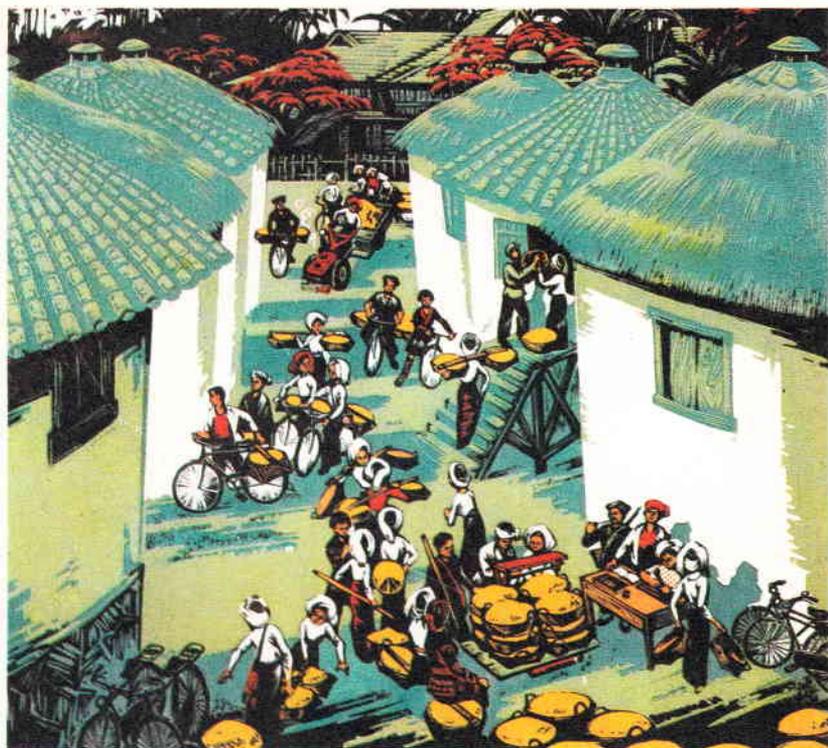


# CHINESE LITERATURE



High in the Yimeng Mountains (story)

1977 4

## CONTENTS

### STORIES

- High in the Yimeng Mountains — *Nieb Li-ko* and *Liang Nien* 3  
Sister Autumn — *Chao Pao-chi* 19

### SKETCHES

- Heroes Split Mount Chailing — *Sung Shu-wen* and *Sung Kuei-sheng* 36  
Callused Hands — *Tsung Ting-chao* 53  
A Pine Twig from Tachai — *Chang Kang-keang* 59

### POEMS

- Lake Hsiangyang — *Tsang Keb-chia* 67  
The New Canal — *Wang Hsun* 73  
The Moon — *Pieh Min-sheng* 75  
Our Pack-Horse Bells — *Yang Chun* 77

### NOTES ON ART

- Grand Panoramas of History — *Chung Shu* 79  
The Liberation of Six Popular Films — *Hsin Jung* 85  
Our People Sing of Chairman Hua — *Ma Chang-yi* 91

### REVOLUTIONARY RELICS

- A Blanket in the Military Museum — *Lin Chih-chang* 96

### CHRONICLE

100

### PLATES

- Our Great Leader and His Close Comrades-in-Arms (sculpture)  
— *Chou Chih-hai*, *Chen Kuei-lun*, *Yu Sung*, *Pan Hsi-jou*, *Fu Tien-chou*  
and *Cheng Yun-hsien* 2-3  
Chairman Mao Reascending Ching kangshan (woodcut) — *Ma Chen-*  
*sheng* and *Chu Li-tsun* 52-53  
Art and Crafts 78-79

Front Cover: Golden Grain for the New Granaries — *Chia Kuo-chung*



Our Great Leader and His Close Comrades-in-arms (sculpture)  
by Chou Chih-hai, Chen Kuei-lun, Yu Sung, Pan Hsi-jou, Fu Tien-chou and Cheng Yun-hsien

## STORIES

*Nieh Li-ko and  
Liang Nien*

### High in the Yimeng Mountains

Winter came early to the Yimeng Mountains in 1942. When a north-west wind sprang up, frost silvered the persimmon trees and a thin layer of ice formed over the streams flowing into the Yishui River. The temperature was dropping yet the army still had no padded uniforms. The leadership was worried. As the quartermaster I was even more frantic. We had captured a large quantity of cloth from the Japanese and uniforms had been cut out, but we had no cotton padding and no workshops where the uniforms could be made up.

Our command told me to take some cloth to the Kuling district to enlist the local government's help in buying cotton and making padded uniforms. My instructions were to carry out my task under the leadership of the district Party committee, and not to put the people to too much trouble as the times were hard with the war of resistance going on. As soon as I checked in at the district committee, the cadres of nearby villages were summoned to a meeting and asked to help make padded uniforms for us. I was very bucked by their enthusiasm. The one place that worried me was Kuchien Village,

for this poor mountain village close to the Japanese stronghold was under constant watch by the enemy. It was suggested that this village be exempted from the task.

A man in his thirties jumped to his feet protesting, "If I don't take back this task of supporting the Eighth Route Army, the villagers won't let me get away with it. We do have difficulties, that's true." He paused and turned to me. "Can we make revolution without overcoming difficulties, Old Fang? Don't try to give me a smaller quota either."

The speaker was swarthy and square of jaw and had protruding cheekbones. His eyes shone steadfastly under bushy eyebrows. He gave one the impression of a simple, optimistic peasant. District Secretary Wang told me that he was Pao Shan, head of Kuchien Village.

"I know your feeling for the army, Comrade Pao," said I. "But your village is too close to the enemy stronghold and, besides, you have no cotton."

"Comrades," Pao Shan interrupted. Sticking his long pipe under his belt he produced a pistol. We all stared at him in bewilderment. Slowly he said with a smile, "It's true we don't grow cotton. But we have the masses. To fight the Japanese aggressors and save China we can get anything we need, to say nothing of cotton. Look, haven't we captured this pistol from the enemy?"

Everybody laughed.

Secretary Wang whispered to me, "You don't know him. This meeting will never end unless we assign him his quota."

"Shall we give him a smaller one?"

Pao went on, "Hand out the material, quick. I have to pass the gun-tower at Chuchiachuang and get back to Kuchien before day-break." Lowering his voice he said to me, "Don't you worry, Comrade Fang. We'll find a way to get cotton. We'll not lag behind the other villages."

Hurriedly he took the material and left. But how could I help worrying?

I spent the next few days visiting different villages to see how the

work was going, but Kuchien Village was always in my mind. After getting permission from the district Party committee I put on civilian clothes and left for Kuchien.

## 2

The trip to Kuchien was tricky not because of the mountains that had to be climbed on the way but because one had to pass the biggest enemy stronghold in these parts — Chuchiachuang. A large Japanese force was stationed there and Chu Pa, head of the puppet troops, was a ruthless killer. Fortunately one of our comrades, Old Yang, had managed to get the job of head cook there. Today being market-day the place was thronged with people. Though the enemy was keeping a careful watch, Old Yang came out on the pretext of buying meat and vegetables to see that I had no trouble. He whispered to me as I was leaving the market, "Tell Old Pao that I've got the information he wanted." I was about to ask what he meant when two puppet soldiers approached. "Bring more carp next market-day," Old Yang said loudly. "I'll give you a good price for them."

"You'd better, or I won't sell," I replied and left.

Kuchien Village was still a dozen *li* away with Stone River and Camel Peak in between, but the path was sheltered and relatively safe. Just before noon I saw ahead of me a village surrounded by mountains with grotesque rocks and boulders strewn through its few fields. Could such a poor place, so close to the enemy, make us so many padded uniforms?

At the entrance of the village, the member of the children's corps who was on guard inspected my pass and questioned me carefully before directing me to the village office. Finding no one there I asked my way to Pao Shan's home. In the sunshine at the foot of the northern wall were a pile of padded uniforms and several baskets. A woman in her thirties, sitting crosslegged on a mat, was unpicking a padded quilt. She looked up at me and asked, "Are you the Comrade Fang in charge of padded uniforms?"

"How did you know?" I grinned.

She quickly pulled a stool over and poured me a cup of water. "My husband told me."

"Where is he?"

She lowered her voice, "He went away three days ago with a few militiamen to buy cotton in the enemy-occupied areas. He should be back today. Grandpa Chiang, nicknamed 'Old Peasant Association', is home. Have a drink, comrade, while I fetch him."

"No." I stopped her. "You're busy. I can find him myself."

She didn't insist but went on unpicking the quilt. I noticed that her clothes were thin and there wasn't much padding in the quilt she was unpicking. As I hesitated, feeling perturbed, she handed me a padded uniform, saying, "The sewing is poor, comrade. Will it do?"

The uniform was thick and soft, its stitching neat, close and strong. "It will do fine!" I exclaimed.

Her hands still busy she told me, "This was made by an old granny of nearly seventy." By now she had the padding out of the quilt, and having rolled it up she put it aside. Then, pulling over a basket of wheat stalks she began spreading them on the quilt.

I was dumbfounded as the truth dawned on me. Pao Shan and the villagers here were making padded uniforms with cotton from their quilts! I felt so moved I hardly knew what to say. Picking up the roll of cotton I urged, "Put this back. How can we let you folk cover yourselves with wheat stalks in the winter?"

Putting the roll of cotton aside she went on spreading the wheat stalks and then sewed the quilt up as if she had not heard me.

"Sister-in-law!" I raised my voice.

She looked at me. "These stalks are soft after being rolled under the millstone several times. They can keep out the cold. We'll be a lot warmer than you Eighth Route comrades marching over ice and snow." I was deeply touched by the calm sincere way she spoke.

"Well said. That's how all the villagers feel," cried Pao Shan coming in with two empty baskets. At sight of me he dumped the baskets and gripped my hand with his two big ones. "Old Fang, you've come in the nick of time."

Pao Shan looked travel-stained. In the few days since I had last seen him he had grown gaunter, his cheekbones more prominent. Only his eyes shone as steadfastly as ever.

"Comrade Pao Shan," said I pointing at the empty baskets and wheat stalks. "I know all your difficulties. The padded uniforms..."

He laughed. "We're short of cotton now, but I guarantee you we shall finish our quota."

"I'm talking about the tight enemy blockade..."

"Blockade?" He laughed again. "How can they blockade all our Yimeng Mountain peaks?"

He pushed me on to a stool. Picking up a bowl of water he gulped it down, filled his pipe and turned to his wife. "How many have we now?"

She showed him the uniforms. "This was made by Cheng-yueh's mother, this by Spring Flower, this by Liu-keng's grandmother... Here you are. Look them over."

"Sure. We must look them over carefully," Pao Shan told me. "We must give the Eighth Route Army only the very best." Holding the uniforms in his arms he fingered them gently. "Think them up to the mark, Old Fang?" he asked.

Before I could answer, an old man came in with a small bundle of cotton. "This is Grandpa Chiang or 'Old Peasant Association'," Pao Shan's wife introduced him.

"Why, handing in that cotton again?" Pao Shan walked over to help the old man sit down on a tree stump.

Ignoring him the old man turned to me. "Be the judge, comrade. This village head of ours risks his life to get cotton from under the very noses of the Japs. Why is *my* cotton refused so many times?" He turned to Pao Shan. "I'm handing in this cotton, that's flat."

"I've told you plenty of times how it is, Grandpa Chiang. You got stomach trouble working for the landlord, and the beating you got from the Japs the year before last when they forced us to build that gun-tower has given you chronic backache. You need to keep warm." He added persuasively, "The Party branch decided that you should make a padded vest with this cotton."



"I know how you and the villagers feel. But, remember, none of us died of cold working for Landlord Chu in the depth of winter with nothing to wear but sacking. This year the village has made me a brand-new padded jacket. I don't need a vest." He pointed to his heart. "If our Eighth Routers are warm my heart is warm too."

Pulling my stool over to him I took his hand and said, "The village head is right, grandad. At your age..."

"You're no better than Pao Shan, comrade," the old man retorted irately. Stuffing his bundle into Pao Shan's arms, he started off.

Pao Shan made no move to chase him, just called, "Wait a minute, 'Old Peasant Association'. I have a mission for you." That stopped the old fellow. Pao Shan went over to whisper into his ear, then inquired, "Can you do that?"

"What a question to ask when there's a job to be done!" he answered, mollified but still unsmiling. Turning to me he invited, "Drop in at my place when you have time. I've a job to do now."

I picked up the bundle and started after him, but Pao Shan stopped me. "You don't know him. When the uniforms are finished, I'll get my wife to make him a vest with this cotton."

"Sure. I'll do that as soon as I have time," answered his busy wife.



"Things are so hard for you here, Comrade Pao Shan, what you've already done can't have been easy. I think you've made enough."

Pao Shan shook his head. "Certainly not." Pulling the empty baskets towards him he said, "These may be empty today. In a couple of days they'll be overflowing with cotton."

His wife threw him a repressive look. "Is this your idea of a joke?"

He pushed the baskets away. "It's no joke. Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee call on the army and people to unite to fight the Japanese. You risk your lives at the front to win victory. We should do our work in the rear better too."

Secretary Wang of the district Party committee had told me that Pao Shan used his brains and knew how to mobilize the masses. He had plenty of good ideas too. Not having fully grasped what he meant, I inquired with interest, "Have you some new idea?"

He pulled his stool over. "No. But I have Chuchiachuang in mind."

Chuchiachuang? I gave him Old Yang's message. Listening intently he asked me, "Is there cotton on sale in the market?"

"None."

"Just as I thought!" he exclaimed.

I asked what he meant.

Pao Shan filled his pipe and puffed at it. "I found something queer in the three days we spent in the enemy-occupied areas. Usually, this is the cotton-selling season. But we didn't see a single wisp of cotton in all the market-places we went to. I found out from the villagers that the enemy in Chuchiachuang have snapped it all up, going to the surrounding villages to grab what they can. I see this as a reprisal for our capture of cloth from their train and the fact that all the villagers in our base area are making army uniforms. The swine know we need cotton and they've grabbed it all so that our army can't have padded uniforms."

"They can't do that!" His wife stopped sewing.

Pao Shan tied up his tobacco pouch and stuck it in his belt. "No. They can't. The Chinese people have grown the cotton with their sweat and blood. It should be used to fight the Japanese. We'll get hold of it!"

His wife looked at him thoughtfully. "You mean you're going to raid Chuchiachuang to get cotton?" She sounded apprehensive.

Sensing how she felt, he nodded and asked us earnestly, "What do you think of my idea?"

His wife told me, "Chuchiachuang is the biggest stronghold hereabouts with the largest number of Japs and puppet troops."

Pao Shan clapped his hands and put in, "Exactly. If it wasn't the biggest, we wouldn't single it out."

"Why?" she asked.

"Sister-in-law," said I, glancing at Pao Shan, "I'll explain for him. The enemy in Chuchiachuang reckon we don't dare touch them because they're so strong. So we'll take them by surprise, catch them off guard, and carry off the cotton. Is that the idea, Old Pao?"

Excitedly Pao Shan stood up and slapped my shoulder. "Didn't I say you'd come in the nick of time? We have the same idea."

### 3

While we ate Pao Shan told me how he planned to seize the cotton. He had it all worked out in detail. He did have a good head on

his shoulders. After the meal, he called a meeting while I went to the district committee to make a report. Secretary Wang did not return until midnight from his tour of the villages. He said to me cordially, "You're just the person I wanted to see." After I told him the situation in Kuchien Village and Pao Shan's plan he thought it over carefully before saying, "I've visited a few villages. Most of them are going ahead with their task of making army uniforms. But since the enemy started seizing cotton from the peasants, Kuchien isn't the only village short of cotton. If we don't get hold of some quickly we can't guarantee our troops padded uniforms." He paused. "Where is all the cotton? At Chuchiachuang. I think we can adopt Pao Shan's plan. We've still some time before daybreak. Come on, Old Fang, let's go and find Pao Shan."

"You don't have to go." Striding in, Pao Shan seemed to have dropped down from the sky. Sweat coursed down his swarthy face. Eagerness for battle shone in his eyes. I sensed that there must have been new developments and asked him what had happened.

Pao Shan sat down mopping his forehead. "Something unforeseen has cropped up."

Secretary Wang poured him a cup of water. "Did 'Old Peasant Association' bring new information?" he inquired.

Pao Shan nodded, downed the water and filled his pipe.

"If we know the position we can cope," said Secretary Wang. "Tell us your plan."

Pao Shan pulled at his pipe. "Old Yang says the Japs and Chu Pa sunned the cotton and then baled it. This afternoon he was sent to the city to get a few extra cooks, because a Japanese officer is coming soon to ship all the cotton to Japan via Tsingtao."

The enemy would guard the cotton more closely if they were about to ship it away, making it more difficult for us to get it. I was worried. Tying up his tobacco pouch and sticking it in his belt, Pao Shan went on, "I'll give my life to get that cotton. It's as clear as daylight that those devils haven't grabbed our cotton simply to blockade us. And we're not seizing it back simply to make uniforms either."

"How and when are we to get it?" I asked.

Pao Shan said, "Tomorrow is Chuchiachuang's market-day. I'll find out from Old Yang where the cotton is stored, what the size and weight of each bale is, and when and how they mean to ship it out. Then we'll map out a plan." After a pause, he turned to Secretary Wang. "What do you say, Old Wang?"

"Fine. But of course the enemy's bound to put up a fight for that cotton. We must be prepared for that or we'll suffer losses."

"I've thought of that too," said Pao Shan. "We'll only send some of our militiamen to Chuchiachuang, not too many or they would attract attention. The rest will help evacuate the villagers to the mountains to fight guerrilla warfare, if necessary. Then we'll mine the village to lead the devils a dance."

"Good," approved Secretary Wang. "Your plan is well mapped out. What difficulties have you?"

Pao Shan looked at me and smiled shyly. "If you agree, I'd like some support." When Secretary Wang nodded he went on, "First, let us have Old Fang. He can help us with his experience of fighting. Second, when we go into action, will you send some men to wait for us at Camel Peak?" Rubbing his chin Pao Shan chuckled, "Having no cotton is a headache, but a lot of cotton can be a headache too. Our villagers won't be able to carry it all. We'll need help to get it away quickly."

