

China Reconstructs

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Asian solidarity: President Sukarno of Indonesia, Chairman Mao Tse-tung of China and Premier Tanka Prasad Acharya of Nepal, on the reviewing stand on China's National Day, October 1, 1956.

CHINA RECONSTRUCTS

VOL. V NO. 12 DECEMBER 1956

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CONTENTS

ARTICLES

- FATTER PAY ENVELOPES FOR
MILLIONS—*Tan Man-ni* 2
- WHAT KIND OF MUSIC FOR CHINA?
—*Ho Lu-ting* 5
- FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN; VICTORY
AHEAD OF TIME—*Yung Lung-kwei* 10
- A 'WAR DANCE' DRAMA
—*Tang Shih* 15
- THE BASIC GEOGRAPHY OF CHINA
—*Lo Kai-fu* 18
- STORY TOLD AT A WEDDING
—*Yu Lin* 24
- IN AN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN
PEKING—*Evangelos Papanoutsos* . 27
- THREE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLE-
MEN—*Chang Shou-chen* 30

COLOUR PICTORIAL

- CHINESE "ACROBATIC COMBAT" . 16

FEATURES

- TO OUR READERS
—*Visitors and Friends; Historic
Congress* 1
- TRADE WINDS
—*In the Market for Tractors; Fer-
tilizer Imports; Rubber Embargo
Ends* 9
- LANGUAGE CORNER
—*Looking Back—and Forward* . . 28
- FILM NOTES
—*Before the New Chief Arrives* . . 29
- HOME AND CHILDREN
—*Making a Paper Whale* 32
- POSTBAG 33

SUPPLEMENT

SUN YAT-SEN MEMORIAL

FRONT AND BACK COVERS: An
embroidery design of the Miao
people of Kweichow province.
Photo by Chang Shui-cheng

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With deep sorrow we announce the death of Liu Ong-sheng, a member of our Editorial Board. He succumbed to arteriosclerosis and hypertension at his home in Shanghai on October 1, 1956, at the age of 69.

To Our Readers

Visitors and Friends

THE BANDUNG spirit, a spirit of solidarity that transcends single countries and links all nations that oppose colonialism and strive for equality and freedom, is manifesting itself more and more. On China's National Day, October 1, reviewing the parade on Tien An Men Square, President Sukarno of Indonesia and Premier Tanka Prasad Acharya of Nepal stood side by side with our Chairman Mao Tse-tung (see picture on opposite page). In the stands were thousands of other foreign guests from over fifty nations. Among them were military and parliamentary delegations from India, several Japanese delegations, cultural delegations from Ireland, Iceland and Italy.

Many foreign correspondents watched the parade too, but American newspapermen were conspicuously absent. A good number, representing leading U.S. newspapers and magazines had applied to come and been told China would be glad to receive them. Their own government had stopped them—with a threat of five years in jail for "misuse of passports" if they dared make the trip. China has no "bamboo curtain"; it hangs elsewhere.

PRESIDENT SUKARNO'S visit was truly historic. It demonstrated the solidarity of Asia's nations against colonialism with particular vividness. Colonialism is still far from dead; one need not go to Suez for proof. China herself still suffers from it in Taiwan. Parts of Indonesia's territory too remain to be freed.

The Chinese people, therefore, responded warmly when President Sukarno said in Peking, "Your struggle for the liberation of Taiwan is also our struggle; our struggle for the liberation of West Irian is also your struggle." Chairman Mao Tse-tung called the 82,000,000 Indonesians our fighting comrades. We and they, he said, are of one heart.

Historic Congress

CHINA'S growing moral prestige abroad is a result of the solid achievements, progressive aims and strong unity of her own people. These were demonstrated in the greatest single event in her internal life in 1956, the Eighth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party.

Congress reports and speeches noted that the Chinese people have now won a victory no less worldwide in its significance than their liberation in 1949. During the past year, as a result of massive and deep-going transformations, our society became basically socialist. Among 600 million Chinese people, a quarter of all humanity, the system of exploitation of man by man disappeared never to return. All energies can now be thrown into building the material foundation for the prosperity of our men and women. Big new strides in this direction are embodied in the principles the Congress announced for China's Second Five-Year Plan (1958-62).

VERY important was the adoption at the Congress of a new Constitution of the Communist Party. It provides for elected representatives on different levels who will serve for definite terms and meet repeatedly. New precautions have been taken against over-centralization and bureaucracy. While decisions are collective, the responsibility for carrying them out is individual. Democratic control is all-pervading.

To its supreme assembly, China's leading party invited the leaders of all other parties in the country. These have their place in the People's Political Consultative Conference. Their members may be found in the People's Congresses, which are organs of political power that legislate and administer, nationally and locally. China today has many channels along which the democratic stream can flow. And more democracy means more solidarity.

FATTER PAY ENVELOPES FOR MILLIONS

TAN MAN - NI

MOST of the eighteen million factory and office workers in China are getting fatter pay envelopes this year, as the result of the greatest nationwide wage increase in China's history. The rise averages 14½ per cent, or about ¥80 (equivalent to 500 lb. of flour) per year for each of the workers in government-owned industries, government offices and the older jointly-owned state-private enterprises. Such workers went onto the new rates this summer and autumn. Those in private establishments which changed over to joint operation only in 1956, are now in the process of a similar wage reform. They may receive a higher rise.

Alongside the general increase, the entire nationwide wage system is being drastically revised to iron out disparities and create uniform rates for each job.

One Worker's Situation

Let's see what the new wage levels mean, for example, to Li Lien-chih, a 41-year old repairman in the Tientsin No. 2 Rubber Plant. Before the increase he earned ¥64 a month. Now, as a result of the rise and promotion by one grade, he takes home ¥85, tax free.

Li is a semi-skilled workman. His pay before the reform was about average, enough to support a small family comfortably. Though he and his wife have six children, a rather large family, they were able to meet ordinary expenses without strain. They spent ¥40 for food, ¥10 for rent, water, electricity and coal, and the remaining ¥14 for clothing, books, cigarettes, candy for the children and other sundries.

But this was a very tight budget, allowing for few luxuries, and nothing laid by for emergencies.

Though Li, as a worker, is covered by health, accident and old-age insurance, as well as half the expense for medical treatment for his dependants, some difficulties arose. Last year, when Mrs. Li was ill, the family had found it necessary to use Li's right to apply to the trade union for an additional grant for her medical treatment. Statistics compiled before the recent wage increase by the Tientsin Federation of Trade Unions show that 10 per cent of Tientsin's workers had to apply for such occasional grants, while 5 per cent depended on trade-union allowances to maintain an adequate living standard.

Now, with his ¥20 rise, Li's household can manage some "extras", which most average factory workers with smaller families could already afford: more meat and fruit in their daily diet, new clothing, possibly a silk dress for Mrs. Li, a radio and other more costly entertainment than film shows at the workers' cultural club.

Moreover, the money wage is not a complete statement of the real income of Chinese workers. Li, for instance, gets his health and old-age benefits without paying a cent. Many other workers also receive a subsidy for transportation to work, rent and heating. Production workers often make additional money for overfulfilling of their quotas on piece work, bigger output or better quality on time work, savings on materials, inventions or improvement of efficiency on the job.

