for the people's hero and utter hatred for imperialism, revisionism and reaction. Her voice with its crisp timbre was deeply moving.

China and Albania are like brothers. **“China and Albania are separated by thousands of mountains and rivers but our hearts are closely linked.”** The performances of the Albanian artistes were permeated with joyfulness over the revolutionary friendship and militant solidarity between the peoples of our two countries. Our Albanian comrades-in-arms also presented several Chinese songs, including *Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman*, *On the Golden Hill of Peking*, *The Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention* and *Peking — Tirana*, as well as the Chinese dance *Song of Clothes Washing*, all of which express the profound friendship between the Chinese and Albanian peoples.

CHRONICLE

Documentary Films on Taching and Tachai

On July 1, a festival of documentary films entitled *In Industry Learn from Taching* and *In Agriculture Learn from Tachai* opened in the cities and villages of China. The films shown, all produced since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, include the coloured documentaries *Taching — Red Banner on the Industrial Front* and *Tachai — Red Banner on the Agricultural Front*, the coloured scientific and educational film *Tachai Fields* (part one and part two), *Tachai Flowers in Full Bloom in Hsiyang County* and the short documentary *Special Series on Criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius* (No.8) which shows the Taching workers' thoroughgoing criticism of the idealist fallacy "the high-born are wise and the low-born are fools".

These films reveal the revolutionary spirit of China's workers and poor and lower-middle peasants and sing the praises of Chairman Mao's great policy of self-reliance and arduous struggle.

This film festival is aimed at advancing China's mass movement to learn from Taching and Tachai.

Two New Art Albums

Paintings by the Hubsien Peasants and *Lu Hsun — Great Revolutionary, Thinker and Writer*, both compiled by the art collection team of the

Cultural Group under the State Council and printed by the People's Art Publishing House, have been distributed throughout the country.

The eighty paintings, reproduced in colour, by the peasant artists of Hubsien, Shensi Province, were chosen from the exhibition of their work shown in Peking in 1973 as well as from later works painted during the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius. The fifteen plates in colour of *Lu Hsun — Great Revolutionary, Thinker and Writer* were selected from the 1973 National Exhibition of Serial Pictures and Traditional Chinese Paintings.

The publication of these two albums marks fresh achievements on the artistic front since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and will spur the development of our socialist art.

Rapid Development of Tibetan Cultural and Art Workers

The labouring people of Tibet with their fine tradition of singing and dancing have created a rich culture and art. But its growth was cruelly thwarted in the past by the reactionary feudal system of serfdom. Before Liberation, Tibet had only one Tibetan opera company, the members of which were forced to perform like slaves for their rulers. To support themselves they had to work as day labourers or servants.

After Liberation, under the care of the Party, Tibet now has a song and dance ensemble, a drama troupe, a Tibetan opera company and a Lhasa cultural work team. Spare-time cultural and art propaganda groups have been set up in each special district and county as well as in many of the people's communes, and a large contingent of cultural and art workers are maturing in the course of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experimentation. Mostly sons and daughters of emancipated serfs, they are working hard to create a socialist literature and art in Tibet. While writing new items and revising traditional Tibetan operas they visit factories, mines, communes, forests, pastures and sentinel posts at the frontier to perform for the workers, peasants and soldiers. Since 1971, the eighteen members of the Lhasa cultural work team have produced

more than 70 short items to sing the praises of the socialist revolution and socialist construction in Tibet. They have given some 400 performances to audiences of 280,000 in the twelve counties and districts around Lhasa and other districts and have been well received by the workers, peasants and soldiers.

New Repertoire of the Hainan Song and Dance Troupe

Since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the song and dance troupe of the Hainan administrative area of Kwangtung Province have learned to perform the modern revolutionary ballets *The White-Haired Girl* and *Red Detachment of Women* and have boldly adapted various local folk songs and dances besides creating new ones. The Li dances *Happily Delivering Grain* and *Our Troops Are Coming over the Mountain* and the Miao dance *Opening Up the Mountain* are among the new items in their repertoire. They reflect the transformation of the Wuchih Mountain district, the new socialist developments there, how the national minority peoples are striving to learn from Tachai, the bumper harvests they have reaped and the steadily growing unity of army men and civilians — all happy results of the Cultural Revolution.