I stood up to assure Secretary Wang, "I'll gladly stay in Kuchien to take part in this action and learn from Comrade Pao Shan."

"Well. One proposes, the other accepts. That settles it. But Old Fang must take care of Old Pao's second request too. I think we'll ask the army to help transport the cotton. We can count on them for speed. And if the enemy give chase, they can cover the villagers."

"Good. I'll make arrangements for that."

"That's even better." Pao Shan sounded excited. "I feel more confident now we're getting help inside and out from the Eighth Route Army."

"You must work out your plans in detail, Comrade Pao Shan. For instance, evacuating the villagers is as big a manoeuvre as raid-

ing Chuchiachuang. It'll take a lot of organizing." Pao Shan nodded. Wang added, "The main thing now is to time your action for when the enemy's least on guard. Keep your eyes open at the market tomorrow."

Pao Shan pulled out his pistol, cocked it and left with the promise, "Wait for our news."

4

I returned to my unit to report. The army had succeeded in obtaining some cotton, my commander said, but raiding Chuchiachuang was something more than capturing cotton. If the militia could make a successful raid on the biggest Japanese stronghold in the vicinity that would deal the enemy a heavy blow and boost the morale of the masses. So an army detachment would be dispatched to help in the manoeuvre. On my way back to Kuchien in the afternoon I stopped at the office of the district Party committee where Secretary Wang told me that "Old Peasant Association" had brought the information that the action was to take place that evening. The feast Chu Pa was giving for the Japanese officer provided a good opportunity. I wanted to notify the army detachment but Secretary Wang told me to go straight to Kuchien where Pao Shan was waiting for me. He would send someone else to the army.

All was quiet in Kuchien. The place seemed deserted, with no sign of tense preparations for a battle. Where was everybody, I wondered. At Pao Shan's home "Old Peasant Association" was sitting with his back to the door jamb dozing. Wakened by my footsteps he stood up rubbing his eyes and waved to me. "You're back at last. Pao Shan's been waiting for you a long time."

"Where's he?"

He pointed inside. "I made him get some sleep."

I nodded and led the old man to the gate to ask, "All set?"

Smiling mysteriously he told me softly, "All the villagers, except those laying mines with Chang-suo the militia leader, have gone to the 'market'."

By that I knew he meant they had all gone into the mountains.

"What about the army men?" he inquired.

"Don't you worry." I laughed.

"Is that you, Old Fang?" Pao Shan called from the house.

Shaking his head "Old Peasant Association" complained, "He's only had a catnap."

I strode quickly into the room which was empty except for a coir cape, two bricks and a new padded uniform on the bare *kang*. We briefed each other about the situation in the market and the army. Looking tired, Pao Shan dusted his clothes and said, "We'll have to wait till it's dark, so we may as well have a sleep." He gave the padded uniform to me. "This was made from the cotton of my wife's quilt. You take it."

"Certainly not," I protested.

He threw the jacket around my shoulders. "I'm not giving it to you, just asking you to carry it. Let's sleep a little now. Chang-suo will come for us presently."

Spreading the coir cape on the *kang* for all of us to sleep on, he laid his head on a brick while "Old Peasant Association" used his little bundle of cotton as a pillow. Soon they were fast asleep.

Warmth surged in my heart as I looked at the two men sleeping so soundly and at the new padded jacket draped over my shoulders. I had no inclination to sleep. Softly I spread the uniform over them and tiptoed out. In the distance were undulating mountain ranges. The towering Yimeng Mountains sparkled in the setting sun.

Pao Shan and "Old Peasant Association" got up at dark. Soon Chang-suo and the militiamen returned, having mined the village. Pao Shan and I checked to make sure everything was in order. Then he said, "Let's go."

As we climbed Camel Peak the moon had sunk to the west and a wind was rising. Secretary Wang and Battalion Commander Chang were already there. Chang-suo, Pao Shan's wife and the militiamen and women were lined up waiting with shoulder-poles and ropes. Pao Shan divided them into groups according to their usual battle formation and told them which road to take. "Keep in mind," he said, "the need for speed and silence."

We crossed Stone River and took cover on the bank near Chuchia-chuang.

The Chuchia-chuang stronghold was big and had no drawbridge. Outside its tightly-closed black iron gate stood two listless puppet sentinels with rifles. Pao Shan beckoned to us. "Come on. Get these two first." He, Chang-suo and I stole up to the gate. He whispered, "You two take one of them. I'll handle the other. We'll drag them away." Alerted by our movements the sentinels spun around. Before they could raise the alarm we grabbed them by their throats and stuffed towels in their mouths. They fell on their knees, thumping their heads on the ground to beg for their lives.

"Don't be afraid," said Pao Shan, removing their gags. "How many are there in your gun-tower?"

"The officers have gone to a feast. There are only a squad leader and six soldiers there, all asleep."

"How many are there in the western end with the Japs?"

"The senior interpreter has gone with the Imperial Army, I mean with the Japs, to the feast. Only the junior interpreter and a dozen or so Japanese are there."

"How many are on guard at the cotton storehouse?" Pao Shan pressed.

"The cotton!" the puppet soldiers gasped.

"How many?"

"Four at the gate, five inside. Altogether nine."

This conformed with the information Old Yang had sent us. Pao Shan nodded to me and handed over the two prisoners to the militia women. "Let's get cracking," he ordered us in a lowered voice. "Chang-suo, take two squads to Chu Pa's house to keep an eye on the Japs at the feast. Grandpa Chiang take a squad up the gun-tower to prevent that squad leader and the six soldiers from coming down. Old Fang and the rest of you, come with me to the storehouse." Then he snapped at the two puppet soldiers, "Open the gate."

They flopped to the ground with fright.

Sternly Pao Shan ordered, "Quick."



Ramming guns into their backs, the militiamen forced them to open the gate.

The sound made the soldiers in the gun-tower shout, "What are you up to, Liu Yu-piao?"

The fellow looked at Pao Shan who said, "Tell him it's too cold outside. You want to warm up."

When he repeated this, someone in the gun-tower asked, "Is all quiet?"

He faltered, "Yes . . . yes, quiet."

Although we were such a big party we walked softly, and the

raging wind enabled us to slip inside unnoticed. We hastened to the entrance leading to the storeroom. It was lighted inside. Rifles and grenades were stacked against one wall. Some enemy soldiers were gambling there, Old Yang among them. Pao Shan and the others grabbed the rifles while I cried, "Hands up!" The militia tied the enemy up. Pointing at Old Yang, Pao Shan said with a show of anger, "This is a collaborator, he cooks for the Japs. Tie him up too."

When Pao Shan and I approached the inner room, the door was opened by the soldiers inside who had heard the commotion. They nearly ran into Pao Shan. We forced them back with a dozen rifles. Once inside, Pao Shan growled at them, "Don't move."

Shaking like a sieve the soldiers pleaded, "Don't kill us!"

Pao Shan turned up the lantern. "Don't make any noise."

We shut the puppet soldiers up in a small room guarded by the militia while the villagers raced to start carrying out the cotton. Suddenly the phone in the storeroom rang. Pao Shan, with a pistol behind Old Yang, made him pick up the receiver and answer. "I'm the cook, Old Yang. I've prepared the men a few dishes. . . . No, we won't drink much. Don't worry. Everything is fine. . . ."

Pointing at Old Yang, I said to one militiaman, "Tie him up well so that he can't raise an alarm."

"I'd never dare," protested Old Yang, his glance at me indicating that we should make haste.

The big pile of cotton was soon carried away. Pao Shan and I urged the villagers to leave quickly. Pao Shan's wife had somehow got hold of a hand-cart which she trundled over to us. We found it was loaded with padded uniforms. "Don't you want the enemy's padded uniforms?" she asked.

"They belong to us, not to the enemy. Take them," said Pao Shan.

The villagers made off, covered by the militia. Grandpa Chiang came down from the gun-tower holding two rifles. "Finished?"

"Yes. Where are the puppet soldiers?" I asked.

"We shoved them under the beds tied up."

Chang-suo ran over. "The feast is almost over. Make haste."

"Lay a few mines here, then leave quickly," Pao Shan told him.

The villagers flew out of Chuchiachuang like a long dragon, some carrying shoulder-poles, some with crates on their backs, some pushing carts.

By the river-bank, Battalion Commander Chang and his men were lying in ambush. He waved Pao Shan and us onward. Silently, Pao Shan and Battalion Commander Chang clasped each other's big hands tightly.

Pao Shan had just led the villagers up Camel Peak when the mines in Chuchiachuang exploded. Apparently the enemy had discovered their loss too late. Secretary Wang and the other Kuchien villagers came up to welcome us.

Presently shots rang out in the vicinity of Chuchiachuang, but they seemed to be in the opposite direction from Camel Peak. Battalion Commander Chang must be luring the enemy away from us. We listened as the shots receded in the distance.

Dawn broke. The sun rose in the east suffusing the pale sky with a red light. The sun shone down on Kuchien, on the villagers and armymen transporting cotton and on the tall figure of Pao Shan.

*Illustrated by Liu Hsi-li*



## Sister Autumn

A light rain fell all through the autumn night and only stopped at dawn.

Early that morning, the narrow street of the fish-market in the county town was puddly, and water still dripped slowly from the eaves. Here and there on both sides of the street stood baskets and crates filled with fish, prawns and turtles from the lake. Rough puppet troops with guns were checking up on the passers-by while plain-clothes agents sneaked in and out of the crowd. The fish-venders looked grim and tense.

From the north end of the street a woman in a rush rain-hat approached the market, a big creel slung from her shoulders. She looked about thirty and had a tall slender figure, large intelligent eyes and the air of being a grave, strong character. She was in fact Sister Autumn, head of the underground Party group in Yulangpu Village and in charge of the secret mimeograph station on the lake. Two tradesmen brushed past her remarking in low voices:

“By the look of things, something’s up again.”

"Yes, notice that Kuanghua Bookstore in South Street has been sealed up?"

Overhearing this, Sister Autumn suppressed a start and looked round vigilantly. As no one was paying her any special attention she walked on to the market, unconsciously reaching up to finger her creel. Going by a ditch she scooped up handfuls of water to sprinkle her creel, then stood up, adjusted her hat and went on. In the market a cook was bargaining with a fish-vender. At sight of him her face relaxed in a smile.

"Halt! Your certificate!" shouted a puppet soldier.

She stopped and glanced at him, then calmly produced a small cloth bundle from which she extracted the card indicating that she was a "law-abiding citizen". "Here." She passed it to the soldier.

Just then a tall, scrawny puppet officer slouched over from the market, took the certificate from the soldier's hand and examined it minutely. He looked Sister Autumn up and down with beady eyes which finally came to rest on the fish creel. "Ah, what fine carp!" he leered.

Sensing what he was after, she whisked off her rain-hat and called to the cook, "Hey, isn't that Mr. Wang of Shunchang Restaurant?"

Old Wang turned at the sound of her voice and came straight over, exclaiming, "At last, Sister Autumn! If not for waiting for you, I'd have finished my shopping and gone back long ago. Well, what have you got today?"

"Carp." She added gaily, "I knew you'd wait for my fish. All alive, look, and fresh from the lake. Didn't you say you wanted two turtles too? I've brought a couple as well."

"Fine. You can count on old customers like me to do good business." As Wang said this he turned and appeared taken by surprise to see the puppet officer. "So you're here too, Sergeant Hol Here, take this turtle. It's delicious, good for all kinds of diseases and full of nourishment. One of our local specialties, this is. Make a turtle soup with eggs to feed yourself up."

The puppet officer was already licking his lips. Taking the turtle he said to Sister Autumn, "All right, get on with your business." To Wang he said, "Come over for a drink this evening."

"Fine, I'll treat you," boomed Wang as he went off with Sister Autumn.

They entered Shunchang Restaurant and went into an inner room, where Sister Autumn was greeted by a man dressed as a merchant who stood up to relieve her of the creel. Old Wang went out then to attend to his own affairs.

"Comrade Liang!" Sister Autumn was pleased to see this messenger from the county's underground Party committee. She pulled over a stool and seating herself asked softly, "What's happened?"

Liang hitched his own stool closer, holding a bundle. He said gravely, "Someone's turned renegade. Last night the Japanese military police made a search and sealed up Kuanghua Bookstore, our liaison centre. This morning they've posted more sentries and are checking up on the people in the streets. According to information we've received, the enemy is trying to track down our printing office."

"A renegade! Who is it?" demanded Sister Autumn through clenched teeth.

"We're trying to find out. Sister Autumn, hidden renegades in our own camp are more dangerous than open enemies. The Party and the people can never forgive such traitors." Old Liang stood up and paced the room before asking, "Have you mimeographed the document?"

"Yes." She took the fish out of her creel, then from under a big lotus leaf drew out a bag. She handed it to Liang.

"At present," he continued earnestly, "the situation in the whole country is developing very fast: we've turned from the strategic defensive and brought the enemy offensive to a standstill. In our own county, too, the Party underground and resistance forces are expanding rapidly. This makes it all the more important for us to pass on without delay to the resistance fighters and the masses our Party Central Committee's instructions, reports from various fronts and new tasks to be done." Looking at Sister Autumn who was listening with rapt attention, Liang added emphatically, "The county Party committee wants me to remind you: our printing office on the lake is the only one in this locality. Our comrades have given their own

lives to safeguard it. So no matter what happens, we must ensure its safety."

Sister Autumn thought back in a flash to her husband's death.

Her husband, Ho Yu-chiu, was a native of this lake district known to all his friends as Brother Autumn. After the start of the War of Resistance Against Japan he took an active part in the resistance led by the Party underground, and after joining the Party he was put in charge of this underground printing office. One night, a year ago, the enemy was informed that someone had come to Yulangpu to collect documents. Several dozen Japanese and puppet soldiers descended on the village then to ransack it. They herded all the villagers together and trained a machine-gun on them, threatening them with death unless they identified this man. Seeing the secret printing office imperilled, Brother Autumn made a dash for the lake to lure the enemy away, and they shot him. In spite of her anguish, Sister Autumn shed not a tear but devoted all her energies to carrying on the work of the printing office.

She stood up now with a resolute expression, saying, "Comrade Liang, tell me what you want me to do."

Liang took a roll of papers from his bundle and gave it to her. "In view of the present position in our county's resistance work, the county Party committee has decided to call a meeting of district Party secretaries tomorrow to organize a further study of Chairman Mao's important work *The Reactionaries Must Be Punished* written in 1939, and to discuss new steps to take. That means copies of this article must be mimeographed tonight." After Sister Autumn had put the papers away he continued, "In the past few years we've printed many instructions, pamphlets and documents from Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee. The people have taken them to heart, gaining strength and courage from them to open fire and deal heavy blows at the enemy. That's why the enemy fears and hates this small printing office of ours and has tried so hard to destroy it. There are signs now that they may be sending a renegade here to sabotage us. Your helpers Little Wang and Little Lien lack experience in struggle. So it's you who'll have to shoulder this heavy responsibility."

"Please tell the county committee not to worry. No matter how hard things are, I promise to do as Yu-chiu did and carry out the task entrusted to me by the Party." Then Sister Autumn took her leave of Old Liang and left the restaurant.

From the window he followed her with his eyes till she disappeared round the corner.

2

Towards noon, grey clouds gathered over Tungping Lake; distant sails seemed like floating dots on the misty water; waves sprang up, buffeting the caltrop leaves among the water-weeds.

Sister Autumn sped to the bank and after looking around started singing a fisherman's shanty in a clear treble. Almost at once someone else joined in from a reedy creek not far away. Then a sampan shot out from the creek. It was punted by a girl of about sixteen, her long hair plaited and tied with a red ribbon. Calling "Sister-in-law!" she made swiftly for Sister Autumn.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting, Little Lien," said Sister Autumn.

"That's all right."

"We've an urgent task today." Before the sampan reached the bank Sister Autumn jumped aboard and set down her creel. She took off her rain-hat and smoothed her hair, then took over the punting pole and deftly propelled the sampan towards Yulangpu Village. This small village of a few dozen households of fishing folk was on a peninsula. It was about ten *li* by boat to the county town, more than fifteen *li* by land.

"Tell me, sister-in-law, what's this urgent task?" asked Little Lien eagerly from the side where she was sitting.

They were now in the middle of the lake. Sister Autumn shipped her pole and turned round to tell the girl softly, "The county committee's given us an important speech by Chairman Mao to be mimeographed tonight."

"Chairman Mao!" exclaimed Little Lien. "Where is he now?"

"In Yen-an."

"Yen-an!" The girl gazed at the distant hills.



Seeing her lost in a dream, Sister Autumn punted hard across the lake until they entered another reedy creek about ten feet wide. She then told the girl what had happened in the fish-market and the enemy's recent activities, especially their interest in the secret printing office. As they approached the village she whispered, "When we get ashore, you go home first. I'm going to a meeting, then I'll get the document stencilled." Little Lien nodded and then each went her own way.

At dusk, one by one, fishing boats returned to moor by the east, south and west shores of the village. Fishing nets were spread on the branches of trees, or hung from eaves and on wooden trellises. The whole small village smelt of fish and prawn.

After the Party meeting Sister Autumn took her stencilled sheets home. Her cottage in the southwest corner of the village was close to the lake on both its south and west sides. Inside the courtyard

gate stood two tall poplars. Before the northern room was a pumpkin trellis flanked by two small rooms. In the east room facing the door stood a loom with a half-woven web of cloth on it. Entering the northern room, Sister Autumn added some oil to the lamp and lit it, then trimmed the wick with her hairpin. The room became bright.

Little Lien brought in two caltrop-flour buns and a small plate of fish—the supper she had prepared. Sister Autumn thanked her with a fond look, then put away the stencil sheets and ate the piping hot buns and fish with relish.

She was pleased with the way the girl was maturing in struggle, and with the help she gave at home to free her sister-in-law for more Party work. After her brother's death, Little Lien and his widow had become close comrades.

"Sister-in-law, what work have you for me tonight?"

"We decided at our meeting that the two of us must get the document mimeographed tonight. We don't want to involve more people, so this is the best way." Drawing the girl to her side she added softly, "It may be very risky. The enemy have been searching so hard all day. They're bound to try something tonight. We must be prepared to cope with whatever happens."