Although still modest, the way the Li family lives now is a long way from the hut of sorghum stalks they lived in up to 1949. For 28 years, Li had moved from one

casual job to another in the factory, always fearing a layoff. Now his job is steady and safe.

Previous Improvement

This year's wage increase, while the most substantial and far-reaching, is not the first since liberation. On the eve of the current increase, workers' income was already about 90 per cent higher than in 1949.

In the first months of China's new government, in order that commerce and industry should not be interrupted, the policy was to maintain jobs and wages such as they had been. At that time, the trade unions in mines and factories launched campaigns to abolish the most ruthless elements of exploitation, such as the "gang boss" system (with wage kick-backs to the boss) and unpaid apprenticeship.

Early in 1950, the "wage point" system was instituted for all workers in state-operated industries. This protected them from price and currency fluctuation. One wage point was equivalent to one per cent of the monthly cost of the five chief items of constant consumption (grain, vegetable oil, salt, cotton and coal) used by two persons living together. Each worker's wage was fixed in terms of these points. And the money value of each point was re-assessed every pay-day on the basis of the current market price of the five necessities. This system was necessary as long as speculation and other market irregularities affecting prices had not been fully cleared up. It was then the only way to see that the workers received an adequate real wage.

In 1955, after most of the production and marketing of the main commodities had come under

state or joint state-private operation, and when currency inflation and fluctuations had long been things of the past, the point system was discarded and replaced by a fixed money wage. Prior to this, almost all workers had received one or more increases in terms of points (i.e. in real wages).

How Wages are Set

The basic principle of the distribution of social wealth in China is that the value produced by the working people must belong to the working people. Therefore, as the productivity of labour in our country rises, so do earnings. But since we must build for the future, not all the value produced can be returned to the people immediately through wages or other compensation. Some—and the figure now stands at just over 20 per cent—must be re-invested to build factories and machines which will help increase production in the future, and some goes for public services, government administration, national defense, education and so on.

The movement of wages during the past few years has been roughly as follows. During the years 1950 to 1952, they increased rapidly. The war-devastated industries were still being rehabilitated at that time, so productivity rose by only one-third. But the government deemed it necessary to remedy the pitifully low pre-liberation pay as soon as possible, so average wages for industrial workers went up at a much higher rate; 57.7 per cent in the three years.

The first Five-Year Plan was launched in 1953. It provided for an average wage increase of 5.8 per cent each year, and a total annual increase in the value of industrial and agricultural production amounting to 8.6 per cent. Between the beginning of the Plan and the end of 1955, wages rose by 13.7 per cent. But productivity actually went up 41 per cent, so a wage increase was due.

Effects of Reform

In February 1956, a wage conference of representatives of the unions, government ministries,



After the wage rise, shoppers crowded the Peking Department Store.

and the Communist Party drew up recommendations for a new wage programme based on the needs of the workers and of the national economy. This was adopted by the government on June 16, and made retroactive to April. By the end of 1956, when the increase will have gone into effect for all categories of workers, the general wage level will be 33½ per cent higher than at the beginning of the Five-Year Plan. This means that one year before the end of the Plan, due in 1957, the original estimate for wage increase for the whole period will already have been slightly surpassed.

Another important task of this year's reform was to regularize the wage system. Before it, wage rates in different industries and enterprises had grown up in a local, uncoordinated way. A carpenter doing a certain kind of job in one factory, for instance, might be getting a much higher rate than another man doing the same job in another factory in the same industry. Such disparities infringe on the socialist principle of "to each according to his work". They have, in general, been eliminated by new nationwide wage and job-grading systems. But certain differentials, favourable to the

development of the national economy at this stage, are provided for.

People in industries of comparatively greater importance to the Five-Year Plan, or those which directly contribute more to the national wealth, have received bigger increases and will have a slightly higher wage scale in the future. They include workers in the iron and steel industry, mining, power, oil and machine building. In the 1956 reform, wage-earners in heavy industries got an increase averaging 15.6 per cent. Those in light industry, got 12 per cent; in non-industrial enterprises, 10.9 per cent; and in government offices 10 per cent.

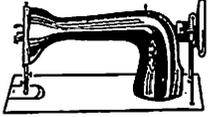
Workers in newly developed industrial centres and on construction sites in remote regions get better pay than those doing the same job elsewhere. This is partly to encourage recruitment for such jobs, partly to compensate them

for the physical hardship due to climate, and to the somewhat rough-and-ready living and working conditions of the industrial "frontier". For instance, machine-builders in Taiyuan, one of the growing industrial centres recently received a wage increase of 20 per cent, a good deal above the average. For miners, furnace workers and others with physically heavy tasks, rates are also higher.

College professors and highly trained personnel have higher pay commensurate with their experience, training and responsibility. A scientific research worker of the highest grade receives roughly as much as a minister in the government. In addition he may get added income for important contributions in his field.

Some groups of workers whose wages were comparatively low, such as primary school teachers and those in rural supply-and-marketing cooperatives and in administrative offices in the villages, also received substantial rises.

This year's wage rise (¥1,250,000,000)* can buy any of the following

 7,812,500 Bicycles	 8,928,571 Sewing machines
 10,416,666 Radios	 9,309,966,215 Lb. of rice
 83,333,333 Pairs of shoes	 1,598,830,409 Yards of cloth
 271,739,130 Fountain pens	 1,887,500,000 Lb. of sugar

*Figures for most joint state-private enterprises not included.

Drawing by Mi Wen-huan

and Wagon Repair Shop near Peking, for instance, the 1,200 workers fell into 762 different categories according to job or level of work.

It is by using such standards that each individual can be placed in his proper job "slot". This may be done by written and practical tests, or through democratic discussions by a committee of his workmates, who best know his capabilities.

From now on, re-grading will take place regularly. Together with the factory administration, the trade union arranges for classes, lectures and library facilities in an organized study programme to help individuals master the technical skills and to enable them to advance to higher wage categories. They also organize "tutor-learner" pairs, where older and newer workers exchange knowledge and techniques. At the Changhsingtien Repair Shop, 60 per cent of those who took advancement tests passed them and were immediately placed on higher-paying jobs, while the others advanced in rate on the same jobs.

It is also the trade union's responsibility to see that in each shop the principles of grading and advancement are carried out properly. At Changhsingtien, five elderly furnacemen were shifted to less strenuous but unskilled work. But even though they were put in the highest unskilled bracket, they complained that this was actually a demotion and meant loss of pay. One of the principles of the reform is that no one's wage should be cut. Therefore, although continuing to do unskilled work, the old men were returned to their former wage-level and rating.

As the general wage-rise came through, counters at every retail shop in the country were packed with people spending their accumulated increases, which were retroactive to April. In Peking, the consumption of meat has doubled. Radios, bicycles, watches and other expensive items are selling as never before. Everywhere, better wages have resulted in a direct rise in living standards.

Democratic Procedure

In connection with the reform, workers in all factories have been busy holding democratic discussions on what should be the standard of working ability at each pay level of each job. For example, to establish standards for railway repair shops, engineers, pace-setters and experienced workers representing all such units throughout the country met to draft appropriate specifications for each job. These covered technical skill, output, and theoretical knowledge required.