Peasant Art Exhibition in Fukien

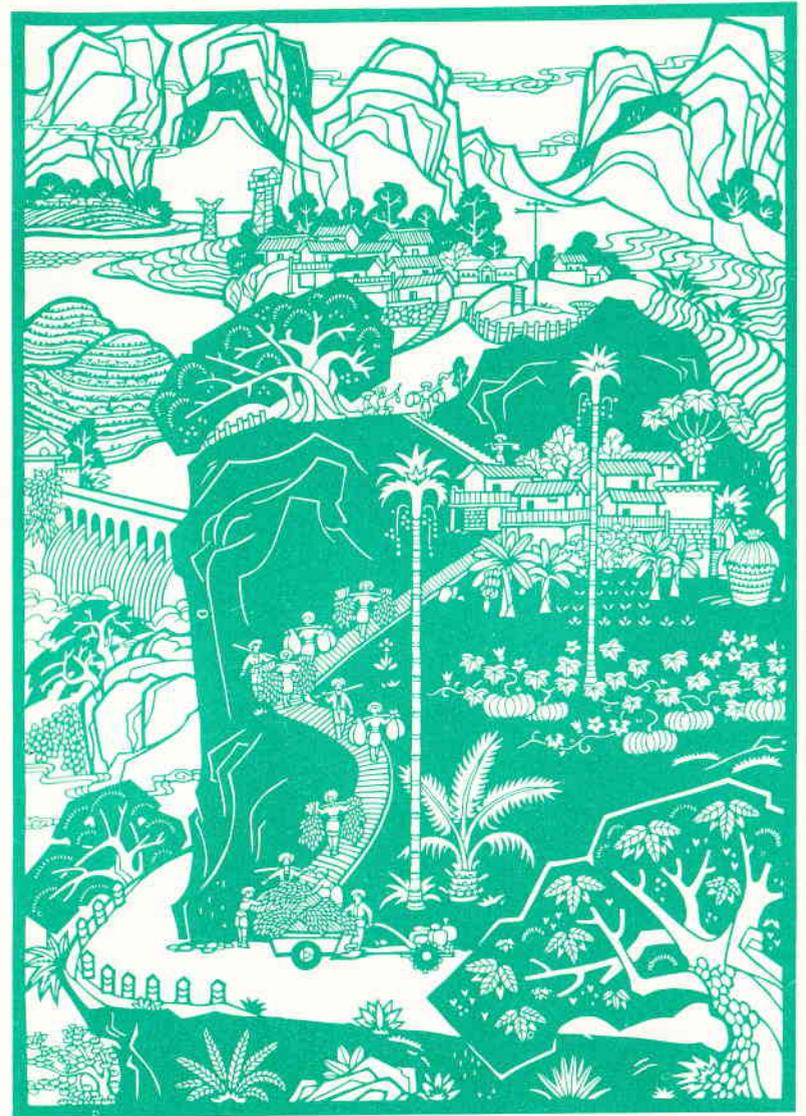
A provincial exhibition of paintings by peasants was held recently in Foochow, the capital of Fukien Province.

Learning from the revolutionary model theatrical works and the experience of the peasant artists of Huhsien County in the province of Shensi, the peasants of Fukien have produced in their spare time since the Cultural Revolution a wide range of art works of ideological and artistic value. The 132 exhibits, including traditional paintings, New-Year pictures, posters, serial pictures and cartoons, were chosen from wall newspapers, blackboard bulletins, mass criticism bulletins and painting exhibitions in the villages. They present a glowing picture of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line

and the new events since the Cultural Revolution, vividly reflecting the outstanding achievements of socialist revolution and socialist construction.

Many of the exhibits depict the deep-going movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius in the countryside.

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Beautiful Yao Mountains (scissor cut)

by Chen Yung-tsai



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