"Right." The girl winked to show that she understood.

Suddenly they heard a light knock on the courtyard gate.

"There's someone outside." Little Lien got up to open the gate.

But Sister Autumn held her back. Could this be one of their own people? No, the password hadn't been given. She reminded the girl, "Whatever happens, use your head and keep cool."

Little Lien nodded and went to the gate. As soon as she unlatched it someone staggered in.

"Who is it?" she asked, quickly closing the gate.

"Hush, Little Lien, it's me."

The girl stepped up to him and exclaimed in surprise, "Why, Mr. Yu! What's happened?"

"Just now, on the road . . . I ran into a Japanese patrol and got hit on the leg. . . . Quick!" he gasped. "Help me inside."

Sister Autumn, standing listening inside, recognized the voice of Yu Chun-wen, vice-chairman of the county resistance association. Her eyes flashed vigilantly. After a moment's reflection she walked out calmly to help him to a bed in the west room. Lighting the lamp she called to Little Lien, "Here, hold the lamp so that I can see to bandage Mr. Yu's leg."

In the yellow lamplight Yu's pale face looked even more ghastly. He lowered his head and with both hands convulsively grasped his leg, crying, "There's no need, Sister Autumn. I tore a strip off my coat to bandage it on the road. As a resistance fighter, a Communist, I'm ready to give my life for the revolution. This is nothing but a scratch." He raised his leg for them to see.

"Well, with all that blood it looks pretty serious." Sister Autumn dabbed the blood with some cotton-wool and was preparing to undo the bandage when Yu again stopped her, insisting there was no need. "All right then," she said. "Have a good rest while we get you some supper."

Little Lien hurried off to prepare some food. And Sister Autumn, after settling Yu on the bed, took the cotton-wool to her own room where sitting by the lamp she started thinking.

Yu Chun-wen came from Hokouchen, only five *li* or so from this village. His was one of the wealthiest families in these parts. Sister Autumn and her husband had formerly rented a fishing boat from them and paid for it with fish: that was how she had come to know this young man who was a teacher in the county town. In the winter of the year the Japanese occupied this district, Yu had visited several lakeside villages by boat and had called at their cottage. He later joined the underground resistance, becoming vice-chairman of the county resistance association. But why had he looked so startled just now when she offered to dress his wound? Sister Autumn star-

ed suspiciously at the cotton-wool in her hand, then stood up, pulling out her hairpin, and stabbed at the first finger of her left hand. A drop of red blood oozed out.

"Sister-in-law, what's wrong with your hand?" asked Little Lien in alarm as she came in.

Sister Autumn signed to her to be quiet, whispering, "Here, taste the blood on my finger and that on the cotton."

Little Lien did so, then exclaimed, "They taste different! Why is that?"

"It looks as if Yu Chun-wen isn't really wounded," was the positive answer.

"You mean he's shamming?"

Only after a thoughtful pause did Sister Autumn say, "Yes. We must solve this riddle. Why should he come here pretending to be wounded? Could he be. . . ."

As she was puzzling over this, Yu limped in and sat down on a stool. "Sister Autumn, aren't you going to bed?" he asked.

"It's still early and I've some sewing and mending to do," she answered casually, glancing up at Yu. She was thinking, "Fine! Here's my chance to sound him out. If he has a guilty conscience he'll give himself away." So she asked outright, "Mr. Yu, why aren't you resting? Have you some urgent business?"

Yu was flustered by her blunt question. Sweat beaded his forehead as he stammered, "Well, yes . . . yes, I have."

Seeing the state he was in she probed, "What is it? Tell me. Maybe I can help you."

Making an effort to seem calm, he lowered his voice to say confidentially, "Things are very tense just now, with the bookshop in town scaled up and the military police searching for our underground printing office. As a revolutionary devoted to our cause, how can I help feeling worried? As there was no time to consult the Party committee, I came straight to the lake. You must take me to warn the people of our printing office to move away, quick."

This confirmed Sister Autumn's suspicions. We have only the one contact with outside, she reflected. Why should he come barging

in? He must be the renegade Old Liang was talking about. Well, the more complex and cruel the struggle, the cooler we must keep so as not to let out any Party secrets. With a show of sympathy and helplessness she said, "If what you say is true that sounds really bad. But I've never heard of a secret printing office, so how can I take you to it?"

"Sister Autumn, this is vital to the revolution. It affects our comrades' safety," he told her sternly. "I know how honest and kind-hearted you are. How can you treat this business as a joke? We must safeguard the printing office."

"How can you talk like that?" she retorted with assumed annoyance. "You're implying that I'm not being honest with you. All right then, you'd better not hide here. I don't want to get involved if the police arrest you." She turned away as if in a huff.

Yu stepped forward with an ingratiating smile. "Don't be so sensitive, sister. Of course I trust you. You're not that sort. I know Comrade Yu-chiu gave his life for the cause. You must naturally be concerned for the printing office." He fixed sharp eyes on her to watch her reaction.

"Bah! A pretty kettle of fish he got me into! The Japanese soldiers and traitors make trouble for me because I'm the widow of a resistance man. And now you Eighth Routers blame me for not working for the resistance. Neither side will leave me in peace." Having poured out these "complaints" she once more turned away.

"Who's blaming you, Sister Autumn?" Yu saw he was getting nowhere by this approach, so decided to wait and presently do some snooping. "Don't worry," he said with a smile. "Things will work out all right. I'm going to bed." He limped out of the room, bumping straight into a big pumpkin on the trellis, then went off rubbing his head.

After Sister Autumn saw that he was back in the west room, she said to Little Lien, "Slip out quickly through the gap in the wall on the east side and report this to Uncle Ting. Tell him to let the county Party committee know at once."

Little Lien went off. By then it was late at night.

The whole courtyard was quiet. The only lamp still lit was in the north room.

Sister Autumn, mending clothes by lamplight, was keeping a close watch on the west room. Soon Little Lien came back and slipped in quietly to report, "The county Party committee had notified Uncle Ting that they'd discovered Yu was a renegade working for the Japanese. Their instructions are: If Yu sneaks into our village we must try to get him away to ensure the safety of the printing office, leaving the county committee to deal with him without attracting the enemy's attention. If we can't get him to leave, we must handle him as we think fit. Uncle Ting's getting hold of the local militia now to help us out." She shook her fist and burst out angrily, "We should kill the rat here and now!"

Sister Autumn patted her shoulder. "Little Lien," she reminded her, "think how hard the enemy's trying to find our printing office. If we bungle things we'll only endanger it. Our job now is to frustrate their plot by safeguarding this place and getting Chairman Mao's article mimeographed in time. This way we'll be dealing a most powerful blow at those capitulationists and reactionaries."

The girl saw the truth in this and felt a new surge of strength. "I understand, sister-in-law," she said eagerly. "I want to help you in this fight the way you helped my brother in the past. Just tell me what I can do."

This strengthened Sister Autumn's confidence. After a moment's thought she said, "Fine. This struggle will test us both. I'll do the mimeographing here while you go and weave in the east room and keep an eye on his movements. He won't hear me above the sound of your weaving. If he makes any move..."

"I'll stop weaving as a signal."

Sister Autumn nodded, then saw Little Lien out and closed the door. When she heard the clack of the loom, she tiptoed into the inner room and took a big bundle wrapped in oilcloth out of the hole dug under the bed in there, put it on the table and unfastened it. She took out the mimeograph machine, carefully inserted a stencil, and

mixed some kerosene with the ink. Quickly and deftly she set about mimeographing. The faint sound made by the machine was completely covered up by that of the loom outside, making it impossible for Yu, crafty as he was, to detect it.

Yu in bed in the west room shuddered as the clatter of the loom grated on his ears. The thought of his own record unnerved him too. He had posed as a patriot until, intimidated by the enemy's reign of terror, he had turned renegade and betrayed his country. Last night when the Japanese military police searched and sealed up Kuanghua Bookstore, the head of the police had ordered him to reveal the whereabouts of the secret printing office and the names of the people in charge. They had promised him a reward for this information, but threatened to shoot him as a Communist if he failed to provide it within two days. But how was he to obtain it? He had heard some talk over a year ago about Ho Yu-chiu giving his life to protect this printing office, and it therefore seemed possible that Ho's widow might have carried on his work. So Yu, posing as wounded, had come to Sister Autumn's cottage to find out the truth. However, he had been foiled in his attempt. He must make another try. "If she's involved in this, there's bound to be evidence of it here," he decided. He sat up abruptly in bed and lit the lamp.

Little Lien sitting shuttle in hand at the loom was alert for any movement in the west room. As soon as she saw the light she stopped weaving and tiptoed over to peer in at the window. She saw Yu searching under the bed, holding the lamp.

Sister Autumn had just mimeographed the last sheet and was reaching up to wipe her perspiring face when she heard that the loom had stopped. She immediately hid the machine as well as the pile of mimeographed documents. Before she could go out to look, Little Lien slipped in. "He's lit the lamp and is searching the room," the girl whispered.

Sister Autumn frowned. "Digging his own grave!" she swore softly. "I'll tell you what we must do. . . ." She whispered something to the girl, who then left. Sister Autumn herself splashed some kerosene on the table and on the floor of the inner room, then lifted down the creel hanging on the wall, dipped some osiers in

water and taking these to the other room set about mending the creel under the lamp.

For her this was no ordinary fish-creel, for it had been made by her husband. Many times they had used it to pass on messages for the revolution, deliver food to comrades in the resistance or send medicine to wounded soldiers. . . . After his death the sight of the creel always made her heart burn, encouraging her to fight on. Looking at it now she thought of the present struggle, the whole war situation and the future liberation of all mankind. She told herself, "I've pledged my life to the Party. I must do as Yu-chiu did, work with all my might for the revolution as long as I live and die for it if need be."

Yu had ransacked his room without finding a single clue when he noticed that the sound of the loom had stopped. He scrambled to his feet and dashed towards the east room. It was empty except for the loom. At once he headed for Sister Autumn's northern room and walked in. Sister Autumn, calmly mending her creel, did not even look up at his entrance.

"Are you still so worried about the printing office that you can't sleep?" she asked.

"That's it," he answered. Then, sniffing hard, he exclaimed, "Where does that smell of kerosene come from?"

Sister Autumn sighed and pointed to the inner room. "Kerosene's hard to come by these days, and now I've gone and spilt it all!"

Yu at once hurried inside, followed by Sister Autumn holding the lamp. She pointed at the kerosene on the table and floor there.

"Too bad," agreed Yu, then came out and caught sight of the wardrobe in one corner of the room.

Sister Autumn knew what was in his mind. With a faint smile she turned to Little Lien who had just entered. "Little Lien, Mr. Yu must be cold. Open that wardrobe and get out one of your brother's coats for him."

The girl caught on and promptly opened the wardrobe.

Elated by this chance Yu said, "Don't trouble. Let me find something myself." He pushed Little Lien aside to start rummaging. But although he looked through everything there he could find

nothing suspicious. Then Sister Autumn opened a battered chest, the only other piece of furniture in the room. She turned out all the contents, producing a tunic and a pair of old trousers from the bottom. "I'm afraid they're very shabby," she said sarcastically, handing these to Yu. "Not up to your usual style of fine clothes."

Dashed by having drawn a blank again, Yu took the clothes and left the room muttering, "They're quite good enough."

Little Lien then went back to her weaving, Sister Autumn to mending her creel. Yu felt he was wasting his time here and was afraid he might have aroused their suspicions. He decided to get away while it was still dark. He told Sister Autumn, "I have something pressing to do, I must be off now."

As he spoke they heard the tramp of steps in the street.

"What's up?" he asked in alarm.

Sister Autumn said nothing but listened to the voices outside: "Don't let that wounded Eighth Router get away!"

"Catch him and kill him!"

Knowing that this was the militia force sent by Uncle Ting, she stood up and said to Yu who was panicking, "It sounds like the police. Do go quickly, Mr. Yu. Don't involve us in this!"

"I'll go at once!"

"But they're at the gate," she objected with a show of worry. "Your only chance now is to creep out through that dog-hole in the courtyard wall. . . ."

"Right!" Like a beaten cur, Yu squeezed out through the hole in the wall.

When Sister Autumn saw that he had gone she opened the gate to admit Uncle Ting and Little Wang, who were carrying a crate of fish. She reported to them briefly what had happened.

"You see to things here," said Uncle Ting. "I'll go and trail him."

By the time the cocks started to crow, Sister Autumn, Little Lien and Little Wang had carefully packed up the mimeographed articles and Uncle Ting had come back.

"That scoundrel sneaked out of the village towards the lake," he told them. "Then he climbed the dyke and headed towards the end of it."

"What a snake in the grass!" fumed Little Wang.

"Looks as if he wants to take our boat," said Little Lien.

Sister Autumn looked thoughtfully at the fish-creel. She must get Chairman Mao's article off as quickly as possible, and with enemy sentries everywhere it would be too risky to go by land. If she took them out by boat she would have to pass the end of the dyke. . . . She clenched her fist and said resolutely, "I'll go by way of the dyke too."

"What?" exclaimed Little Wang and Little Lien.

Stepping closer she explained, "I'll take the boat to induce Yu to come with me, then find a way somehow to get rid of him. Little Lien can follow with the documents. We'll meet at the fish-market."

Uncle Ting approved, "Right, I'll get the militia to meet you."

It was dawn now. Tungping Lake was shrouded by milky-white mist, the silhouettes of reeds showing indistinctly. Yu was crouching by the dyke. Although bitten by swarms of mosquitoes he was buoyed up by the conviction that Sister Autumn would come this way and he could catch her red-handed. Suddenly a sampan sped towards him from Yulangpu Village. "Fine. Here she is. I'm in luck," he told himself. When the sampan reached the end of the dyke, he stood up abruptly and called, "You're early, Sister Autumn. Where are you going?"

"Oh, it's you! Popping up like a ghost, you gave me quite a fright." Sister Autumn stopped punting and added, "I'm making an early start to the fish-market. Why? Do you want a lift?"

"That's it. It'll soon be broad daylight and too risky for me to go by road. . . ." Yu laughed.

"Oh." She hesitated deliberately, then said, "All right, come on quickly then."

The day grew brighter. A water-fowl swooped down and skimmed the surface of the water before winging off again. In those parts they had a saying: Birds skimming the water herald stormy weather. In no time a strong wind drove clouds over from the northwest. Sister Autumn stood firm, punting hard, ready for the coming tempest.



Yu sat quietly in the sampan until they had gone some distance from the village. Then, blinking, he staggered over to the creel. "Fine fresh fish!" he remarked as he reached down for it.

"Don't dirty your hands, Mr. Yu," she warned, warding off his arm with her pole. The wind had risen now and a high wave rocked the boat. As Sister Autumn withdrew her pole to go on punting, Yu made another grab at the creel and overturned it, spilling out all the fish. To his dismay there was nothing else there. Trying to hide his disappointment he said, "What a storm, it's upset your basket."

"That's nothing. We fishing folk like to battle with wind and waves."

"Sure," mumbled Yu, then calmed down enough to ask, "I don't suppose you'll get much for these fish, will you?"

"Not much, but we have to make do with it," she answered.

As they were now out in the middle of the lake, after glancing around he said with a crafty smile, "If you'd just help me, Sister Autumn, you could make big money — right away."

She stopped punting then to stare as if in amazement. "No such luck, I'm afraid. How can I possibly help you?"

"I'll tell you the truth. I've already made my contacts. Just tell me where the printing office is and I guarantee you money enough to last the whole of your life!" He watched carefully to see Sister Autumn's reaction.

She realized in a flash then that Yu's desperation was due to the fact that he had not yet won the full trust of the Japanese, and was working all on his own. Her curt answer was, "You'd better earn that money yourself, Mr. Yu. I haven't got such luck."

At his wits' end Yu flew into a rage and finally showed his true colours. He whipped out a dagger and threatened, "You filthy bitch, take me to the stone bridge. The Japanese will know how to make you speak."

The boat rocked again and Yu staggered. Flashing a glance at her creel, Sister Autumn furiously swung her pole and shoved the renegade into the lake. She struck again and the grapple at the end of the pole smashed his dirty skull. . . .

Watching the blood on the water, Sister Autumn let out a long sigh of relief. And just then some fishing boats appeared in the distance with Uncle Ting and Little Lien on the lead boat.

The wind dropped, the waves subsided. Not a speck of cloud remained in the clear blue sky. The bright morning sun rose high over the eastern horizon, shedding radiance on the lake.

*Illustrated by Tung Chen-sheng*

*Sung Shu-wen and  
Sung Kuei-sheng*

### Heroes Split Mount Chailing

Tachai's red banner raised on high  
Will make a mountain bow its head.  
Hack open the Taihang ranges  
And through the cliffs make a new river-bed!

Is this just a militant folk-song? No, it is a fact. This has already been done by Hsikupi Production Brigade in Hsiyang County.

Hsikupi is a mountain hamlet in Chichtu Valley. In front of it flows the Sunghsi River; opposite it, obstructing the river, rises Mount Chailing. When freshets roar down its foothills, they form an angry torrent which veers to charge Hsikupi like a ravaging tiger. Bit by bit the 600 *mu* of rich land at Old Grave Bend were swallowed up so that the peasants had to till the hillsides. Year in year out they gazed at lofty Mount Chailing, longing for a giant to swing a huge axe and hew it into two. Only then would the Hsikupi people get hold of a golden rice bowl.

October 27, 1969 was an unforgettable day. Morning clouds crimsoned the earth, adding charm to the golden autumn. Comrade Chen Yung-kuei, then secretary of the county Party committee, accompanied Li Chi-mao, secretary of the Hsikupi Party branch, across the Sunghsi River and up Mount Chailing. Under the morning sun the two of them stood on the peak pointing at the mountains and rivers all around. Looking down at the dry Sunghsi river-bed strewn with stones, in exceptionally high spirits Chen Yung-kuei asked:

"What's your plan for this winter?"

"Work, all out!" Chi-mao, fairly bursting with energy, pointed at the dry river-bed and added resolutely, "Learning from Tachai means we must tackle big jobs. We plan to build an embankment along this river bend to enclose 200 *mu* of land by narrowing the Sunghsi."

"Two hundred *mu*?" Chen Yung-kuei laughed. "Why not 600?"