The draft specifications were then sent to all the shops for discussion by the workers, whose suggestions were taken into consideration in finalizing the standards. In the Changhsingtien Locomotive



The Central Symphony Orchestra, Peking.

What Kind of Music for China?

HO LU-TING

THE ITEMS that received the greatest attention at the four-week Music Festival in Peking last summer were the traditional tunes played on Chinese instruments, and songs and local-style opera arias performed by folk-singers from different regions. New works — choral, instrumental and orchestral — also occupied a considerable part of the programmes. But our ancient heritage, as the Festival showed, is still the best aspect of China's musical culture. Musicians all agree that it must be preserved and enriched. A more controversial problem, however, and one of quite long standing, is how to set about creating a new national music, expressive of the spirit and sentiment of modern China.

National and International

Now it is my opinion that a national music, like a nation itself, is formed over a long period of

history — and that it is not formed in isolation. Musicians of various European countries, in the past three or four hundred years, influenced one another to such an extent that terms like the baroque period, the rococo, the classical, or the romantic can be applied to Western music as a whole. But did this have the effect of submerging national characteristics? On the contrary, it produced in the nineteenth century such unmistakably national composers as Grieg, Chopin, Debussy, Smetana, Dvorak and Russia's "Big Five".

Creative Combination

In China too, one of the great flowerings of music occurred in a period when musical culture was being assimilated from abroad, from India and Central Asia, during the Sui (A.D. 581-618) and Tang (A.D. 618-907) dynasties. Professor Yang Ling-liu wrote in his *Outline History of Chinese*

Music: "The secular music of the Tang people was a kind of creative combination of pure Chinese and *hu* (foreign) music."

As for folk songs and local operas, their different styles are closely related to the speech, customs, natural surroundings and social life of the respective regions. But these operas did not take shape in isolation either; they too were affected by external influences. When an outside form first clashes with a local one, some kind of incongruity is inevitable, and immature works result. After a time, however, the outside influence is assimilated and becomes part of the main stream.

Among our musical instruments, for instance, we now regard the *hu chin* (two-stringed fiddle), the *pipa* (a fretted guitar-like instrument) and the *sona* (a horn) as Chinese. But all three originally came from what were then the foreign countries of the "Western



Regions" (now Kansu and Sinkiang), and still retain their foreign names.

A Chaotic Period

In Europe, from the seventeenth century onwards, there was a great vitality in the arts and sciences as the various countries moved away from feudalism and modern society arose. But China, under the rule of the Ching dynasty (1644-1911), experienced no basic social change and remained stubbornly aloof from outside contacts. One result was that her musical culture stagnated until after the turn of the present century, when Western influences began to impinge on it.

That clash, when it came, was a sudden one, and Chinese music entered a very chaotic period. On the one hand there was the deep ocean of our musical heritage — consisting mainly of folk-song, local opera and narrative ballads, along with the traditional orchestral and instrumental music. On the other hand there was modern European music, an idiom entirely new to the Chinese people, both in its formal aims and its technique of composition. The collision of these two widely-differing forms produced conflict and argument that has been going on ever since. And the recent Music Festival again debated the old issues: between "foreign" and "domestic"; between "scientific" and "backward". This debate continues. Professional and amateur musicians, ordinary music-lovers, all are taking part in it.

A traditional folk song by Jen Ai-ying, of the Shansi Song and Dance Ensemble. Her accompanist is playing the hu-chin.

Nobody has been heard actually to deny that China's traditional music has any artistic value. But it is looked down on and regarded as backward by some people, who are accustomed to the Western musical tradition only. Others, on the contrary, take a narrow national view and repudiate anything Western. In the discussions at the Music Festival, I heard this opinion: "The leading musical authorities these days are all trained in the Western way; they talk about creating a national music but there is danger that they may strangle traditional music under the slogan of enriching it with Western elements." And some people asked jealously: "What percentage of the music played at the Festival was Western, and what percentage national?"

What do such people mean by "national"? To their ears, only songs sung in the folk style and music played on traditional instruments was national; everything else seemed Western. Therefore they reached the conclusion that Western music dominated the Festival. But were not all the works performed there written by Chinese composers? We have far too few musical theorists and highly-trained composers, so perhaps some of the works were immature. Nonetheless, they certainly represented a genuine attempt at modern national style.

Folk Songs as Themes

Groups of musicians have been travelling round the country, going into the villages and into national minority areas. They have collected songs and musical scores, written down tunes and lyrics, made tape recordings, and interviewed traditional ballad-singers and local musicians. Much of the material they gathered was subsequently arranged for concert performance, and some of the adaptations have been very popular with music lovers, both at home and abroad.

But success in this direction is still comparatively rare. On the whole, as the Music Festival revealed, folk songs often lose much of their original flavour and feeling after professional musicians

have gone to work on them. Why? I think it is because we have been taking these matters too lightly. The arranger must have a thorough understanding of the nature and style of every single folk song he tackles, of its pattern of development and its relation to the people among whom it is sung. Otherwise he cannot avoid damaging its integrity or spoiling the original style. To be able to write pretty accompaniments is not enough; a musician must also know what folk song is and how it is born.

Questions of Composition

European music underwent a long process of development, from folk song and religious music to such complex forms as grand opera, chamber music and the symphony. A great body of theory was built up through the study and analysis of the works of great composers. The simple musical instruments of the people went through a series of improvements to become modern string, wind and percussion instruments with their rich variations in tone, colour, volume and quality.

In China, during her prolonged social and economic stagnation, the arts and sciences were retarded. That is why, even though we have an incomparably rich heritage of traditional music and a living, vital folk-art, we have not yet produced composers of the calibre of Mozart, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky or Chopin. We still have no body of musical theory, and no stable, organized educational system for training composers and musicians. Even our system of notation is inaccurate.

As for musical instruments, they have a rich variation in timbre, but most still retain their primitive forms and have not been perfected over a long period by master-craftsmen like those of the West. The majority have no fixed pitch and their compass is narrow. We possess no bass instruments like the cello and the double-bass. In these respects we are behind the West. If we refuse to learn from it, we shall be the losers.

Those of our musicians who have a fair grip on Western composition know very little about traditional



A scene from a local opera, *Raid on the County School* (Kwangtung province).

music, and often do not have enough feeling for the new life. The result is that their work lacks spontaneity. Those who know traditional music well, on the other hand, are ignorant of Western technique, so find it hard to compose good modern works. There are still others, one must say, who know a little of each and produce a mixture of both. But when you pour two half-bottles of vinegar into one bottle, it's still a bottle of vinegar. How can you blame people for calling this sort of music "neither Chinese nor Western", or 'a sort of conglomerate'? Still, it must be admitted that it is impossible to train large numbers of composers overnight. So we have to study and experiment at the same time.

A Modern National Style

To create a modern national music, I think, we should study Western technique and apply it to traditional Chinese music. We can certainly adopt the Western system of notation. And since any traditional Chinese music can be played on Western instruments, we can use them all. We should also study their essential characteristics so as to improve our own instruments.

In such things as harmony and counterpoint, Chinese and Western music have the same basic prin-

ciples. But only we ourselves can devise our own national style and enrich the texture of our music.