"Six hundred *mu*?" Chi-mao's face brightened up. "You mean we should split open Mount Chailing?"

"Right!" Chen Yung-kuei sawed the air. "To build socialism, we must see far and do big things, keep the whole world in mind and keep Tien An Men in view. Split Mount Chailing, straighten the Sunghsi and reclaim those 600 *mu* of rich land at Old Grave Bend. How about it? Have you the guts?"

"Sure!" Stimulated by this prospect Chi-mao threw out his chest. "With the red flag of Tachai flying over our heads and several hundred pairs of hands, we Hsikupi people can move mountains and fill up seas. We'll split Mount Chailing — that's for sure!"

"Fine!" Chen Yung-kuei clapped him heartily on the back. "That's the spirit we need in building a socialist agriculture. How many years will it take you, Chi-mao?"

Chi-mao thought for a moment then answered, "Let's say five years."

"Five years? A good five-year plan!" Chen Yung-kuei laughed again. "Go back and talk it over with the Party members and the

masses. The faster you do it the better. Get cracking as soon as you can."

"I will!"

After seeing off Chen Yung-kuei, Chi-mao's heart was in a tumult. From of old Mount Chailing had posed a threat to Hsikupi and the Sunghsi had swallowed up many of its people's lives. Now the time had come to remove it, trample it underfoot and make it return them their rich, fertile land. However, the five fingers of a hand are not all the same length, and the people of Hsikupi were a mixed lot. Among them were landlords, rich peasants and double-dealers, as well as people who feared natural obstacles. Chi-mao was shrewd enough to see that tackling a big job like this would be a struggle.

A sturdy ex-PLA man of about forty, Chi-mao was a dauntless optimist whom no difficulties could dismay, so ebullient that he was for ever singing and never missed a chance to take part in their opera troupe's performances. A Party secretary offstage, on stage he acted the part of the hero who sings: "Nothing in the world can scare a Communist." He was ready now to shoulder this heavy load — the hard task of cutting through the mountain and changing the course of the river.

As he had foreseen, when the plan was submitted for discussion it met with a storm of protests. Some people shook their heads, others stamped their feet, all against him.

"Heavens! Isn't there an old saying, 'There's no moving mountains or changing the course of a river'? Are you crazy, Chi-mao?"

"Can't be done! Transform nature? No, that would just land us in trouble."

The general reaction of the villagers had repercussions in the Party too. Even Old Li the brigade leader, one of the Party committee, raised angry objections. He was heart and soul for the collective and the last two years, following Chi-mao's lead, had gone all out in learning from Tachai, digging ditches, levelling land and building retaining walls for terraced fields. Looking back he couldn't help grinning from ear to ear, for with more grain and money put by the brigade was doing nicely and the life of all its members had improved. During the autumn harvest, he had tagged after Chi-mao

nattering about his "big construction plan" for the winter. When the Party secretary proposed building embankments to reclaim more land, he slapped his thigh and urged, "Go ahead!" But now the more he mulled over the plan to split Mount Chailing, the more impossible he felt it was. He rushed to find Chi-mao and declared:

"We can't do it, Chi-mao. We mustn't bite off more than we can chew."

"What do you mean?"

"I've figured it out. It would take more than five years to level the mountain. Most likely it would drain our resources too and topple this nice little set-up we've just got. That would break my heart."

Chi-mao threw back his head and guffawed. "My old brigade leader! We can't build the great cause of socialism without toppling our present little set-up. We must scrap it and go ahead with a free hand. Don't let it hold you back."

"I don't see it your way." Old Li heaved a pained sigh. "Chi-mao, you don't think I'm a slacker, do you? If one swing of a pickaxe could split Chailing and get us that 600 *mu* of rich land — fine! But to level the mountain, build embankments and terrace the land in five years, man! How can we possibly do it?"

The old brigade leader's reaction pained Chi-mao. "Before the Cultural Revolution," he thought, "we lagged behind in learning from Tachai because the political power was in the hands of some bad characters. Today we must catch up at all costs." So he had several heart-to-heart talks with Old Li, but failed to win him round.

Some counter-revolutionaries gnashed their teeth and said viciously, "Chi-mao's taking the right line learning from Tachai. How dare Mount Chailing refuse to make way? It's bound to topple. Wait and see. A good time is coming."

When these snide remarks reached the ears of the Party members and the poor and lower-middle peasants, they were hopping mad. Party members sought out their secretary and declared, "Chi-mao, what did we join the Party for? We'll split the mountain even if it costs us our lives!"

"Right," Chi-mao echoed. "That's the way to catch up with Tachai."

The poor and lower-middle peasants said, "Chi-mao, we won't blacken the red banner of Tachai. We'll crack Chailing even if we have to claw it apart with our fingers."

"We poor and lower-middle peasants have backbone," Chi-mao answered. "We'll claw it apart together."

His father said, "Chi-mao, it was Chairman Mao who saved me from ending up in that heap of bones under the mountain. Now I'll give my life to help open it up."

Chi-mao's wife and children promised to learn from Tachai too and do their bit for the revolution in this assault on the mountain.

"Good!" Chi-mao exclaimed. "We'll lock our door and go up the mountain together, to work each according to his ability. Give the lead and show we have spunk."

The initiative of Chi-mao's family fired the other villagers with enthusiasm. With a cheer, several hundred fists were raised and the heroic people of Hsikupi roared like thunder: "Split the mountain!"

At once the Party branch approved the proposal. To emulate Tachai they must charge ahead and complete the project in five years at most.

## 2

On November 5, the resolute villagers of Hsikupi started their assault on Mount Chailing. Holding aloft a red flag and with two baskets dangling from his shoulder-pole Chi-mao, his family beside him, led the way.

It was a red-letter day. The Hsikupi villagers set up a big flag bearing the slogan "Transform China in the Spirit of the Foolish Old Man Who Moved Mountains" on the peak of Mount Chailing.

However, Chi-mao's face was grave. He glanced at the old brigade leader at his side, thinking of the decision of the Party branch. Though Old Li had voted in favour of it and led his contingent here, he still lacked confidence in the whole scheme.

Work started, everybody going all out with unprecedented drive. Those quarrying stone swung their pickaxes with might and main; those building embankments rammed down the stones so hard that the crows in the trees took wing, cawing in alarm, to circle high in the air.

But Mount Chailing was after all a mountain. For three whole months that winter, Chi-mao led over three hundred commune members to carry earth and rock day after day and each of them wore through several shoulder-pads, yet they only managed to bring down 30,000 cubic metres. That meant they had only razed the peak of the mountain. At this rate how long would it take to tote away the planned 500,000 and more cubic metres of earth and stones? Those worried for Chi-mao reckoned it out: nearly five years working full-time. But how could they give up farming for five years? The Hsikupi people were no fools. Once the spring ploughing started, at least half their manpower would have to withdraw and this project would be slowed down. The old brigade leader did not utter a word. Instead, in his anxiety, he dumped each load from his baskets extra hard. The masses were worried too, afraid this five-year plan would be a flop. Those who wanted Chi-mao to come a cropper laughed in their sleeves and said, "No, it won't. The mountain's no harder than their bones. Chi-mao's dad's risking his old neck to split it. How dare the mountain refuse to bow its head?" When the Party members and the poor and lower-middle peasants heard this, they gnashed their teeth with rage and swore:

"The swine! They want the project to flop to make Chi-mao lose face. Nothing doing!"

"Right! Let them throw cold water—we've grit, we won't knuckle under. Each of us will do the work of two. We Hsikupi people are tigers, not lumbering bears. Mount Chailing won't last five years!"

Enthusiasm blazed high again on the work site.

They toiled earth harder than ever, using bigger baskets, taking two steps in one, not letting up day or night.

Leaning on sticks, old people too climbed the hill after dark to join in the battle.

Children wrapped their heads in towels and went up the hill to join in the night battle.

The hard way Chi-mao's family worked kindled a flame in the other villagers' hearts. His father grew so numb from exhaustion, you could prick his back with an awl without his knowing it. The young people tried to stop him from working at night, but he said, "It's much harder for me to stay at home. Though I can't do much, I can do my bit and temper my old bones on Mount Chailing."

The hands of Chi-mao's little son were so frozen, he daren't warm them near the fire. When he came in his mother gave him a steamed bun, but he fell asleep, his back against the stove, before he had swallowed more than a few mouthfuls. Chi-mao's wife worked harder than anyone else, cooking and taking food out to the men besides digging earth herself. Her feet were so swollen she couldn't get into her shoes and her hands were too swollen to shape corn meal buns. But she didn't stop to rest. "If only we can cut through the mountain," she said, "my health just doesn't count."

As the saying goes, "The flock follows the bell-wether." When Chi-mao and his family worked with such a will, the other commune members naturally followed suit. Team Leader Li Liu-hai heaped his baskets with earth and fairly raced along yet still felt he was going too slow. Once, in his hurry, his carrying-pole hook gashed his belly and he had to have a dozen stitches; but he stayed only four days in hospital then dashed back, his wound not fully healed, to the work site. Told to go home and rest he retorted, "Learning from Tachai is a battle. If we can't beat Chailing, if our Party branch's plan flops, what use are we as Party members?"

Chi-mao shed tears when he saw all this. With Party members and commune members like these what had they to fear? And yet working efficiency had to be improved. As he raced along carrying baskets of earth his eyes fell on a channel cut by mountain freshets in the stony river flats by Old Grave Bend. He remembered how, in 1963, the hundred *mu* of land with its thousands of poplar trees there had all been flooded. The force of the torrent had been overwhelming! If only he could use that force to cut a channel through the mountain. Unfortunately, there was no big flow of water at

the top. His glance rested on the people working on the dam. In a flash he realized that, using pumps, they could bring water uphill. Why not pump the water of the Sunghsi up Chailing to cut a new channel for the river? Once the idea came into Chi-mao's head, it refused to go.

The lunch call sounded. Everyone dropped his baskets or pick to go to the shed for food. Chi-mao too put down his carrying-pole and baskets, stamped his feet to free them of dust and strode towards the shed, humming a tune. Inside, people crowded round the stove, chatting and eating. Only the old brigade leader, squatting by himself in a corner, was moodily munching. Chi-mao's heart sank. Hurrying over with his lunch box, he squatted down by Old Li.

"What's wrong? You don't seem happy."

His heart raging, the old man muttered, "Happy! Happy! When people are watching your every step, can you be happy?"

Chi-mao laughed. "You're not quite right there. The more they watch us, the more pleased we should be. Why shouldn't we be happy when we're working for socialism? We should be singing."

"Sing, then, go ahead and sing. I feel more like weeping." The brigade leader plonked down his lunch box so hard, it turned over. Those near by burst out laughing. Old Li snatched up his pipe and turned to go, but Chi-mao stopped him.

"Wait. What's eating you?"

"Don't you know what's eating me? It'll soon be time for the spring ploughing, but how far have we got in splitting the mountain? What's eating me indeed?"

"What's the use of worrying? Think up ways and means."

"Ways and means! Hum. A bulldozer costs money but when I suggested mentioning it to the higher-ups, you said we shouldn't ask for handouts. What ways and means can you think up?" The old man took a deep puff at his pipe. "Haven't you heard the talk? Some people say: 'The foolish old man moving mountains, eh? If he can't do it himself, he's got sons and grandsons to finish the job for him.'"

These words cut everyone to the quick. The cheerful hubbub in the shed died down. People turned their eyes on Chi-mao whose face had become grim too. The silence dragged on.

After a while, the brigade leader stood up. "It's quite clear now, Chi-mao, we must quit. Better early than late. I might as well have my say now. Straight after the lunar New Year, I'm going to pull out my people to start the spring ploughing. To stick up here would be like hanging ourselves." He dashed angrily out of the shed leaving everyone stunned. The silence was broken only by the north wind flapping the matting of the shed.

Chi-mao eyed the men around him. Old Li's biting words rang in his ears. His heart felt as if afire.

"No matter how hard the north wind rages, it can't topple our red banner over Mount Chailing. Hsikupi's six hundred people are set on splitting this mountain, and nobody can pull out our men like that. Revolution means pressing forward, not pulling back."

"We'll go ahead!"

"Whoever backs out is a deserter."

"Even if he wants to pull us out, we won't go. Why should we follow a leader who holds us back?"

"Yes, nothing doing. Let him go backwards alone."

So the villagers put on another spurt. Chi-mao's heart was warmed by their enthusiasm. That afternoon, he called a Party branch meeting to thrash out the reasons for the slow progress they'd made. The Party members said: With the help of the masses we must find a way to speed up our work. The meeting went on so late that by the time it broke up the commune members on night shift had reached the construction site. Chi-mao grabbed his torch and dashed out. The light from his torch picked out a group of old men shouldering shovels, leaning on sticks as they climbed up to help the night shift. The foremost was his own father. Chi-mao's heart went out to them. He wanted to tell them off but just stood there speechless. Then he overtook them, calling to his father, "Dad, why did you bring the old uncles here again?" Before his father could answer he went on, "Haven't I told you more than once that you're not to work nights, groping through the dark?"



"Listen, Chi-mao." Li Tsai-yuan, an old poor peasant, hobbled up to him. "Don't blame your dad. We came because we want to." The old man thrust a pot of food into his hands. "You're not cutting through Mount Chailing for your family alone. The way those swine mock and curse you, and the way the brigade leader holds

you back — we just can't stand it! We can't swing picks any more, but if we can share your worries and think up new dodges we'll feel easier in our minds."

Chi-mao was pleased to hear this. There's strength in numbers, and only with mass support would they succeed in cutting through the mountain. He took the old men into the shed and made them sit down round the stove while he picked up his chopsticks. When he thrust them into the pot he felt something hard. Peering into it under the lamp, he saw that the food was frozen. It was bitterly cold on the mountain and he had got used to cold food. Breaking it up with his chopsticks he tucked in.

"Old uncles," he said as he ate. "Let's put our heads together and hear what good ideas you've got between you."

The old men talked it over and finally hit on the same idea as Chi-mao, namely, to harness water to cut through the mountain. But their plan was better thought out. It was not only to pump the water uphill but also to store it. For the force from one pipeful of water would not be too big. To wash down great masses of earth, they would first have to build a reservoir with a sluice-gate on top of the mountain. Once the reservoir was filled, they could open the sluice-gate and release such a torrent that it would sweep earth and rocks down together with it. Chi-mao slapped his thigh in his excitement when this was proposed. "Good, good! That's the way we'll do it!"

Chi-mao immediately set about getting people to dig the reservoir and build a sluice-gate while others laid pipes. This took them a whole month, during which Chi-mao grew so thin that his cheekbones stood out and his eyes became sunken. By the time the last few pipes were laid, he was working on the site day and night.

One night in early spring, when the ground was still covered by snow and silence reigned, the commune members lay sound asleep in bed after a day's hard work. But Chi-mao and several other Party members were still working on the pipes up on Mount Chailing. When Chi-mao was urged to go home and get some sleep, he went on laying pipes and tightening bolts. When his eyes grew dim, he

rubbed them furiously. When he slipped, he scrambled quickly to his feet. When his hands grew numb with cold, he rubbed them and went on working. At last Chi-mao and Ming-hsiao fitted in the final section of pipe. By then it was light and many commune members had arrived to watch the water wash away the earth.

Giving his eyes another rub, Chi-mao called out to the electrician to set the pump going. Water gushed from the wide six-inch pipes, filling the little reservoir in no time.

"Open the sluice-gate!" shouted Chi-mao. With a roar, water cascaded down the slope, sweeping with it tons of stone and earth. Soon a fairly big gully was made. The people cheered. Even the old brigade leader beamed. Chi-mao, jumping with joy, came bounding to his side.

"Weren't you talking of pulling out our men?"

"Not now that you've hit on this method."

"Precisely because we've got it, you can now take some of our men back," said Chi-mao excitedly. "We need to go fast not only in construction but in agricultural production too. Take half the men to the village tomorrow and start spring ploughing."

### 3

The water carried away up to two thousand cubic metres of earth a day, gladdening the hearts of all the commune members. But all of a sudden a boulder the size of a small hill appeared in the middle of the new river channel, taking up about a quarter of its total length — four hundred metres. A new obstacle stood in the way of the construction project.

Comrade Chen Yung-kuei came to the village as soon as he heard this news. He examined the boulder carefully, then burst out laughing. "It's a bad business coming across this rock," he said. "But it's a good thing too. We need to crack hard nuts like this in making revolution. Besides, when we've tunnelled through the rock, the water can flow through the tunnel while carts can cross over on top.

It'll save us the trouble of putting up a bridge or building dykes along the channel. So it's a very good thing." Everybody clapped at this remark and laughed too.

"You've given us no end of encouragement," Chi-mao told Chen Yung-kuei. "We'll tunnel through the boulder."

Chi-mao at once led the way in boring through the rock. Because they had had no experience in tunnelling, they worked hard for about a week without making much more headway than a metre. Some people were discouraged. Some began to worry. Some thought it was time they took a breather. Chi-mao noticed all this and was torn with anxiety. The more he thought about it, the more he realized that this wasn't the right way to learn from Tachai. They should soldier on, attacking harder and harder. How could they think of stopping to rest? The Tachai people always worked with might and main, pressing forward after each fresh advance and never slacking off. They raced non-stop along the road of progress. But now some of Hsikupi's people were feeling tired before they'd finished splitting a single mountain. That wouldn't do. You can't learn from Tachai by taking it easy. Once he got this clear in his mind, he clambered up the boulder. Standing there he called out to Chao Szu-yi, the Party committee member in charge of the tunnelling, "How long will it take us to tunnel through this rock?"

"That depends on how hard we work."

"Suppose we go all out?"

"If we go all out we can finish before the freshets come down."

"That's it!" Chi-mao waved his hand. "That's what I want to hear." Chi-mao took Chao's arm and marched him up the mountain. Pointing to the culvert in the dam he said: "Let's close the dam, and speed up the tunnelling as well as the levelling of the river flats."

Chao slapped his thigh in approval. "Good. That's the ideal!"

Chi-mao never lost any time. That same evening he called a Party committee meeting and laid his plans on the table, criticizing the idea of taking things easy.

A decisive battle started. People swung their hammers with a will, but the tunnel was a hard nut to crack.

Chi-mao took the lead in every kind of work, whether swinging a hammer, lighting a fuse or dashing into the smoke after an explosion. He was always where the job was hardest and most dangerous. When Jen Ai-lien, company commander of the militia, was injured in the leg during a landslide, the doctor called for volunteers to give him a blood transfusion. Chi-mao stretched out his arm. "My blood is O type. Take mine." Chi-mao's blood flowed into the veins of his comrade-in-arms and Jen quickly recovered.

In their hurry to set off more charges they would dash into the tunnel before the smoke from the last explosion had cleared, and once two comrades were overcome by the fumes. Chi-mao carried one of them out on his back. When he rushed back to pick up the other, he fainted himself. When Chao Szu-yi carried him out, Chi-mao's eyes were swollen, his hands blistered and bloody. The moment he came to, he struggled to his feet and staggered towards the tunnel.

The old brigade leader held him back crying, "No! Our six hundred people of Hsikupi won't let you risk your life. You won't speak out, Chi-mao, let me. I'll go and ask Chen Yung-kuei to lend us a pneumatic drill for a couple of days. That can hardly count against us."

Chi-mao smiled. "We have to learn Tachai's spirit of self-reliance, you know."

Before long, on the twenty-sixth of June 1971, to be exact, Chi-mao was summoned to a meeting in the county town. He was on his way there by bus when the sky darkened and thunder rumbled. "Looks bad!" he thought. "If the Sunghsi floods before our tunnel's through, our dam may be breached." His heart in his mouth he turned his eyes to the river. It was already rushing towards them in full spate. Chi-mao called to the driver to stop and jumped off the bus. He was running back as fast as he could when a lorry behind him tooted. Chi-mao explained the situation to the driver, who willingly gave him a lift. As the lorry shot forward, racing the roaring river, Chi-mao's heart was more turbulent than the leaping waves.

The Party's trust, the poor and lower-middle peasants' hopes, the faces of the heroes working on the mountain all flashed through his mind's eye. When they reached Hsikupi he saw that the river banks were dark with people.

"Chi-mao's back!" they cried.

Chi-mao smiled at the cheering crowd and dashed across the dam to the mouth of the tunnel. Meeting Chao Szu-yi there he asked:

"Is the afternoon's blasting done?"

"Yes."

"How much left to go?"

"One more lot of charges and the whole tunnel will be through."

"Good. We must see there's no slip-up." Chi-mao grabbed a hammer and called to the men standing round, "This is the crunch. We must keep cool and blast this tunnel through ahead of time. It's a race between us and the flood. We've got to safeguard our dam and the newly levelled fields in Old Grave Bend."

The men yelled: "Quick!" and swung their hammers so hard the noise was deafening. Chi-mao stopped hammering presently to run out and look at the river. The seconds ticked away: the river was rising fast. The roar of waves pounded against Chi-mao's ears. Running up to the top of the tunnel he saw that the water had reached the top of the dam. He clenched his fist tight; perspiration soaked his clothes. While he was considering what measures to take, Szu-yi and Liu-hai came running to report: "The holes are all made."

"Quick, set the charges."

"We've run out of dynamite."

"What? Run out?" Chi-mao bit his lips until they bled, his eyes on the turbulent waves lapping over the dam. Beckoning to Li Hsin-hsi, political instructor of the militia, he said, "Come back to the village with me to get some." Chi-mao had barely taken a step before the militia surrounded him.

"The dam's under water, you can't get through."

"We'll wade across."

"That's too dangerous."

"We must risk it and we'll be careful. We've got to get across."

Chi-mao pushed his way through them only to be stopped by the brigade leader who clasped him round the waist. "It's dangerous. Let me go."

"You stay and see to things here, I'll go. It's the same." Chi-mao pulled free and hurried towards the dam with Li Hsin-hsi. Hand in hand they waded through water up to their waists. The peasants crowding the banks looked on with bated breath. As for the old brigade leader, as he watched Chi-mao, their fine Party secretary, tears sprang to his eyes and his hands were wet with sweat.

The roaring torrent only made Chi-mao more determined and steady. He felt his vision had broadened as he waded calmly to the other side. No difficulty could stop these heroes bent on learning from Tachai.

Shoulder to shoulder Chi-mao and Hsin-hsi waded back across the dam carrying explosives, then dashed towards Mount Chailing. Soon after that loud explosions rang out shaking everything around. Mount Chailing quivered, the torrent swept through the tunnel, and at once the water level at the dam dropped. The peasants cheered, their voices strong as thunder.

"We've tunnelled through!"

"We've won!"

Cheers reverberated over Mount Chailing while the dam stood firm and imposing. The old brigade leader gazed fondly at Chi-mao, gripping his callused hand tightly, hot tears streaming down his face. "Chi-mao, you're a good son of the Party. You're our good helmsman."

So these heroes cut through Mount Chailing by taking the Tachai road. But the Hsikupi villagers did not pause to rest after this victory. Instead, led by Chi-mao, they went on to scale greater heights. They raised still higher the banner of learning from Tachai and pitched in with all their might to forge ahead even faster. In exactly three years and four months, they completed a ten-year construction plan. In their own words, "they got themselves two golden babies in three years" — finished their construction project at top speed

and reaped high yields by working hard. Now their annual per *mu* output has risen from 400 catties in 1969 to 900 catties. As some visitors commented:

The Hsikupi comrades worked hard  
To make their village blossom like Tachai,  
But a single flower is not spring,  
Let Tachai flowers bloom all over the countryside.

*Illustrated by Liu Jen-ching*

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Chairman Mao Reascending Chinglangshan  
(woodcut) by Ma Chen-sheng and Chu Li-tsun



## Callused Hands

The calluses on men's hands show the kind of life they are leading.

Nowhere is this more evident than in Hsiyang. Shake the brawny hand of any peasant there and you'll feel calluses as big as broad beans and as thick as coins across the whole of his palm. After clasping a hand like this, someone observed, "Though Tachai's ridges and gullies have gone for good, I can see and feel them on the hands of these heroes!"

Whose hand was that? A quarryman's or a carter's? Or that of a peasant wielding a hoe or carrying heavy loads by shoulder-pole?

No, it was the hand of a commune Party secretary, a Party member of thirty-seven years' standing, who started life as a mason.

You'll find him at the work site up on the mountain, swinging his massive sledge-hammer above his head, his stalwart figure outlined against the white clouds. Even on the coldest days — when the temperature drops as low as twenty degrees below zero — he never wears padded clothes, only a lined belted tunic over his trousers. Bare head steaming, eyes fixed on the rock, his lips compressed, he

hammers so hard that the veins stand out on his hands. Sparks fly and the mountains re-echo at every blow. He counts as he swings his hammer, "...Ninety-eight, ninety-nine..." then a sudden bellow "Crack!" At that order, the huge rock splits.

If you ask his name, the villagers will tell you that everyone in these parts calls him "Uncle Stone". That is how he is known to thousands of commune members. Only visitors call him "Party secretary". However, "Stone" is not his real name. If asked about that he will rub his horny hands and embark on a long story.

It is a story about callused hands, the mark of the labouring people. For thousands of years, from slave society to capitalism, they symbolized the exploitation and oppression of the toiling people. And each callosity on Uncle Stone's hands embodied bitterness and hatred for the landlord class; each wrinkle and chap represented sweat or blood. When his father, an old mason, was crushed to death by a rock-fall with the fury of generations pent up in his heart, though only a boy, he took over the sledge-hammer spattered with his father's blood. In mid winter, he set out each morning with only a few bran buns for food and cut stone all day in the biting wind and snow. As his wedges wore down one after the other, his palms blistered and were rubbed raw. The tablets he hewed out and set up in the landlord's graveyard and ancestral temple had drops of his blood on them; and the calluses which formed on his hands were compounded of blood and anger. That brute of a landlord even forbade the villagers to call the boy Chia Tieh-suo, the name given him by his father, and ordered them to call him simply Little Mason. As time went by, his real name was forgotten.

Some years before Liberation, a severe drought lasting over sixty days made all the crops wither and die. During the famine that followed, scores of people starved to death every day. And when Uncle Stone's mother dragged herself out of their cave to fetch him some water, she fell headlong down a precipice. Then, his eyes filled with scalding tears, his horny hands clenched, he left his native village. In the Taihang Mountains he found the Eighth Route Army and his callused hands took up arms. He fought in battle after battle and was wounded many times.



After Liberation the leadership, concerned about his health, persuaded him to go back and work in Hsiyang. He threw himself into this new life and struggle, his callused hands never idle. When the land reform movement began, he swung his sledge-hammer to smash the landlord's tomb-stones. One of the creators of history, he was now master of his own fate.

In the course of the great transformations that took place in the countryside, he angrily debunked the Right opportunists who attempt-

ed to put the clock back and together with other villagers advanced jubilantly along the bright socialist road by setting up agricultural co-operatives. In the year of the Big Leap Forward, he hung on the gate of the township government the bright red signboard announcing the setting up of one of the people's communes which were to open up new vistas for the mountain villagers. With his callused hands he helped dynamite mountain ridges to turn them into fertile fields.

When the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began, he hoisted the banner of rebellion, hitting back at the reactionary bourgeois line peddled by Liu Shao-chi. With his callused hands he wrote big-character posters exposing the bribery of the capitalist-roaders and their plots to turn comrades-in-arms against each other. And one glorious and unforgettable morning with those callused hands he hung the revolutionary committee signboard on the whitewashed wall of their commune office. Then he was elected chairman of the commune revolutionary committee, secretary of the commune Party committee and a member of the county Party committee.

Those callused hands which had known so much hardship now found themselves in a very different environment: a bright office with shiny desks and chairs. . . . Could they withstand this stern test? His comrades watched with concern, his enemies smiled cynically. But Uncle Stone soon put an end to their doubts.

On his very first day as commune Party secretary, he talked to the Party committee about the significance of callused hands, telling them the story of a childhood friend, now a Party member of over thirty years' standing. As children, they had begged for food together and been cruelly whipped by the landlord. However, when this man became a cadre after Liberation he shunned manual labour and before long his calluses disappeared. He gradually became a capitalist-roader. Uncle Stone warned his comrades, "Though we're cadres now, we mustn't lay down our tools. We must never lose the calluses on our hands, never forget that we're ordinary working people. The enemy is hoping we'll trip up, but we must disappoint them — and reassure our comrades — by working hard." His favourite saying was, "Be proud of your calluses. They are a sure sign that our class and our Party have guts, that our future is bright."

Uncle Stone took the lead in learning from Tachai, going to work in various villages in the mountains. In the whirling snow of winter he led the commune members to level hills, wielding a pick with his callused hands. When they built a reservoir, his callused hands delivered cartloads of stone to the dam. As the cart shuttled to and fro, the dam rose higher and higher. In the battle against drought, his callused hands carried buckets of fresh spring water for the parched seedlings and his sweat mingled with the water.

At each meeting in their brightly lit Party office, he studied Chairman Mao's works with the other committee members to raise their political level. He spent many a quiet night, while others were fast asleep, working out plans and new targets in their movement to learn from Tachai. And on countless mornings the red sun leaped over the horizon to discover him still deep in thought, his chin cradled in his callused hands, as he reflected on how to enforce the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. As hills were dynamited and levelled, and gorges filled to form wide tracts of arable land, the calluses on his hands grew thicker and harder.

One day a peasant gripped his hand and said with concern, "You cadres are shouldering a heavy load running our commune, and you have to receive reporters and foreign visitors too. So don't spend so much time in the fields. By working a little harder, we can do your share as well."

Uncle Stone rubbed his horny hands together and replied with a smile, "You may be able to do our field work, but no one else can remould our ideology for us."

The most unforgettable episode occurred when they were dynamiting a cliff to quarry stone for the reservoir. He was taking some technicians round the site to see how things were going when he suddenly spotted a smoking fuse in a cleft of rock, near a cave in which several dozen peasants were working. To save their lives, he risked his own, darting forward to tear out the fuse with his bare hands. But it was too tightly embedded to be pulled out and frantic with worry he seized it between his teeth and jerked it out. The peasants had been saved, but Uncle Stone himself collapsed from exhaustion.

“Pebble, Pebble!” an old peasant whom he had just saved fondly called the Party secretary’s childhood name. “Open your eyes! How can we manage without you?” His tears fell on Uncle Stone’s hands burnt by the fuse.

Calluses are a sign of steadfast revolutionary spirit as well as a reminder of the bitter past. If we say that the red flowers of Tachai have blossomed all over our country, surely calluses too have helped to make our land a lovely garden. Uncle Stone has shaken hands with comrades from all parts of China and countless friends from the five continents, in whom those hard calluses have evoked both admiration and respect. Like pollen wafted far and wide by the wind, those calluses of his have made red flowers blossom not only in Hsiyang County, but all over China: from the East Sea to the Pearl River, north and south of the Tienshan Mountains, and on either side of the Great Wall; our labouring people’s callused hands are making our motherland ever more powerful and magnificent.

*Illustrated by Tung Chen-sheng*

## A Pine Twig from Tachai

When I returned from a visit to Tachai, tucked into my notebook densely filled with jottings was a lustrous green twig of pine-needles, a gift from one of the children there.

The day after my arrival at Tachai I was woken at dawn by swift footsteps outside my window, the rhythmic sound interspersed with occasional clear whistle blasts and orders. I got up in a hurry and dashed out to the flagged terrace to watch. But all I could see in the opalescent light was a troop of figures running in the morning breeze towards a mountain slope.

Wishing to find out what was happening, I scurried to catch up. But after rounding a bend, I lost sight of the troop. As I was wondering where it had gone I heard laughter from higher up the slope. Straining my eyes I made out a group of children, their ages ranging from about eight to fourteen. They had fanned out, each carrying a wash-basin, and were watering some rows of saplings. The wind had brought the colour to their cheeks and their eyes were shining. I knew how the Tachai people in the past had “made a hundred trips,



covering a thousand *li*, to fetch water for each *mu* of seedlings". But were they at it again now, I wondered. So I accosted a plump boy wearing an Eighth Route Army cap.

"Do these little trees need watering, too?" I asked.

"Little trees?" He threw me a not too friendly glance, as if shocked by my ignorance. After a pause he said emphatically, "These are the Tiger Head Woods — planted by Tachai's children!"

Then, of course, I remembered. After the Cultural Revolution the Tachai Brigade Party branch had called on the school children

to afforest Tiger Head Hill. So these trees must be about eight years old now. As far as eye could see, the hillsides around were covered with sturdy pine-saplings bathed in golden sunshine. They made a fitting foil for the lovely, ingenuous children so hard at work there. When the wind blew, the branches swayed, making rustling music. . . .

Presently, the urgent blast of a whistle behind me made me turn to see a girl of about thirteen blowing her whistle as she ran down from the hilltop. She had a round rosy face, and was wearing a flaming-red velvet flower in her dark glossy hair. Her grass-green jacket had been carefully mended with two patches exactly the colour of the pine-saplings. Now she was beckoning to all around, the sound of her whistle floating over the treetops.

The children came running from all sides, puffing and shouting:

"What's the whistle for?"

"Something urgent?"

The girl, fingering the cord of the whistle, called back clearly, "Come and help East Hill Brigade with their watering! They've left out a big stretch up on the hill. Let's make it up for them and leave our own work till later."

The other kids exchanged puzzled glances in silence.

"Those aren't *our* saplings," a chubby boy grumbled, pouting.

"Right. We have plenty of our own to water," chimed in a girl with two short plaits. "Aren't the grown-ups always telling us to love our collective?"

The girl with the whistle paused to think, the dimples on her cheeks disappearing, her big eyes blinking. For a moment it was so quiet on the slope, only the rustling of the trees could be heard.

"Chun-hsiao! Hung-ping! Are you children of Tachai or aren't you?" the girl finally asked in a ringing voice.

"Of course we are," came the answer in unison.

"Well, what is the Tachai spirit?"

"Love the motherland, love the collective."

"Right. But hasn't our Party branch always told us to love other people's collectives more than our own? Will a single pine-tree make the Tiger Head Woods?"

"Let's water East Hill Brigade's trees first, then come back to see to ours," some of the children proposed.

The two "dissidents" flushed and putting their wash-basins on their heads like helmets rushed towards the hilltop. After a few steps they turned to shout, "Come on, quick. Anyone who shirks isn't a Little Red Soldier of Tachai."

"Forward march!" Having mustered her force, the girl with the whistle led them up the hill with swift rhythmic steps, the velvet flower in her hair glowing like a bright red azalea.

"Love other people's collectives more than our own" — these words were still ringing in my ears when I suddenly realized that I had forgotten to ask her name.

Just at that moment someone piped up behind me: "Hey, comrade, make way, please."

I spun round. It was another child, one with a clever face. The pair of crates he was carrying on a shoulder-pole very nearly touched the ground. I was going to make way for him, but changed my mind. Instead I stopped him to ask: "See that girl ahead of us — the one wearing a red velvet flower and blowing the whistle — what's her name?"

"Hsiu-ni." The boy cast me a glance, his load swinging as he moved towards me. Then as if reciting a ballad he reeled off: "She's the company head of our Little Red Soldiers, really first-rate. If you don't believe me, ask anyone around here. She often performs sword-dances and gymnastics for foreign visitors to Tachai, and takes the lead in criticizing Confucius. She's read ever so many books; she reads even while eating."

The boy seemed such a mine of information, I caught hold of his pole, exclaiming, "Fine, sonny. Tell me more about Hsiu-ni or your other schoolmates."

That put him on the spot. His face turning red he tried to back away. "Hsiu-ni wouldn't like it. . . ."

Naturally I wouldn't let him go, so I gave him a whole lot of reasons, starting with why we had come here — to learn from Tachai — till finally he was won round. Then I made him put down his load and sit down with me on a rock.

"Where shall I begin?" the boy asked, cupping his face in his hands.

"Anywhere you like," I urged. "For instance, what's she like at school? Or at home?"

After blinking a couple of times, he clapped his hands and tapped the ground with the tip of his toes. "I know what. Can I tell you about the hen-coop?"

"Of course you can," I answered, inwardly amused by his naivety — what could there be to tell about a hen-coop?