In relation to form, we can also recognize the same general principle in the two traditions. For instance, the sequence of movements in a Chinese musical work—"the introduction, the elucidation of the theme, the change to a fresh viewpoint, and the summing up"—is essentially the same as the western three-part song form (AABA). But the Western form has gone on from there to more complex manifestations, such as the fugue and the sonata. We can compose traditional-style music in these forms. Some of our musicians have already attempted it.

When I say we should study western techniques, I do not mean that we should imitate them or re-fashion Chinese music to make it accord with Western models. I think a knowledge of Western technique, theory and experiences should help us to seek out our own pattern of development, and to build up the necessary theories so that we can create forms suitable to our purposes. Such a new national music, composed according to a new technique and played on improved Chinese instruments, will be different from the traditional music played on the old instruments. But it will still be national in form, and intensely Chinese.



Musicians, from a Tang dynasty (A.D. 618-907) mural in the Tunhuang caves, western Kansu province. In the Tang period, Chinese music absorbed many foreign influences and flowered.

During the period when the Chinese people were fighting for their freedom we needed songs that would encourage and inspire. The traditional Chinese melodies, we must remember, were not adequate for this situation. Except for a few north Shensi ballads, our folk songs generally lacked a fighting spirit and rhythm. A whole range of new, fighting, patriotic songs came into existence during the Anti-Japanese War, most of them in march-time, with a strong Western influence in their melodies. Among them was Nieh Erh's *March of the Volunteers*, now China's national anthem, and Hsien Hsing-hai's famous *Yellow River Cantata*, written in a modern choral form. It is difficult to imagine that if either of these composers had stuck entirely to traditional forms and melodies their work would have been so stirring, so apt for its time, so right for the people.

Now, as our country moves into a new historical period, we must create songs for our own genera-

tion, with new elements that broaden the scope of our traditional music rather than detract from it.

What Kind of Orchestra?

Argument has also arisen as to whether more stress should be put on the development of the traditional orchestra or the symphony orchestra. Some people are for "coexistence", but hold that the traditional orchestra should receive the main emphasis. I agree that we must give special attention to organizing and training more traditional orchestras, because this will help to spread understanding of music and delight in its performance. Traditional instruments are simple in structure, easy to master, and inexpensive to buy. Factories, farms and schools can all afford to have them. So I think our composers should write more works for such orchestras, and that the Ministry of Light Industry should get some experts to study how to improve the traditional instruments, standardize their pitch and so on.

Having said this, I still consider that the symphony orchestra should be the main point of emphasis in forming China's new musical culture. What we call "Western" musical instruments have been developed to a very high degree of perfection by musicians and craftsmen in the different countries. The potentialities of a symphony orchestra are far great-

er than those of the Chinese traditional orchestra. A symphonic ensemble can play both Western and Chinese works, and give the latter a richer tone and colour than ever before.

A Word on Local Operas

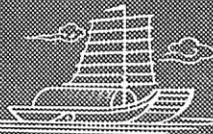
China has an astonishingly rich variety of local opera styles. It is neither a simple process nor a short one for each such style to be formed and perfected. Why then do our musicians often look down on the folk artists? It may be because many of the latter cannot read music and have had little general education. But it is necessary to remember that the folk-musicians have attained their artistry after long years of arduous training, and the music they perform is the fruit of hundreds or even thousands of years of tradition. Local operas are a composite art. Our musicians, most of whom are trained in the Western tradition, must themselves learn the elements of Chinese literature, drama, dancing, art and history—as well as Chinese traditional music—before they can take an effective part in adapting or improving local operas.

As for the folk artists, all the educational opportunities they used to lack are now open to them. They should therefore study modern music, or at least learn to read it, so they can work with the composers to collect and edit our rich musical heritage.



This orchestra, using only traditional Chinese instruments, performed at the National Music Festival. Many Chinese instruments are now being improved.

Trade Winds



In the Market for Tractors

NO COUNTRY in the world can satisfy singly the rising need for agricultural machinery in China." This remark was made by Mr. Paul A. Spencer of Massey-Harris-Ferguson (Export) Ltd., the well-known British farm-equipment firm, after his visit to this country last summer. It reflects the fact that a truly enormous new market for tractors and other machines has come into existence with the rapid changes in China's age-old system of agriculture.

Almost all of the nation's 110 million peasant households are now in cooperatives. This means that land is being cultivated in big tracts instead of small plots. Moreover, during the Second Five-Year Plan, beginning in 1958, it is planned to open up a further 6½ to 7 million acres of hitherto-uncultivated land. Obviously, the agricultural producers' cooperatives, the state farms including those engaged in reclamation, and the forestry units all require machinery.

Yet the number of tractors working in China today is still below 10,000. These have been mainly imported from the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies, and China is building her own tractor plants. But the country needs many hundreds of thousands of tractors, and the demand cannot be easily satisfied in the near future even if China absorbs a good part of the export potential of countries like Britain, France and Western Germany.

This source has so far been cut off by the "Strategic List" imposed by COCOM (Consultative Group Cooperation Committee). Now, however, some of the governments participating in the COCOM embargoes are beginning to grant export licences for tractors to China. Last summer a number of western firms, including Massey-Harris-Ferguson and David Brown,

Marshall & Sons Co., Ltd. in Britain, the Renault, Continental, Noraple and St. Chamond companies in France and Hanomag in Western Germany, sent representatives to China to explore the possibilities of trade provided restrictions imposed by their governments can be relaxed. They signed contracts for the trial sale of tractors (ranging from scores to hundreds in number) with the China National Transport Machinery Import Corporation. They visited cooperatives, state farms and tractor stations, and held technical discussions with officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agro-Technical and Motor-Traction institutes in the capital.

In 1955, China had 139 tractor stations equipped with the equivalent of 2,300 tractors (reckoned in units of 15 h.p.). By the end of this year, 137 stations with 4,500 tractors will have been added, serving over 2,500,000 acres, more than five times as much as last year.

So far, most tractor stations have been in the cotton and grain producing areas north of the Yangtze River. But now a development has taken place which will increase the range of mechanized cultivation very greatly. Two types of tractors—the Czechoslovak ZETOR-25K wheel-type and the Soviet DT-54 caterpillar-type have been adapted for ploughing wet paddy-fields. The whole rice-growing area of the south thus enters the market for tractors of various makes.

Fertilizer Imports

THE DEMAND for chemical fertilizer too is rising sharply. Under the biggest single import contract for this commodity ever signed in China, the Belgian Cobelaz Company will supply 425,000 tons by next February.

Mr. L. Tiller, manager of the Belgian company, told a reporter of the Hsinhua News Agency during his visit to China in February last that his firm has been selling fertilizer to China for a quarter of a century. "But it is only now, when the People's Government is making great efforts to develop agriculture," he said, "that the trade can be substantially increased."