"That was during the harvest last autumn. One day when Hsiu-ni went home she saw a wire cage outside the door. Hearing cheeping, she bent down and looked. It was their own chicks. You know, Hsiu-ni's very keen on raising poultry. She told me some time ago that when autumn comes she'll sell all the eggs laid by her hens to the state to support our socialist construction." The boy paused to take breath before going on, "But, when she saw this cage didn't belong to them, she went in and asked her mother about it. Her mother told her she'd borrowed it from the brigade's chicken farm, as they wouldn't be needing it for the next few days. Their own coop had broken and she'd had no time to mend it."

The boy broke off here to ask me seriously, "Uncle, do you know why Hsiu-ni's mother borrowed that cage?"

"To stop the chicks from damaging the crops."

"Then, was it right or wrong to borrow it?" The boy put his head to one side and edged closer to me. Why, I thought, he's testing me. Seems this business of the cage isn't so simple.

"Hsiu-ni didn't give the matter so much as a second thought. She flung her satchel on the *kang*, then stooped to let out the chicks so that she could return the cage right away. Her mother got flustered and grabbed hold of the cage. 'Go and have your meal. This is none of your business, child,' she scolded. 'What's wrong with borrowing a cage?' Hsiu-ni was red in the face. She tugged at the cage and wouldn't let go, saying, 'It *is* my business. There're over eighty households in Tachai, and every household keeps chickens. What if all of them go to the brigade to borrow a cage?'"

Now I understood why the boy had put that question to me: He was hinting that the struggle between public and private interests in a family was also very complex and could take many different forms. These children had sharp eyes and a real fighting spirit. As I was thinking about this, the boy chortled and went on to mimic Hsiu-ni's mother, "All right, no more fuss, I'll admit I was in the wrong. Let the chicks out, quick, and I'll return the cage." Hsiu-ni was so pleased she at once volunteered, 'Let me do it.' Afterwards, our old labour model Grandad Chia praised Hsiu-ni for doing the right thing."

"What about the chicks, then? Were they kept indoors?" I made haste to ask, fascinated by the story and the lively way in which it had been told.

"Of course not." The boy smacked his lips and rose to his feet. Pointing to the willow trees on the opposite mountains he said with some pride, "D'you think we can only talk and not lift a finger? No such thing! That afternoon after school Hsiu-ni and I went to cut willow branches and that evening Grandad Chia showed us how to make coops with them. Hsiu-ni's mother joined in too. Before the chicks woke from a nap, one big coop was finished." He gestured with his hands to show its size.

Then, taking me unawares, he slipped the pole over his shoulder, continuing, "After that we went up the mountains for willow branches every day and made lots of coops for the brigade and families who needed them.

"During the spring holidays this year we went to work in the fields. And Hsiu-ni didn't take a single day off. It was she who topped the list of work-days done. When she lay on the *kang* at night, she groaned because of the pain in her swollen shoulders. Her mother felt very upset and begged her to take a day off, but Hsiu-ni turned over, gritting her teeth, and said, 'No, ma, I can take it. . .'" At this point, the boy winked cryptically at me and said proudly, "You know, we children of Tachai must have backbone just like the grown-ups."

Someone called him from the hilltop. He answered cheerfully and went off, nimbly climbing up and soon disappearing from sight. In digesting what he had told me, I had a mental picture of him

and Hsiu-ni grown suddenly taller and stronger. What was the force spurring these youngsters on to overcome difficulties? What were the high ideals motivating them? I climbed the mountain in the brilliant sunshine to look for that red velvet flower and for Hsiu-ni, whom I now felt I knew. I joined the children at work under the trees, our sweat commingling as it dripped on the other side of Tiger Head Hill.

I had no chance to approach Hsiu-ni until we knocked off work and started home. Walking beside her, I groped in vain for the right words in which to frame the questions I wanted to ask her. As I was hesitating several visitors to Tachai came our way. Brushing past us, they fixed their curious eyes on the troop of red-scarfed children. A middle-aged man greeted Hsiu-ni with a smile.

"Are you out learning from the peasants, lass?" he asked.

"Yes," was the girl's brisk answer.

"How many work-days have you put in?"

"Twenty."

"Oh, quite a lot!" The man put up his thumb. Then stroking Hsiu-ni's head he stooped to say kindly, "When you get your work-points, you can get your mother to make you a drip-dry flowered jacket, eh?"

All the children burst out laughing, the girls covering their mouths, the boys grinning and pulling faces. Hsiu-ni laughed so hard that her red velvet flower danced on her head. The visitor was bewildered and so was I.

"What? Did I say something wrong?" he asked himself with a sheepish smile.

Hsiu-ni controlled her laughter now and said loudly, "Comrade, we're doing volunteer labour."

"Volunteer labour?" The visitor still looked puzzled.

"Of course. We've studied the theory of proletarian dictatorship and criticized bourgeois thinking, so we know that to work simply for work-points is shameful," Hsiu-ni explained. She then recited a verse, and the other children chimed in:

Go all out not for work-points but for revolution,  
To make the Tachai spirit shine brighter still;

Learn the old folks' self-reliance and high thinking,  
And temper red hearts at Tiger Head Hill.

The visitors hearing this applauded their spirit. One by one they shook Hsiu-ni's hand.

The questions in my mind were resolved too — here was the answer, the simple yet lofty ideals of these innocent children. It was this high thinking of theirs that had turned the once barren Tiger Head Hill green and, even as the pines grew sturdier day by day, it was reaching ever greater heights.

I was so stirred that I asked Hsiu-ni without thinking, "Tell me, what's your family name?"

Crinkling her nose, she chuckled mischievously, then thrust something into my hand. Running off, she shouted back over her shoulder, "My family name is 'public' — not 'private'!"

The other children trooping after her chortled, "Public — that's the name of us all."

I looked at the thing the girl had put in my hand. It was a pine twig green and supple, with a refreshing scent. I stared after the youngsters receding into the distance, then looked at the pine twig on my palm and the green sea of the Tiger Head Woods. Before my eyes rose the faces of the poor and lower-middle peasants of Tachai who had raised and nurtured these children.

This pine twig kept in my notebook is very close to my heart. Small and tender as it is, this sprig of communism shines with the spirit of Tachai and all the hopes of our new socialist countryside. Ten or twenty years from now, the pines in the Tiger Head Woods will have grown tall while the children will have grown into the new pillars of Tachai and of our motherland.

This pine twig brought back from Tachai is only one of millions in the Tiger Head Woods but the fragrance wafting from it keeps reminding me of the ideals of the Tachai children: From very young they take the name 'public', not 'private', and they are marching on and on towards communism.

*Illustrated by Chou Ssu-chung*

## POEMS

*Tsang Keh-chia*

### Lake Hsiangyang

Shantung was my birthplace,  
Peking my second home.  
But to tell the truth  
It's Hsianning I long for,  
Hsianning, south of the Yangtse.  
Though I only lived three years beside Lake Hsiangyang  
My feelings for the cadre school there  
Are deeper than the waters of the Yangtse.  
For my cadre school beside the lake  
Was where I began my real new life.

Ah, Hsianning,  
I think of you night and day.

---

Tsang Keh-chia is a veteran poet who, in response to Chairman Mao's call, went to study and work in a May 7 cadre school for three years. He wrote this poem to depict the life he had experienced in the countryside. Lake Hsiangyang is in Hsianning, Hupeh Province, south of the Yangtse.

I long for you

As a flower or tree longs for its native soil,  
As a fish longs for its own stream or lake,  
As a young child far from home  
Longs for its mother.

It was you that taught me  
Hand and mind must work together  
To distinguish and follow the correct political line;  
You taught me to wield hoe as well as pen;  
Taught me how to grow the rice I eat;  
Taught me how to follow wandering field footpaths  
As easily as a straight highway.  
You it was that taught me to speak the language  
Of the former poor peasants, with whom I worked  
Side by side and slept at night,  
Sharing the same rough bed.

In sultry summer the breeze from the fields  
Dried our pearls of sweat better than electric fans;  
When we braved winter's icy winds,  
Melting snowflakes on our lips were sweet.  
In spring we nursed rice seedlings  
In the rippling green water.  
In the busy autumn harvest season  
Men and machines worked joyfully together.  
Even July days are not long enough,  
So after sunset we worked by moonlight.  
Every day our clothes were soaked

In sweat and muddy water;  
Manure caked our legs and feet;  
Our hands were callused,  
Faces tanned,  
Shoulders hard as iron.

All our thoughts centred on class struggle,  
On how to criticize and oppose revisionism;  
How well the rice seedlings were growing,  
Or if the vegetables needed more water?  
We were concerned about the weather,  
But cared little for our personal comfort.  
Our individualism and bourgeois ideas lessened,  
While comradely working-class attitudes gradually grew.

We no longer thought of "I" this or "I" that,  
But proudly felt part of a fighting collective.  
Our old ideas of "hardship"  
And "happiness" were changed completely.  
For so many years we had devoured books,  
Our eyes dim with so much study;  
But now, with trenchant pens,  
We debunk and oppose revisionism.  
With hoe in hand we are weaving  
This whole land into a fine new tapestry.

Only then did we begin to understand  
How imperative practice is;

Only then did we begin to understand  
Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.  
I shall never forget the meeting we held  
To criticize Lin Piao and Confucius,  
On the grassland beside the growing crops  
Our denunciations shook the earth,  
Anger soared to the sky as I tore  
The grass in my hands to shreds.

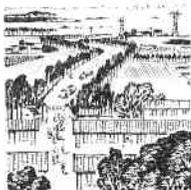
I shall never forget a former poor peasant  
Who poured out his past misery at that meeting  
Of blood and tears mingling in the bitter cold and rain.  
I vowed that never, never would we allow  
Landlords and the bourgeoisie to seize power again.  
I shall never forget each morning  
When in groups we studied under the trees,  
Reading from our red-covered books with golden titles;  
As the sun rose in the east it lifted our hearts.  
How in sultry summer weather returning from work,  
We filled every seat in the library;  
Where, wiping off our sweaty hands and swatting mosquitoes,  
We continued our study of Chairman Mao's works.  
We toiled unceasingly, not just  
For a bumper harvest in grain;  
We toiled to achieve ideological reform.

In days now passed we knew our colleagues  
By their faces only;

For we were separated by position and rank.  
But in those three years as we battled day and night,  
Sweated together, criticized revisionism together,  
Ate at the same table, slept side by side,  
Shared the same feelings, were concerned for each other,  
Helped each and all, we were close to each other.  
When any comrade left our school,  
No matter whether young or old,  
Youth or tested veteran,  
All felt the same pangs at leaving,  
For none can forget  
The militant friendship of the cadre school;  
The former poor peasants who educated us;  
The sickles and hoes we used together;  
The gleaming red-tiled hostels which we built;  
The saplings now spreading branches like green umbrellas;  
The beauty of those well-tilled fields;  
The familiar footpaths that wound around them;  
The new trees and crops at our cadre school;  
The new landscape around Lake Hsiangyang.

Ah! Our cadre school  
Has filled my mind with new ideas.  
Ah! Our cadre school  
Has given me fresh vision.  
Of the ten springs since the Cultural Revolution began,  
Three were spent by Lake Hsiangyang  
Where the education given me was more profound

Than all I'd had before in fifty odd past years.  
Ah, Lake Hsiangyang,  
When I think of you  
My heart is warmed,  
Ah, dear comrades,  
How deeply I long to see you all again.



*Wang Hsun*

## The New Canal

In the hundred *li* of spring water beyond the dyke  
The bright sky and clouds are reflected;  
In the new canal the tumbling water  
Is rushing along, singing loudly.

Where have you and your clamour come from,  
The lake ahead or the sluice-gate beyond?  
Where are you going that you rush on so swiftly,  
To the fields or the hydro-electric plant?

Does your song remind me to breathe deeply  
The fragrance of the newly reaped paddy?  
Or to suggest I look around  
At the bursting blossoms in the cotton fields?

Wang Hsun is a young school graduate who has gone to work in the countryside.

Tell me how many boatloads of prawn and carp  
The fishing teams have brought in from the lake?  
I hear work chants here and there,  
Where are the new dykes being built?

In the new canal the tumbling water  
Is rushing along, singing loudly;  
Saying that it's on its way to the hydro station  
Taking thousands of lights to the mountain people;  
It's going to climb ten thousand peaks  
Till all our fields blossom like Tachai.

I say: "Wait a moment; we'll go together."  
The call comes back: "Hurry then; our age is moving fast!"



*Pieh Min-sheng*

## The Moon

As one of a land reclamation team,  
I study Chairman Mao's works beside our camp fire.  
Above, the moon casts its bright light,  
But Chairman Mao's works are brighter by far;  
The warmth in my heart no cold wind can disperse.

Around me all is quiet; the tractors still  
And ploughshares resting in a row.  
Gazing at the moon as it shines above,  
I recall the deeds of past revolutionaries.

The same moon shone on the Loushan Pass,\*  
On the grasslands and the Yangtse as they crossed it. . . .

\*Pieh Min-sheng is a young school graduate who has gone to live and work in the countryside.

\*Loushan Pass in Kweichow and the grasslands in Szechuan are places the Red Army passed through during the Long March.

So many bitter years of fighting to free China,  
The old world was shattered by the blows of their broadswords.

Now the moon shines on us, a new generation;  
Who've come to this wilderness as pioneers  
To sow the seeds of Tachai in this border region,  
Embroidering these wastelands with our high ideals.

Clasping my Red Guard armband  
Tightly in my arms, I feel the loyal hearts  
Of the older revolutionaries close to mine.  
Ah! My motherland, from now on we shall take over  
The red flag and the revolutionary cause.

We must be firm in settling in the countryside,  
Our determination an iron bastion.  
No evil wind can ever extinguish  
The leaping flames of our camp fires.

Tonight in the wilderness I tell the moon  
How we intend to write the next page of our revolutionary story.  
Tomorrow the roar of our tractors will be like thunder,  
With ploughshares we'll create a whole new world.

*Yang Chun*

## Our Pack-Horse Bells

The bells on our pack-horses\* are ringing, ringing,  
Shaking a shower of silver raindrops from the sky,  
While scattering clouds from the mountain tops.  
Our horses' hooves go clop, clop, clop,  
Along the meandering mountain paths;  
We knock on a thousand doors,  
Bringing care and help to a myriad hearts.

Shafts of lightning strike close beside us,  
Torrential rain streams down upon our heads;  
When we look up at the trail and then beyond  
All we can see is peak after lofty peak.

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\*In the mountain regions of western Kwangsi, doctors sent there from Tientsin often go with pack-horses to treat people of the different minorities there. They are described as "hospitals on pack-horses".

Will you go forward or turn back?  
Asked the wind sighing in the pines  
And the waterfalls in their songs.  
“Forward! Go forward. Why do you ask?  
When we have Chairman Mao’s instructions in our hearts  
Our feet can make a trail even on these high peaks!”

The bells on our pack-horses are ringing, ringing,  
Piercing the tumult of wind and rain;  
Overcoming even the peals of thunder.  
Forward! Forward!  
We carry Chairman Mao’s concern for the people,  
The Party’s deep feelings for the masses,  
To the hamlets of the Yao nationality,  
The bamboo huts of the Miao,  
The new villages of the Yi folk,  
The threshing grounds of the Chuang.  
We are leaving bureaucracy far behind us,  
Becoming ever closer to former poor and lower-middle peasants.

The bells on our pack-horses are ringing, ringing,  
Echoing among the loftiest peaks,  
Carrying our deepest feelings for the people with us.



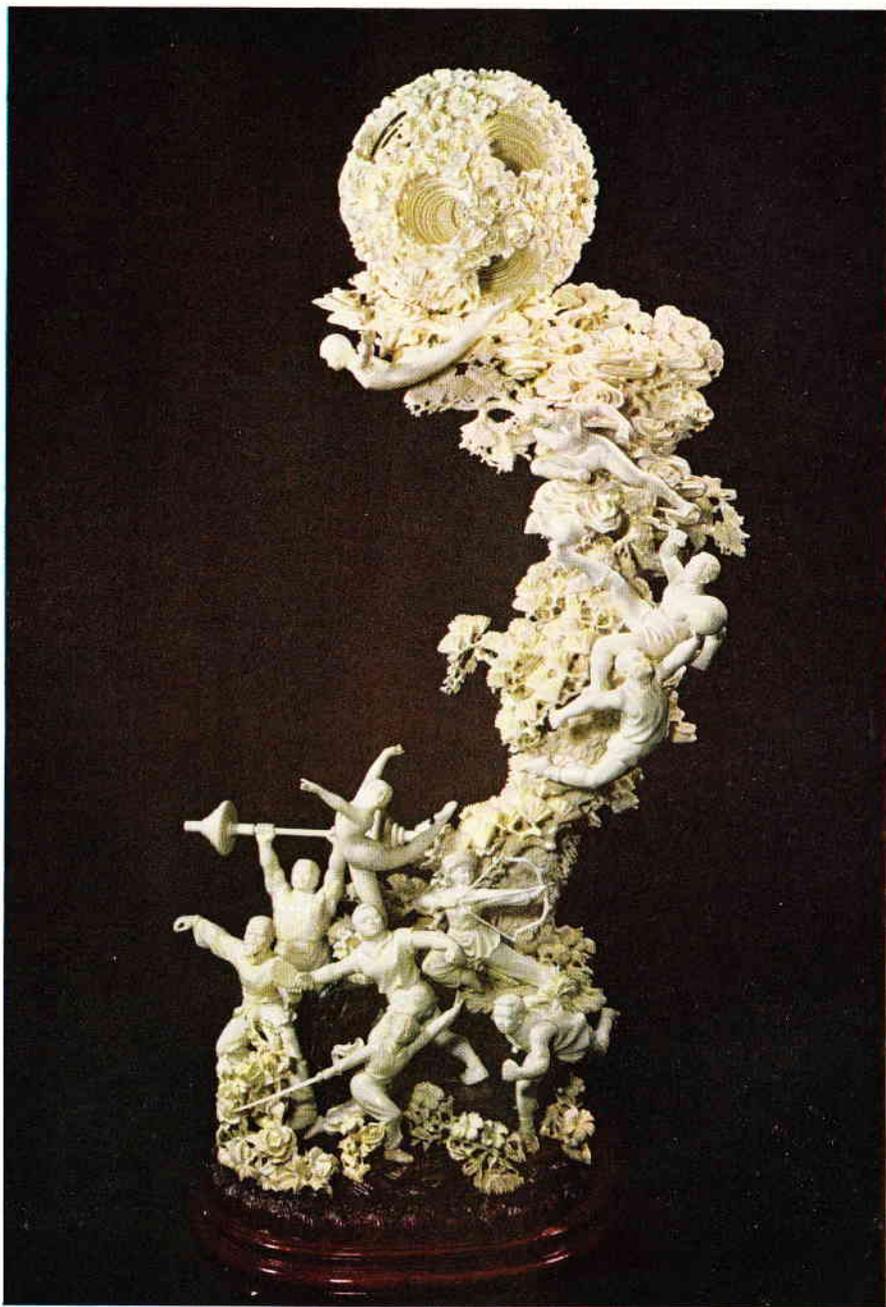
Little Red Soldier (porcelain figure)



Harvest (stone carving)



Lofah-Gourd Vase (jade carving)



Physical Culture (ivory carving)

Each one of 34 ivory balls, one inside the other, can revolve

## NOTES ON ART

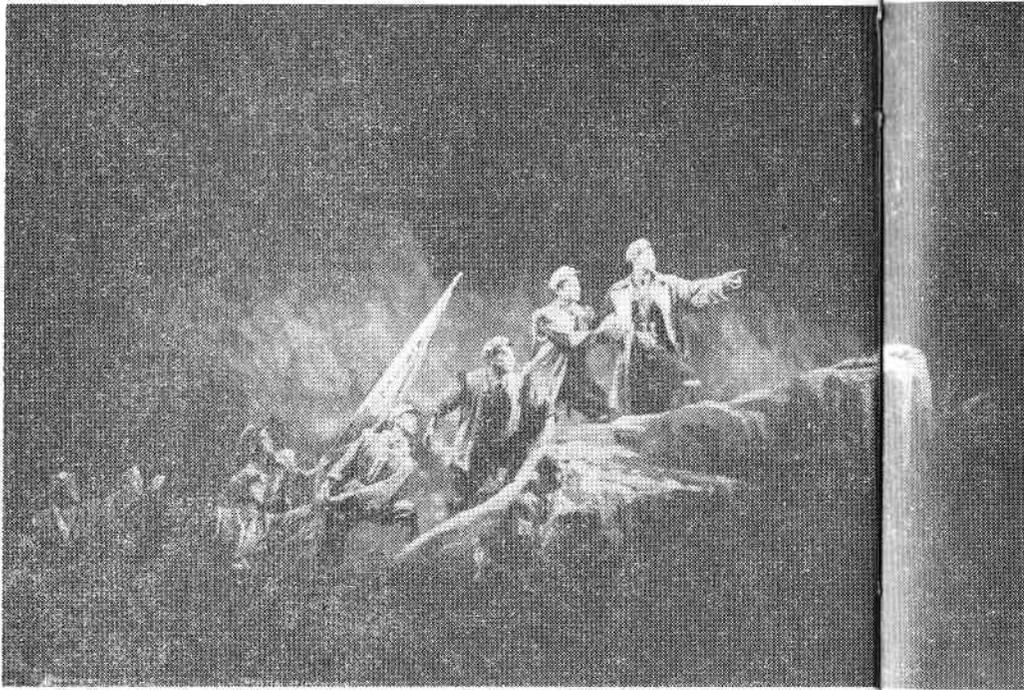
Chung Shu

### Grand Panoramas of History

The play *The Long March* and the suite of songs *The Red Army Fears Not the Trials of the Long March* suppressed for years by the "gang of four" were recently revived, to the great delight of Chinese audiences. Both have successfully employed the method of integrating revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism to present us with a magnificent panorama of the world-famed Long March of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, a splendid part of our revolutionary history.

Both works present the struggle between two lines, vividly depicting episodes from the Long March to show why it was necessary and why the Red Army was able to complete this tremendous campaign.

The play, written by Chen Chi-tung who took part in the Long March, describes the Taishan Battalion of the Central Red Army which followed Chairman Mao on the march. In 1934, Wang Ming had usurped the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, depriving the Red Army of the correct leadership of Chairman Mao. Instead of following a Marxist-Leninist political and military line,



*The Long March*

Wang Ming carried out a "Left" opportunist line which led to the failure to defeat the fifth "encirclement and suppression" campaign of the Kuomintang and caused the Party and the Red Army heavy losses. Finally the Red Army was forced to abandon its revolutionary bases in Kiangsi Province and set off on the long trek to northern Shensi. At the start of the Long March, Wang Ming's lieutenants insisted that our forces must break through the blockade at a place where the enemy greatly outnumbered us, to join up with another section of the Red Army. These wrong tactics nearly brought about the destruction of our Red Army. It is at this juncture that the play begins.

Dark clouds fill the sky above the smoke of battle as the Red Army fights the enemy. After more than two months of hard fighting our forces, including the Taishan Battalion, have sustained heavy losses.

They have come now to a ford on the Hunan-Kweichow border, but here again they are besieged by KMT troops. The battalion commander and many of his men are killed. In some companies only thirty men are left. Yet they keep receiving the order to "fight to the death". The battalion instructor Li Yu-kuo and other Red Army officers realize that something is wrong and indignantly denounce the Wang Ming line. "We still have the same men and same guns as before," they say. "Why did we win battles then but start losing them now?" Aware that the fault lies with the leadership they demand a change of command. And the descriptions of their longing for Chairman Mao show their implicit trust in him and in his revolutionary line. They long to have Chairman Mao back to lead the Red Army.

At this critical moment, word comes that Chairman Mao has directed them to give up for the time being the attempt to join forces with the other contingents; instead, they are to bypass the enemy's main strength and advance towards Tsunyi where the enemy is weaker. The Taishan Battalion's task is to open the way for the main force to advance on the city of Tsunyi.

In January 1935, after the Red Army's capture of Tsunyi, the Chinese Communist Party held an enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau there at which Wang Ming's opportunist line was criticized and his leadership ended. Chairman Mao's revolutionary line was confirmed, his leading position in the Central Committee established. This historic turning-point in the Chinese revolution is reflected by the portrayal of the enthusiasm with which the officers and men of this battalion welcome Chairman Mao's return to the helm.

The play goes on to present stirring episodes from the Long March to display Chairman Mao's brilliance as a strategist. The third scene "Mobile Warfare" describes the great victory of the Battle of Chihshui, when Chairman Mao directed the troops to cross the River Chihshui four times. At the end of January 1935, the Red Army struck north from Tsunyi across the Chihshui towards the upper

Yangtse, meaning to join forces with the Fourth Front Army of the Szechuan-Shensi base and together march north to resist Japan. In alarm, Chiang Kai-shek mobilized hundreds of thousands of troops to blockade the area and stop the Red Army's advance. Then Chairman Mao led the Red Army eastwards through Kweichow where the enemy forces were weaker, and crossed the Chihshui again to recapture Tsunyi, wiping out more than twenty KMT regiments and winning the first big victory of the Long March. Chiang Kai-shek in his frustration took the field himself in pursuit. Chairman Mao ordered the Red Army to cross the Chihshui a third time and make a feint of heading north. The enemy promptly moved to stop their advance, whereupon Chairman Mao led the Red Army across the river a fourth time as if to attack Kweiyang, but instead thrust west into Yunnan, crossing Golden Sand River in the north of the province and skilfully foiling all enemy attempts to overtake, encircle or block his forces. This made it possible for the Red Army to advance north to resist Japan.

This drama describes how the Taishan Battalion crosses the Chihshui four times at Chairman Mao's command, recapturing Tsunyi, wiping out many enemy troops, rescuing prisoners from the city gaol and enlarging the Red Army. This done, the battalion swiftly crosses Golden Sand River. The enemy arriving a week later find only a straw sandal left on the river bank. These incidents testify to the brilliance of Chairman Mao's strategy and ridicule the enemy attempts to wipe out the Red Army.

"The Snowy Mountains", "The Grassland" and "Men of Steel" show how the Taishan Battalion crosses snow-covered mountains and the desolate grassland previously regarded as impassable, and how the political instructor Li Yu-kuo though seriously wounded marches on with his men. These scenes recall the arduous struggle and indomitable revolutionary spirit of the Red Army fighters.

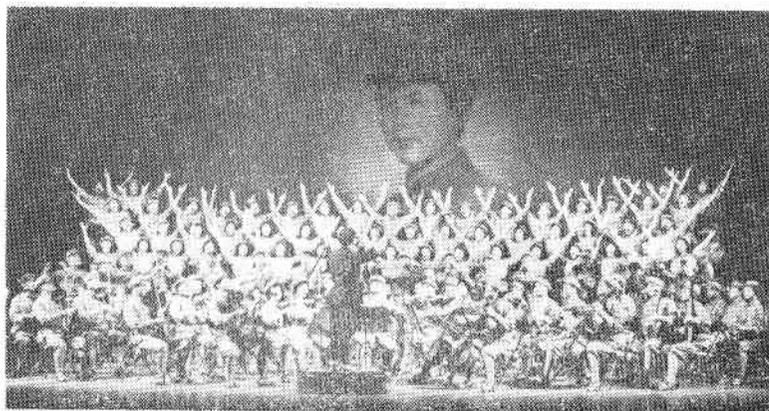
The commander of Chingchiang Battalion of the Fourth Front Army tells Li Yu-kuo how Chang Kuo-tao who has usurped command of the Fourth Front Army engages in splittist activities, anxious to escape from the struggle. This episode highlights the struggle between the Right opportunist line of Chang Kuo-tao and the rev-

olutionary line of Chairman Mao during the later period of the Long March. This struggle between two lines centred on the problem whether to advance north to resist Japan or to retreat to safety and give up the struggle. The central leadership decided to continue north, but Chang Kuo-tao opposed this and wanted to march westwards, splitting the Red Army and sabotaging the plan to resist Japan. However, the main force of the Red Army led by Chairman Mao under the banner of unity to achieve victory continued the northward march, while the officers and men of the Fourth Front Army resolutely resisted the opportunist, splittist activities of Chang Kuo-tao, enabling the Long March to continue along the course charted by Chairman Mao. The play ends with a scene of the various front armies jubilantly joining forces in northern Shensi. The glorious Long March led by Chairman Mao concludes with our victory and our enemy's defeat.

The suite of songs *The Red Army Fears Not the Trials of the Long March* deals with the same historical period. The words of the songs were written by Hsiao Hua, a veteran of the Long March; the music was composed by Chen Keng and others. The ten songs in this suite which form an organic whole are "Farewell to the Revolutionary Base", "Piercing the Enemy Blockade", "The Glorious Tsunyi Conference", "The Four Crossings of the Chihshui", "Fighting Across the Tatu", "The Snowy Mountains and the Grassland", "Reaching Wuchi", "Celebrating Victory", "Announcing the Good News" and "The Great Reunion". These songs praise Chairman Mao's brilliant leadership and the Red Army which achieved immortal deeds for the Chinese people's revolution.

The songs in this suite, choruses, duets and solos, express the changes in the locality and environment at different periods. Accompanied by a symphonic orchestra, they vividly convey the intrepid spirit of the Red Army fighting against the class enemy, nature and wrong lines. The whole work makes a strong impact.

These two works on the Long March make it very clear that during this critical period of Chinese history it was Chairman Mao who saved the Red Army and the revolution. No matter how tortuous the road, as long as we carry out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line



*The Red Army Fears Not the Trials of the Long March*

the revolution will advance and win victories, while if we abandon his revolutionary line the revolution will suffer setbacks and fail.

These two works were first performed in 1954 and 1965 respectively. Both were produced with the warm support and concern of our great leader Chairman Mao, Premier Chou En-lai and other veteran revolutionaries. Chairman Mao went to see the play *The Long March* and listened to the suite of songs, and he warmly approved of them. Premier Chou En-lai took pains to improve both productions. He spent time revising the script of the play and was the one who chose its name — the literal Chinese title *Ten Thousand Streams, a Thousand Mountains*. He also offered advice on the suite of songs and made time to watch rehearsals and performances. To help the artists grasp the historical background, the Premier told them in detail about his experiences on the Long March. However, the criminal “gang of four” did their utmost to kill these two works. Chang Chun-chiao cursed: “Plays like *The Long March* are put on to glorify those old fogeys.” Hating the revolution, they refused to attend performances of either work. But history cannot be negated. Their gang could never succeed in suppressing these works of revolutionary art or making our people forget this glorious chapter in China’s revolutionary history.

## The Liberation of Six Popular Films

The start of this year saw the release of six popular films which had been banned by the “gang of four”. Among them were *The East Is Red*, a pageant of revolutionary songs and dances, and *The Red Guards of Hungbu* based on the opera of the same name.

Thirteen years ago, a pageant of revolutionary songs and dances entitled *The East Is Red* was staged in the Great Hall of the People in Peking and the colour film made of it was shown all over the country.

This magnificent pageant vividly evoked the militant history of the Chinese Communist Party. Its moving songs, spirited dances and stirring music conjured up for the audience the main milestones in the history of the Chinese revolution starting with the birth of the Chinese Communist Party and unfolded a panorama of the first and second revolutionary civil wars, the War of Resistance Against Japan and the War of Liberation. It was an epic in praise of the Chinese revolution and Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line.

On October 6, 1964 our great leader Chairman Mao saw this performance and issued important instructions concerning it. Ten



*The East Is Red*

days later he received the thousands of professional and amateur art workers who had taken part in the pageant's production. It had been staged under the painstaking supervision of our beloved late premier Chou En-lai, who put into this work his deep love and esteem for Chairman Mao and gave detailed directions too regarding the filming of the main theme and major episodes as well as revising many of the songs and recitations in the pageant. He showed such concern for it that the performers called Premier Chou "our director".

The pageant opens with a prelude "Sunflowers Turn to the Sun" which sets the keynote for the whole performance, showing that the foundation of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 started a new chapter in Chinese history. Like the rising sun in the east the Party brought light and warmth to all the nationalities of our country, enabling them to sweep away the filth of the old society. The six

sections following this entitled "Dawn in the East", "A Spark of Fire Sets the Plain Ablaze", "Over Thousands of Mountains and Streams", "The War of Resistance", "Overthrowing the Chiang Regime" and "The Chinese People Stand Up" sum up our people's revolutionary struggles since the birth of the Chinese Communist Party. Under Chairman Mao's brilliant leadership they battled on for twenty-eight years over vast tracts of territory, overcoming countless obstacles and many of them giving their lives to overthrow imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism until at last they accomplished the new democratic revolution and established the People's Republic of China.

This film *The East Is Red* successfully integrates revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism according to Chairman Mao's precept. A creative synthesis of music, dance, poetry and art, it has enriched our proletarian revolutionary art.

The pageant form is well suited to the rich and complex content of the historical periods portrayed, as it is able to integrate the most representative characters and incidents in the various stages of China's revolution since the twenties to the time of Liberation, fully bringing out the main theme. The more than thirty revolutionary songs included have clear Chinese characteristics and vividly project the spirit of different historical periods. The dances, among them some of the Han people and others of Chinese national minorities, embody movements adapted from traditional operas as well as from western ballet. The Torches Dance in the section "A Spark of Fire Sets the Plain Ablaze" opens with a scene of the country veiled in darkness; then suddenly distant sparks appear which rapidly spread and converge to form a huge conflux of torches whirling round and round the stage. This stirring scene, which carries the audience back to the fiery Autumn Harvest Uprising of 1927, combines dancing and music so effectively that it is pregnant with meaning.

This fine work of art was suppressed by the "gang of four" who wanted to usurp power in the Party and government, because this film correctly presenting the glorious history of our Party hampered their plot to falsify the Party's history and overthrow many tried and tested revolutionaries.

*The Red Guards of Hunghu*, another colour feature film now revived, was based on a popular opera produced by the Song and Dance Troupe of Hupeh Province.

Hunghu was the centre of the west Hupeh revolutionary base during the Second Revolutionary Civil War (1927-1937), and Chairman Mao attached great importance to the local people's revolutionary struggle which was led by Comrade Ho Lung. In *Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War Against Japan* he wrote: "...and the guerrilla warfare round the Hunghu Lake kept up for several years in the Red Army period both testify to the possibility of developing guerrilla warfare and of establishing base areas in the river-lake-estuary regions." This opera dealt with the summer of 1930 when, the Red Army having moved away to open up new regions, the Kuomintang rallied the local despots and landlords to destroy the people's armed forces. The Red Guards of Hunghu, led by Party secretary Han Ying and guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, drew the main enemy force to the lake district and by arduous guerrilla warfare succeeded in smashing it and defending the revolutionary base at Hunghu. This film's presentation of the growth of the guerrilla contingent under Party leadership is a powerful tribute to Chairman Mao's military thinking and people's war.

This film makes good use of traditional folk music and certain features of traditional local operas to portray fine proletarian heroines and heroes such as Han Ying and Liu Chuang. Han Ying demonstrates the principle that the Party must be in command of the armed forces. In the complex struggle against the enemy, she relies implicitly on the Party leadership and places this peasant guerrilla contingent under its command. She teaches the Red Guards to look for guidance at all times to the Party "just as sunflowers turn towards the sun". When arrested she sings in prison:

For the revolution, I'll give my life without flinching;  
For the Party, I'll gladly shed my last drop of blood.

Her unconditional loyalty to the Party and to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line is vividly depicted in the film.