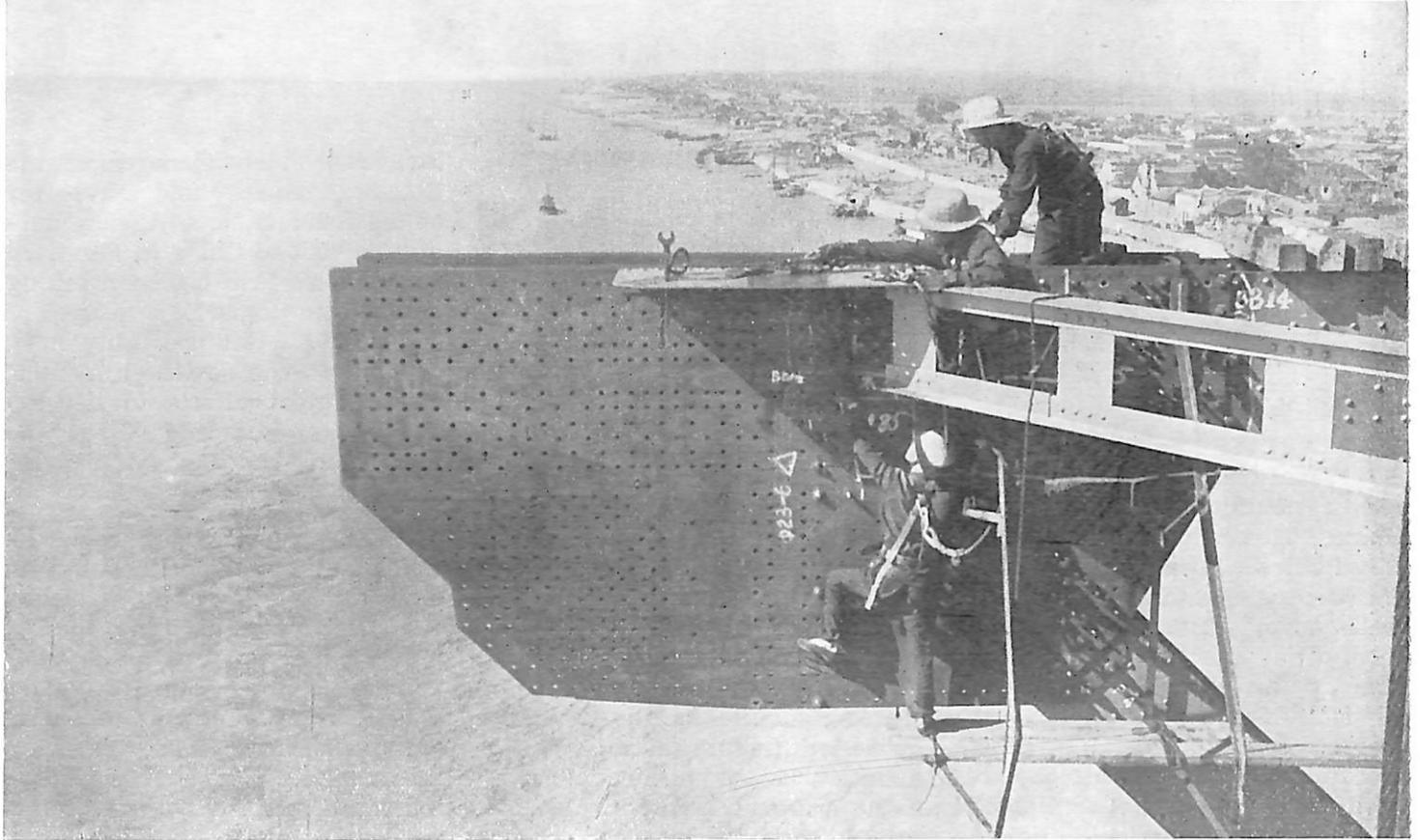
Fertilizer purchases by the China National Import and Export Corporation in the first half of this year alone totalled more than a million tons. They came from Austria, Western Germany, Italy and Belgium. Convoys of trucks are constantly to be seen leaving the coastal ports carrying the imported fertilizer to the countryside.

Rubber Embargo Ends

THE five-year-long ban on the export of rubber from Malaya and Singapore to China has come to an end. Two trade missions—the Malayan with 28 members and the one from Singapore with 54—visited China during the second half of 1956. Represented were big rubber firms and other enterprises. They concluded £5 million sterling worth of trade contracts with various Chinese import-export corporations.

Under the contracts, Malaya and Singapore will sell China a considerable amount of rubber as well as coconut oil, copra, timber, tin, gambier (an astringent and tanning agent) and other products. In return, China will deliver rice, soya beans, canned goods, fruit, vegetables and other food items, sugar, cotton textiles, steel bars, glassware and other products of light industry.

A joint communique, issued on October 4 by the two trade missions and the China Committee for the Promotion of International Trade, expressed satisfaction at the resumption of commercial relations which are beneficial to all parties. "The trade between China and Singapore, and between China and the Federation of Malaya," it stated, "has broad prospects of expansion."



Working on the Yangtze River Bridge at Wuhan, one of the biggest in the world.

First Five-Year Plan: Victory Ahead of Time

YUNG LUNG - KWEI

CHINA is ending the fourth year of her First Five-Year Plan (1953-57). But already the targets set for the full period have been reached or surpassed for many important industrial products—including steel, machine tools, cement, cotton yarn and cloth, motor tires, paper and 20 others. Agricultural production too is running about a year ahead of schedule. Equally important, as Liu Shao-chi noted in his political report to the Eighth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party last September, there has been “total and decisive victory in the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, and capitalist industry and commerce.”

Estimates and Achievements

To give more idea of the progress made, we will cite some facts from the heavy industries, the basis of economic advance. Na-

tional steel production for 1956 will be 4.5 million tons, or nearly 3½ times as much as in 1952. China will make 27,000 machine tools, which represents a doubling over the same period. Among products it had never made before, the country is now manufacturing not only motor vehicles and railway engines but also jet aircraft, as well as the propeller-driven kind. Other new items are steel rails weighing 50 kg. per metre, and 12,000 kw. steam turbines and generators. Many steel mills, coal mines, power stations, and machine-building, chemical and non-ferrous metal plants have been built in different places. A large number of important existing plants have been technically re-equipped and modernized.

Revised annual plan figures for industrial production for 1957 promise even greater achievements. Next year China is to produce 5.5

million tons of steel, 120 million tons of coal and 30,000 machine tools. Industrial output is to surpass the original Five-Year Plan by 15 per cent. Industry (including handicrafts) will account for 50 per cent of the total industrial and agricultural wealth produced in the country.

The First Five-Year Plan, as originally drafted, called for work on the construction or full renovation of 694 industrial and mining enterprises in the above-norm category* and 455 of these were scheduled to begin producing before 1957. With the acceleration that has taken place, work will be done on 800

*The “norm” is a measure of investment set in capital construction. It varies for different fields. In China’s first 5-Year Plan, to give some examples, it is ¥10 million for a steel mill, tractor plant or shipyard; ¥6 million for a cement factory; ¥3 million for a cotton mill.

such enterprises, and 500 will go into production. Apart from this, thousands of below-norm projects will also have been completed. Total investment in capital construction will be 10 per cent more than was planned.

New railways built in the first four years of the Plan are to total 2,867 miles, 335 miles more than the original five-year target.

In agriculture, grave natural calamities struck the country during three of the past four years. There were serious and widespread crop losses from droughts and floods in 1953, floods in 1954 and a typhoon in 1956. Nonetheless, grain output this year is up to the figure set for 1957 (i.e. 180 million tons), and barring future calamities, commercial crop totals will reach those levels too. This is the result of the greater productivity of an organized peasantry, of its greater ability to combat natural scourges and make up for losses by timely-replanting and other means, and of large-scale technical and other help from the government.