This opera and the film based on it elicited a great response from the masses. The theme song which begins

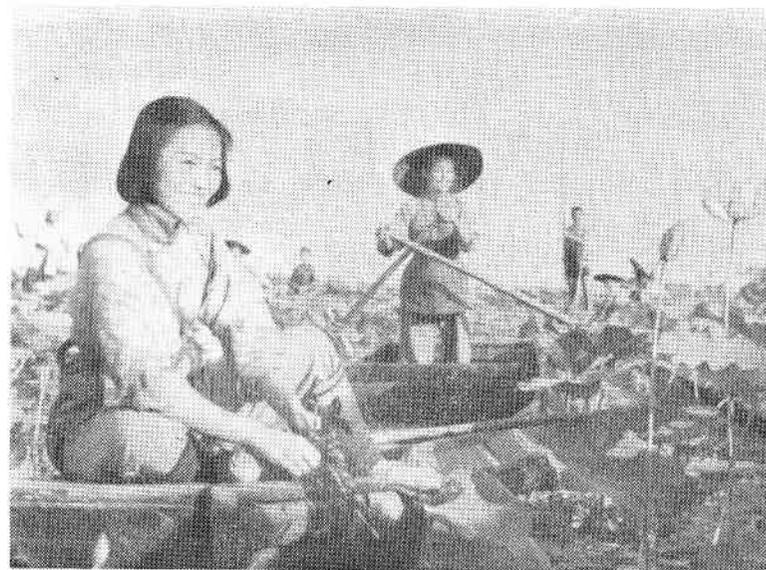
The waves of Hunghu surge and break,  
My home is by Hunghu Lake . . .

is known throughout the country. Our beloved Premier Chou sang this song with great verve at a mass gathering one evening. And after seeing this opera another of our Party and government leaders, Comrade Tung Pi-wu, wrote:

Past struggles are relived here;  
True to life the main characters' parts;  
This opera is an epic,  
Its melodies move our hearts.

However, the "gang of four" conspired with Lin Piao to fabricate charges against Ho Lung who had led the famous Hunghu uprising. Alleging that this opera and film "glorified Ho Lung" and eulogized a wrong line, they banned them and it was forbidden to sing the songs

*The Red Guards of Hunghu*



in the opera. Ho Lung remained loyal all his life to our Party and to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Under the leadership of the Party and Chairman Mao he made great contributions to our Party and people. He was a proletarian revolutionary respected by the masses. After his death, Chairman Mao several times directed that his name should be cleared; but the "gang of four" did their utmost to obstruct the carrying out of these instructions. The banning of *The Red Guards of Hungbu* was another instance of their criminal opposition to Mao Tsetung Thought and their persecution and slander of such veteran revolutionaries as Ho Lung.

In addition to these two films the other old favourites *A Red Flower of the Tienshan Mountains*, *The Top-secret Blueprint*, *Little Soldier Chang Ka-tzu* and *Guerrillas on the Plain* were also released. And in future, while striving to make more and better new films we shall go on showing other good or comparatively good old ones in order to carry out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line on literature and art and hasten the flourishing of our socialist cinema.

Just as plants revive with the coming of spring, after the smashing of the "gang of four" a new blossoming can be expected on our literary and art front.

**Ma Chang-yi**

## **Our People Sing of Chairman Hua**

Thousands of capes make rainbow-coloured clouds,  
Thousands of peacocks circle round the peaks  
Chairman Hua mounts the Tien An Men rostrum  
And our mountains and rivers are radiant  
Our Yi people's hearts turn to Chairman Hua,  
We'll hand on the red banner for generations to come.

— an Yi folk-song

October 1976 was a month to be remembered in China. Hundreds of millions of our labouring people made up songs of jubilation, exulting that once again our Party had a wise leader and that the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua Kuo-feng had smashed the plot of the "gang of four" to usurp Party leadership and state power.

The *dudars* of Uighur singers, the horse-headed fiddles of Mongolian herdsmen, Miao reed-pipes, Pai three-string fiddles, Lisu mouth-organs and long Korean drums . . . could be heard throughout this vast land of ours as the people of all China's nationalities poured out their joy in song. The short spirited songs they made reflected the elation and high morale of our whole army and people.

Countless of the songs being sung far and wide are in praise of Chairman Hua. Using homely metaphors, the expressive folk-song *We of the Bamboo Forests Will Always Follow the Party*\* voices our people's trust in and love for Chairman Hua:

We have cut down thousands of our golden bamboos  
To erect new huts and begin a song contest.  
Our people praise Chairman Hua's wise leadership,  
And all our mountains and streams sing with them.

We have cut down thousands of our golden bamboos  
To weave bamboo baskets, to fill with flowers.  
We resolutely support our Chairman Hua;  
We shall send the flowers to him in Peking.

We have cut down thousands of our golden bamboos  
To make bamboo flutes to accompany our songs.  
The songs we sing are all in praise of the Party  
And its wise decision to wipe out all pests.

In Hsiangyin County, Hunan Province, where Chairman Hua served as the first Communist Party secretary of the county the image of bamboo is used in another folk-song:

I've chosen a bamboo to make a flute,  
I'm playing it to make our tributes wing  
Across the distant mountains  
To Chairman Hua, our leader in Peking.

The bamboo is so well known and loved in China that such allusions to it convey our people's heartfelt feelings in a simple, moving way.

Chairman Hua, the fitting successor chosen by Chairman Mao himself, has won the love and trust of the whole Party, the whole army and the people of all nationalities in China. As Tachai's former poor and lower-middle peasants sing:

Sunghsi River flows on and on,  
And all our joy can never be fully expressed;  
Chairman Hua is our good leader,  
With him in charge our hearts can be at rest.

\*See *Chinese Literature* No. 2, 1977.

A Tibetan folk-song expresses the national minorities' support for Chairman Hua:

Beautiful rainbow arches in the east,  
Auspicious peacocks come here from Peking;  
Precious *bata* raised overhead,  
In our hearts flowers of happiness bloom.  
*So ya la, so ya la,*  
We hail Hua Kuo-feng's appointment  
As Chairman of the Party Central Committee,  
Praising Chairman Mao's wise decision,  
We liberated serfs are all for our new leader!

Our people have compared Chairman Hua with a "pillar of heaven", "locomotive", "helmsman" and "beacon", and sung stirring songs showing their devotion to him.

Chairman Hua has always shown concern for the people of all our nationalities. Closely following Chairman Mao, he has fought for decades for the revolution. He has long had a special place in the hearts of the Chinese army and people. In Hunan the province where Chairman Mao was born and where Chairman Hua worked for many years, the broad masses have deep feeling for Chairman Hua. His travels all over Hunan and the hard work he did there have become local folklore. His selflessness, plain working style and loving care for the masses are the themes of many folk-songs which describe how Commissar Hua carrying an umbrella and a bedding-roll went from door to door on his inspection tours, smoking the pipes old peasants offered him, relishing their home-made cap-sicum sauce, giving his own millet to an old village woman after a natural calamity and carrying stones with the peasants to help with reconstruction. . . .

While in Hunan, Chairman Hua paid five visits to Tsaichiakang Village. During his second visit in the winter of 1968 he stayed with a former poor peasant Wen Shan-chu. Though it was very cold, he refused to have a fire lit because firewood was scarce. His concern for the poor and lower-middle peasants warmed their hearts, and later Wen's wife composed this song:

Chairman Hua stayed here in our home,  
And chatted to us peasants crowding close:  
Don't let ants undermine your dyke he said,  
Keep up class struggle, guard against all foes.  
When the "gang of four" plotted a come-back  
We smashed the lot of them with our silver hoes!

This song depicts the close ties between the people and a leader whose heart is linked with theirs.

In September 1975 when Comrade Hua Kuo-feng led a delegation to Lhasa to take part in the celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Tibet Autonomous Region, he visited some families of emancipated serfs. One of these, Legtan, was so moved by this that he later wrote this song:

Sitting beside us sipping *chingko* wine  
And drinking butter-tea,  
He asked about our daily life —  
None so close to us as he.  
Now he's rid us freed serfs of "four pests",  
True to him for ever we'll be!

Shortly after the major earthquakes in the Yingkou-Haicheng area in 1975 and the Tangshan-Fengnan area in 1976, Comrade Hua Kuo-feng led delegations to the earthquake-stricken areas. Ignoring the risk of after-shocks and the strong wind and scorching sun, he showed deep class feeling for the people there and conveyed to them the sympathy and concern of Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee. The soldiers and civilians of Haicheng County have written many reminiscences and folk-songs expressing their feeling for Chairman Hua. Some of the Kailuan miners at Tangshan sang:

A delegation from Peking has come,  
Our tears pour down like rain.  
Long live Chairman Mao! The Party  
Has given us strength and comfort in our pain;  
This east wind fans the flames of our resolve  
To build our stricken city up again.

Many folk-songs praise Chairman Hua against the background of fierce class struggle and the struggle between two lines, especially

the struggle against the "gang of four". A song written by a PLA soldier of the Yi nationality runs:

The lofty Taliang Ranges dance with glee,  
The rushing Golden Sand River sings aloud;  
Comrade Hua Kuo-feng is now Chairman  
Of the Party Central Committee and its Military Commission,  
Good tidings hover over the Taliang Mountains.

The Torch Festival, so happy and gay,  
Cannot compare with today's grand celebration,  
For our Party has its new leader,  
Our army has its own commander again.

The whole Party, army and people of all nationalities throughout the country will never forget what we owe to Chairman Hua. A PLA fighter in Szechuan Province expressed his gratitude in his song *A "Hata" for Chairman Hua*:

You lifting high the great banner of Mao Tsetung,  
Your keen eyes saw through wind-tossed clouds;  
With the iron resolve of eight hundred million people  
At one stroke you smashed the wolves' den — the "gang of four"!  
Your goodness, like timely rain,  
Nurtures countless birch trees on our snowy mountains...

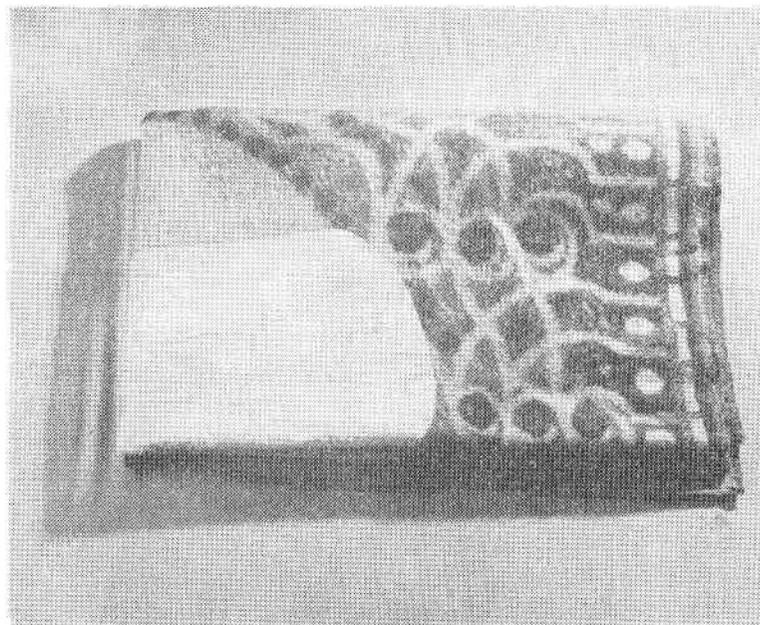
## REVOLUTIONARY RELICS

*Lin Chih-chang*

### A Blanket in the Military Museum

This blanket looks commonplace but it embodies the militant comradeship between proletarian revolutionaries of the older generation and their complete devotion to the revolution. There is a heart-stirring story behind it.

On December 14, 1931, in response to the call of the Chinese Communist Party to resist Japanese aggression, ten thousand men of the Kuomintang 26th Route Army led by Comrades Chao Po-sheng and Tung Chen-tang rose in revolt in Ningtu, Kiangsi and joined the Red Army. This heroic Ningtu Uprising shook the reactionary rule of the Kuomintang and threw the imperialists into a panic, writing a glorious page in the annals of the Chinese revolution. At a rally to celebrate this victory, Comrade Tung Chen-tang presented Comrade Chu Teh with this blanket as a memento. Taking it with him, Comrade Chu Teh smashed the "encirclement and suppression" campaigns launched by the Chiang Kai-shek reactionaries. With it he took part in the world-famed Long March and arrived in Yen-an, the new headquarters of the revolution.



After the uprising Comrade Tung Chen-tang devoted himself to the revolutionary cause of the people, took part in many bitter struggles and fought fearlessly against the enemy until, in 1937, he fell in the battle at Kaotaichen in Kansu. Chairman Mao pointed out: **"The leaders of the Ningtu Uprising, Chao Po-sheng, Tung Chen-tang and others, have become steadfast comrades in the revolution."** He also attended Comrade Tung Chen-tang's memorial ceremony at the foot of Pagoda Hill in Yen-an. After Comrade Tung Chen-tang's death Comrade Chu Teh treasured the blanket even more.

After the "Sian Incident" in December 1936, Comrade Chou En-lai went to Sian as our Party's plenipotentiary to negotiate with the Kuomintang commanders Chang Hsueh-liang and Yang Hucheng, and with Chiang Kai-shek whom they were holding under arrest to force him to stop the civil war and unite to resist Japanese aggression. In northern Shensi the winter was bitterly cold, and Com-

rade Chou En-lai often travelled between Yen-an and Sian by night in his hard struggle to establish and consolidate the anti-Japanese national united front. To keep him warm Comrade Chu Teh gave him this blanket. In May 1937 Comrade Chou En-lai and other comrades set out for Nanking on a mission. On their way from Yen-an to Sian, they came under attack by armed gangsters organized by the Kuomintang reactionaries. At this critical juncture Comrade Chou En-lai personally directed his party to put up a stubborn fight. In the fierce battle which ensued eleven comrades gave their lives to cover the withdrawal of the rest to safety. Those degenerate gangsters attempted to kill Comrade Chou En-lai so as to undermine the resistance against Japan and the national salvation movement — the sacred cause of the whole people. But their scheme was foiled as our cavalry and border guards in northern Shensi got wind of the attack and swiftly went to their comrades' rescue. The gangsters hacked this blanket in a dozen places before they fled in confusion; but very soon they were annihilated by our border troops and people. Comrade Chou En-lai always cherished the memory of the martyrs who fell in this Laoshan incident. After his death, a photograph taken forty years ago was found in his inner pocket with the inscription: "The Laoshan incident left only four survivors." This expressed Premier Chou's deep class feeling towards the comrades who shared weal and woe with him.

The year 1937 saw an upsurge in the nationwide resistance movement led and expedited by the Chinese Communist Party. Comrade Chu Teh, commander-in-chief of the Eighth Route Army, made ready to set out for the anti-Japanese front. Sending the veteran revolutionary off, Comrade Chou En-lai gave him back the blanket. In April 1938, Commander-in-Chief Chu Teh, penetrating deep into the enemy-occupied area in southeast Shansi, led our valiant Eighth Route Army men to smash the concerted attack of nine Japanese forces which had encircled them. The people of the Taihang Mountains, who loved their own army and had the highest respect for its commander-in-chief, kept the *kang* provided for the soldiers well heated. Late one night when the entire army went out to attack the enemy, a big hole was burned in this blanket on an over-heated *kang*

in Hsiaho Village at the foot of the Taihang Mountains. Although it was only an ordinary blanket, it bore witness to the history of the revolutionaries of the older generation who followed our great leader Chairman Mao through hard and bitter battles for the cause of the people's liberation. How could it be allowed to be destroyed? So Comrade Kang Ke-ching, wife of Chu Teh, painstakingly mended the burned part and Commander-in-Chief Chu Teh continued to use the blanket. He carried it with him through the eight years of the Anti-Japanese War and the three years of the War of Liberation, taking good care of it until the whole country was liberated. Finally he donated it to the Military Museum of the Chinese People's Revolution.

Our esteemed and beloved Premier Chou En-lai and Comrade Chu Teh, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress have now passed away. The sight of this blanket they both used and presented to each other reminds us of the glorious deeds of these two great proletarian revolutionaries. Their revolutionary comradeship, loftier than mountains and deeper than seas, educates and encourages us to carry the cause of the proletarian revolution through to the end under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and under the leadership of the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua.

## CHRONICLE

### Anhwei Writers and Artists Spur the Movement to Learn from Tachai

Recently the writers and artists of opera troupes and drama companies in Anhwei Province reviewed Chairman Mao's inscription for a prefectural art troupe in 1951: "Serve the countryside." Having denounced the vicious way the Wang-Chang-Chiang-Yao anti-Party clique tried to prevent them from carrying out this directive, they resolved to go down to the countryside and launch a new drive to spur the movement to learn from Tachai in agriculture and build up Tachai-type counties throughout the whole province.

In 1975, after the First National Conference on Learning from Tachai in Agriculture, cultural departments in Anhwei convened a meeting of provincial opera and drama troupes and sent more than a hundred of them to villages and mountain areas to further the movement to learn from Tachai. In spite of interference and attempted sabotage from the "gang of four" the members of these troupes persisted in carrying out Chairman Mao's instructions, put on good performances for the peasants and have achieved good results.

### Some Good Operas and Plays Restaged

Some good operas and plays that were banned for a long time by the "gang of four" have now been restaged in China.

*Chaoyang Gully*, for example, produced in 1958, is a good Honan opera which warmly praised the new socialist phenomenon of educated youth going to settle in the countryside. *The Great Wall Along the South Coast*, a play written in 1963, is based on the heroic deeds of the navy and militiamen who wiped out a surprise landing by U.S.-Chiang Kai-shek armed agents on the Chinese coast. It embodies Chairman Mao's concept of people's war. The Peking opera *August First Uprising* produced in 1959 presents the historic insurrection in Nanchang organized by the Chinese Communist Party on August 1, 1927, vividly illustrating the great truth enunciated by Chairman Mao "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun". Another play *Battle in Leopard Bay* put on in 1964 reflects the great struggle waged by the armymen and the people in the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party to smash the Kuomintang encirclement and economic blockade in the Anti-Japanese War. It praises the glorious tradition of our Party and army fostered by Chairman Mao — their revolutionary self-reliance and hard work.

Some of these fine items serving proletarian politics had been seen and approved by Chairman Mao and fondly encouraged by Premier Chou and other members of the Party Central Committee.

### An Album of Photographs of Premier Chou

To commemorate the first anniversary of the passing of Premier Chou, great proletarian revolutionary and outstanding communist fighter, the *Chinese Photography* magazine edited and brought out an album of pictures entitled *The Glorious Life of Chou En-lai, a Great Communist Fighter*. This album presents valuable photographs of Premier Chou En-lai taken together with our great leader and teacher Chairman Mao, photos taken with other veteran proletarian revolutionaries and some taken with workers, peasants and soldiers, graphically portraying the close ties between him and the broad masses. In addition, there are pictures taken of him at various critical stages of the Chinese revolution to which he devoted his life. The photographs total 60 in all, some of which are printed for the first time.

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