The number of students in China's universities in 1957 is planned at 2.3 times the 1952 figures, and this target too will be surpassed. The Chinese Academy of Sciences will have established 68 new research institutes by the end of 1957 (only 51 were planned). These advances are a guarantee that China will keep abreast of the needs of industrialization in two vitally important respects: personnel and scientific standards.

In the socialist transformation of agriculture, the Plan called for the entry of one-third of China's peasants into cooperatives by the end of 1957. But today, nine-tenths have already done so. Calculating on the basis of output, private industry is 99 per cent converted to joint state-private operation (the figure for private trade and services, calculated on

the number of enterprises, is 68 per cent). Some 90 per cent of handicraftsmen now work cooperatively.

Were Targets Too Low?

Does the extent of its pre-schedule fulfilment mean that the First Five-Year Plan was too conservative? This is the same as asking, "What should be the rate of development in China's socialist construction?" The experience of the past four years, of difficulties encountered and overcome, sheds much light on this question.

In the drafting of the Plan, the problem of rate was a very important one. Looking ahead in 1953, how many tons of steel, how many kilowatt hours of electricity, should economists have projected for 1957? What growth should have been envisaged for agriculture, trade, transport, education and so on? Obviously, in a planned economy, the development targets for various branches of the national economy must be definitely set out. The principle followed has been that planning should be "energetic and sound".

"Energetic" means that planning should take account of all favourable conditions, production potentials and the development of mass initiative, and that targets should be fixed according to fairly advanced standards. "Sound" means that adverse factors and possible difficulties in each period should also be thoroughly es-

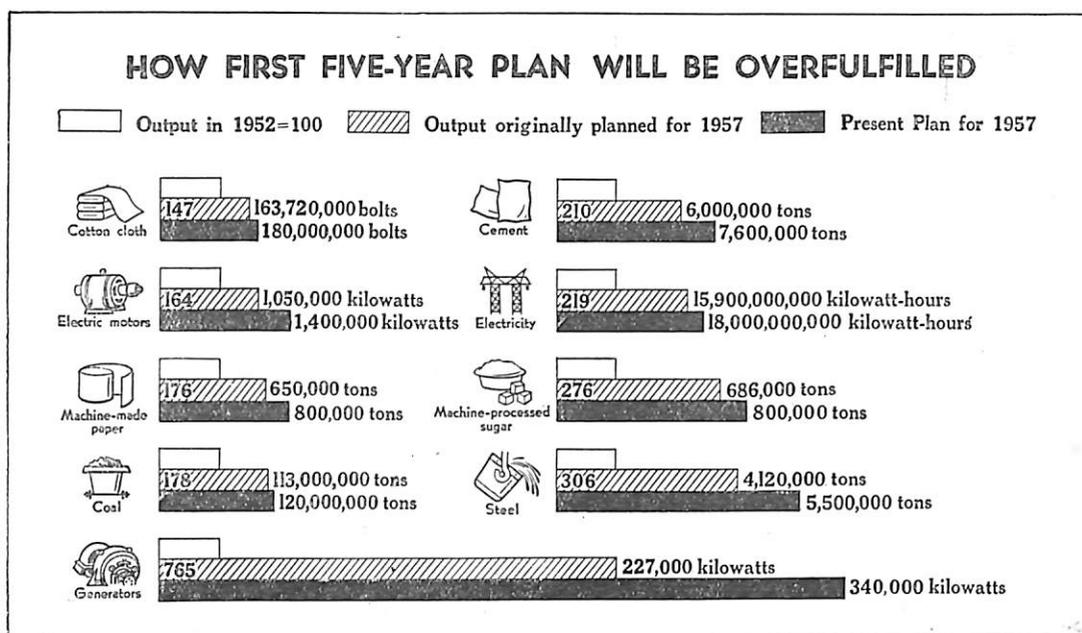
timated and weighed, so as to ensure that the planning be reliable, practical and steady, and that disproportions should not throw the actual work out of gear.

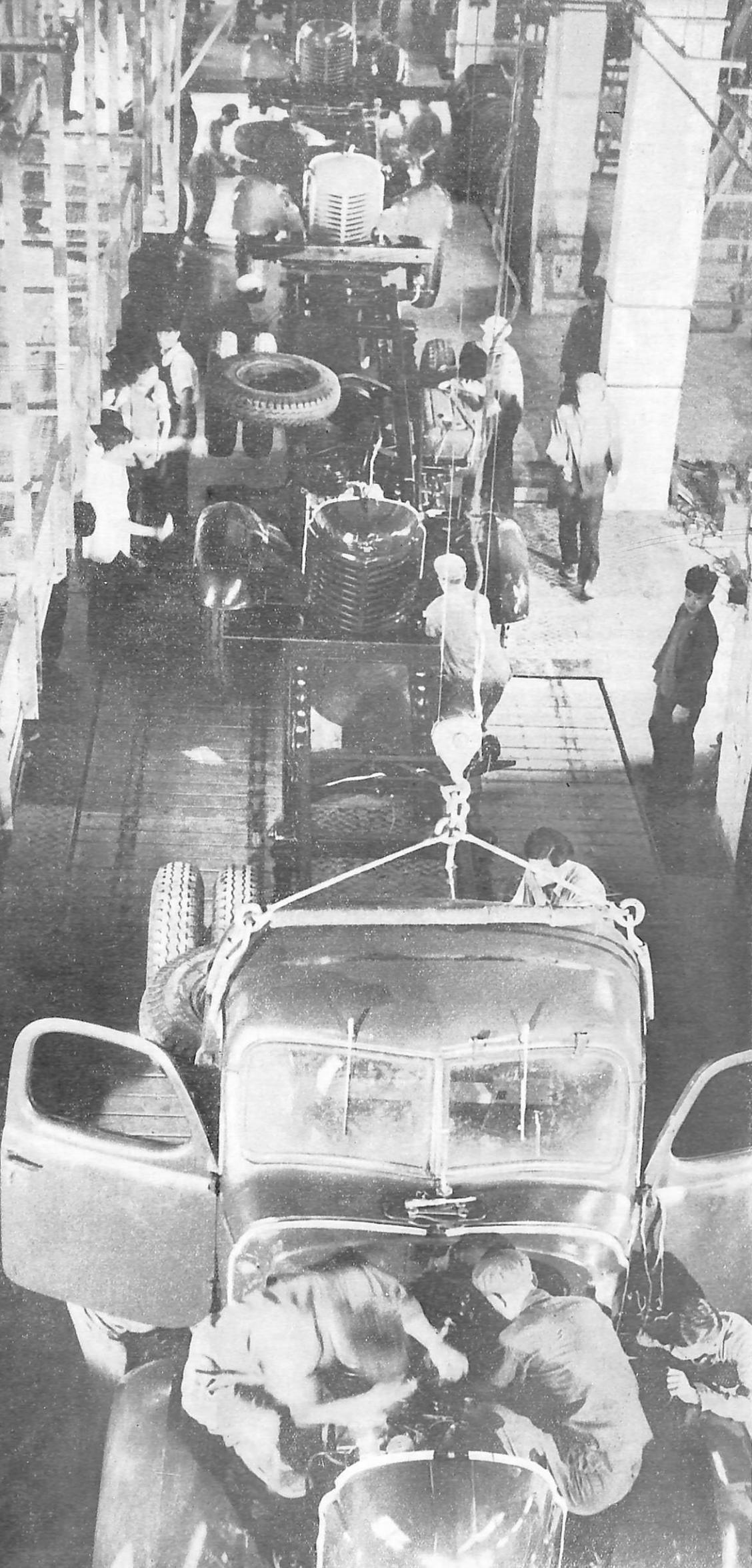
The carrying-out of the Plan during the past four years has shown that the targets set were generally appropriate. In drafting the yearly plans, proper arrangements were made, circumstances permitting, for utilizing all potentialities so as to raise production and overfulfill the original annual targets.

On the other hand, planning is a new thing in China, and mistakes were made at various junctures. Some involved over-great haste, others an under-estimation of the possibilities and a consequent undue slowness of action. Both caused temporary difficulties from which lessons were drawn.

Errors Made and Corrected

In 1953, for example, some departments pushed building ahead rather blindly. Since large-scale construction had begun, they thought that all types of projects, both the more and the less important, could be launched at the same time. Some administrators forgot that the accumulation of funds was still in its early stages and that many handicaps had been inherited from China's age-old economic backwardness. Corrections, therefore, had to be made on the basis of centering the main





effort on projects and undertakings of key significance to the national economy, and proceeding to others step by step as the situation warranted.

By contrast with this premature rashness in building, the steps taken for the reorganization of agriculture on a cooperative basis, in late 1954 and early 1955, were too slow and timid. Some political leaders in the countryside underestimated the socialist awakening of the peasants, and held them back when they wished to go forward. The situation was remedied by Chairman Mao Tse-tung's July 1955 speech on agricultural cooperation, which analyzed a great many facts revealing that the vast majority of peasants were ripe and eager for socialist transformation. Model regulations for agricultural producers' cooperatives were then published, and the movement to organize such units swept the Chinese countryside. In the ensuing three months, no less than 590,000 were set up, in addition to the 650,000 already existing.

Following this cooperative upsurge in the villages, decisive steps were taken in the socialist transformation of private industry and commerce. In late 1955 and early 1956, remaining capitalist enterprises went over to joint state-private ownership by entire trades. They did so willingly, since owners were afforded a future of exercising their experience and talents in an economy already massively socialist, interest on their capital was paid, and no other course offered any prospects. Handicraftsmen were organized into cooperatives in the same period, and showed great enthusiasm for the change. Life itself demonstrated that the situation was ripe for decisive steps in socialist transformation, and that delay would have been an economic and political error.

Industry and Agriculture

The emphasis in China's economic development on industry is properly so since she is lacking in

"Liberation" lorries, the first motor vehicles ever made in China, come off the assembly line.

this respect. But precisely in such a country, with a population nine-tenths rural, agriculture is the basis of industrial development and requires unflagging attention. When farm cooperation reached its high tide last autumn, it naturally gave great impetus to agricultural production — creating vast new raw material resources and a vastly enlarged market for industry. In its turn, the intensified economic activity made greater demands on heavy and light industry, transport, the trading system, education and cultural work.

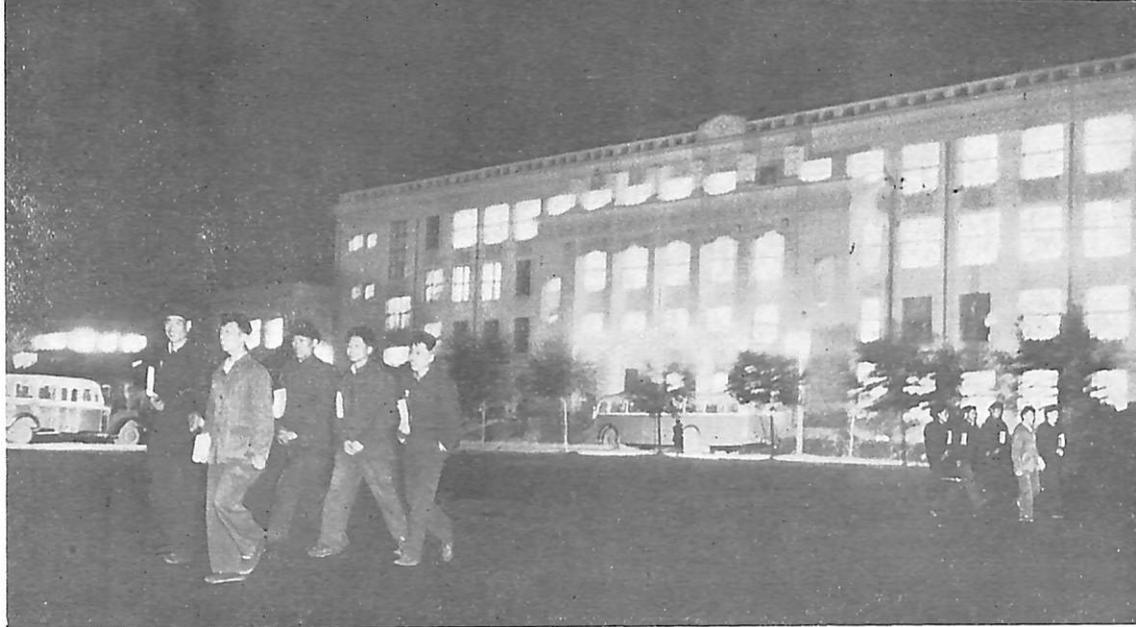
It was in this situation that the “outstanding workers’ campaign” was launched in the factories and mines to turn out more and better products more quickly and cheaply. Its essence was that the best experience accumulated at the point of production in each industry should be spread through the industry as a whole. Outstanding workers’ conferences, held on a national scale during early 1956, defined and popularized 190 important new methods in heavy industry, 400 in textiles, 232 in other light-industrial branches and 203 in the railways. All are contributing greatly to the rousing of efficiency, the reduction of cost, and the improvement of work-techniques and of management.

Experience Exchanged

Similar campaigns were carried on among workers in commerce, education and culture. They represent the integration of the workers’ socialist initiative into the forward movement of the national economy as a whole. This has been an important factor in the fulfilment of the Plan ahead of time.

Construction sites, as well as production units, have exchanged and popularized useful experience. As a result, many designing and building time-tables could be considerably shortened. To build a textile mill with 100,000 spindles and 3,500 looms, for example, a year and a half used to be allowed; now 10-12 months is deemed sufficient.

Furthermore, thanks to the efforts of administrators, technicians and workers, more than a fifth of the 141 large-scale plants completed in 1953-55 have already



Worker-students leaving evening university classes in Shenyang, Northeast China.

reached or exceeded their rated capacity. Production at the aluminum plant at Fushun, the first of its kind in China, surpassed its rated capacity by 10 per cent in the first year. Many other new units, experience now shows, will reach full capacity ahead of schedule. This too contributes to the fast growth of production.

Alongside these positive developments, leading to overfulfilment of the Plan, there have been negative ones. The great advances in agricultural organization led to some too-hasty and ambitious capital-construction schedules in 1956. Shortages of steel, cement and some other building materials resulted, and could be made up only by drawing on accumulated reserves and stocks more heavily than was warranted by the whole Plan. In current production, many more double-share wheeled ploughs were made than the farms needed at the moment, putting an unwarranted strain on steel supplies. Agricultural equipment factories suffered a fever of frantic activity in one period. They relapsed into temporary inaction when a halt had to be called to check the flow of surplus output.

Conservatism and rashness, clearly, can both do great harm in a planned economy. Obvious too is the importance of a proper proportion between the developments in various fields.

Heavy and Light Industries

One of the main problems of correct proportion is that between the development of heavy and light industry. The building of heavy industry must have priority;

that is a fundamental principle. China’s economic backwardness, which has continued so long, can be wiped out only when she herself can supply the equipment, materials, and technical skills needed to develop the national economy of 600 million people. Therefore, during the past four years, the highest speed was set for such branches as metallurgy, machine-building, power, coal, oil, chemical industry, transport, etc., which in old China were the weakest of all.

This has proved correct. The output and range of steel products has been raised considerably. Giant plants for the manufacture of seamless tubing, heavy rails and structural shapes have been built. Many engineering works and other important plants have been set up or expanded. Without these, the complete manufacture of locomotives, trucks, aircraft and metallurgical equipment in Chinese plants, mainly from Chinese materials, would have been quite impossible.

The Proper Balance

But at the same time, the development of light industry must have due attention. Failing this, not only will the rising needs of the people remain unmet, but basic industrialization itself will be adversely affected. An insufficiency of consumers’ goods, for instance, would make it hard to maintain price stability. Peasants, unable to buy what they need with their increased income, would not be willing to raise production or sell their surplus. Light industry, with its quick turnover, is a big

profit-earner for the nation. Were it to be insufficiently abundant or active, there would be less capital for investment in the heavy branches.

In view of these considerations, China decided to raise the investment in the building of light industry this year—from 11.2 per cent of the total investment in all industry to 12.5 per cent. The number of above-norm light industry factories erected during the first Five-Year Plan will increase from 65, as originally fixed, to 99. Such a correction has become possible because agriculture can now supply more raw materials.

Despite its still relatively low share in the construction programme (assigned expenditures being only 1/7 of those for heavy industry), China's light industry can fulfil its production targets and, in general, satisfy the current needs of the people. This is because the number of existing factories is fairly large, and their capacity can be used more fully. Most of the private plants recently transferred to joint ownership were in the light industry field. Now that they are gradually being integrated in national planning, they can work more efficiently. Handicraft production, under its new form of organization, is also rising. Both will play an increasingly important part in the supplying of consumers' goods.

Accumulation and Consumption

It is China's policy, while industrializing, to raise the living standards of the people step by step, in harmony with the growth of output and of the productivity of labour. Can this be done? Is it possible to raise living standards while continually investing huge sums in capital construction? Is this not trying to have one's cake and eat it too?

Our answer is that, based on China's experience in the last four years, a gradual rise in living standards can be ensured while industrializing at an unslackened pace. This depends on the correct handling of another question: what part of the national income to

accumulate as capital, and what part to assign for consumption by the people?

National income, as we define it, is the total social wealth created in industry, agriculture, building, transport and commerce, minus the value of means of production consumed (including depreciation) in producing the wealth. After distribution and re-distribution, the national income falls into two categories: the accumulation fund and the consumption fund.

The percentage of China's national income going to accumulation has risen during the past four years, as her industrialization goals require. Standing at 18.3 per cent in 1953, it went up to 22.8 per cent in 1956. In absolute terms, however, the consumption fund as well as the accumulation fund increased. This was possible because production in China goes up constantly, and the national income with it. As compared to 1952, the accumulation fund was 106 per cent greater in 1956 (from it, investments in capital construction rose by 227 per cent). The consumption fund grew by 29.7 per cent in the same period.

The proportions of the national income fixed for accumulation and consumption respectively during the past four years have proved generally correct, and beneficial to China's economic development. In the coming few years they will be kept roughly the same, because experience shows that this ensures a relatively high speed of industrialization. If accumulation were less, industrialization would slow down and the improvement of living standards would have no sound foundation. But if more went to accumulation, improvements in the material and cultural life of the people would be deferred. Since our country is backward economically, with comparatively low living standards and a tremendous population that is mainly rural, this would be detrimental to the people's interests.

Living Standards Rise

The consumption fund, as we have already pointed out, grew by 29.7 per cent between 1952 and

1956. Within this general figure, consumption by the workers rose by 48.8 per cent. A general wage increase was given in 1956 to remedy a mistake made in 1954-55, when productivity of labour in industry rose by 10 per cent, while real wages went up by only 0.6 per cent. The increase brought wage funds up 14½ per cent as compared with last year, to a level 33½ per cent higher than in 1952.* This was ½ per cent more than the upward movement of wages planned for the entire five years 1953-57.

Consumption funds used by the peasants rose, between 1952 and 1956, by 28½ per cent. Agricultural taxes, including surtaxes, it should be said here, absorb only 12 per cent of the total annual value of agricultural production. This year, the government directed that things should be so arranged that, given an increase in production, nine-tenths of all agricultural co-op members should get an income higher than in 1955. This aim appears to have been reached. In seven cooperatives in Shansi province, to cite information gathered in one sampling, about 64 per cent of the value of the autumn harvest was actually distributed to members, and 2,148 of the 2,489 member-households enjoyed a rise in income.

All the facts show that China's large-scale industrialization does not exclude a concurrent improvement of living standards. The two things do not contradict each other, in principle or in reality. Though the improvement in livelihood cannot yet be called substantial, it is constant. Immediate experience, as well as understanding of the goal, tells the people that really big advances will be made when China becomes more modern and industrialized.

Now China is preparing to draft her Second Five-Year Plan. In this work, account is being taken of the valuable lessons of the past four years.

*See "Fatter Pay Envelopes for Millions", in this issue.



A 'WAR DANCE' DRAMA

TANG SHIH

ONE of the most popular shows on the Peking stage in late 1956 was *Mount Yentangshan*, an acrobatic dance-pantomime on a historical theme. Presented by a Peking Opera troupe from North-east China, it uses dance, costume and "battle acrobatics" from the traditional opera. But there is no singing or speech. The story is told in mime to a musical accompaniment.

Mount Yentangshan won first prizes at the National Festival of Classical and Folk Drama in 1952 and the Fourth World Youth Festival at Bucharest in 1953. The plot is based on what happened when a tyrant of the Sui dynasty (A.D. 581-618) ruthlessly press-ganged the peasants of the Shantung peninsula into the million-strong army with which he invaded Korea. The peasants, headed by their leader Meng Hai-kung, rose in revolt. On the stage, we see how they attack and defeat the emperor's troops on Mount Yentangshan. The battle rages over mountains and lakes. It ends with the storming of a fort, over whose walls the peasants leap like arrows shot from a bow.

ALL the actors belong to the category of *wu hang* (military male roles). The action is carried entirely by the spectacular "acrobatic combat" technique. This technique is thought to date back to the eleventh century B.C., when the war dance called *Ta Wu* ("Great King Wu") was created to celebrate the martial triumphs of that monarch. In the first century B.C., *Musical Cavalry*, depicting the life and battle of that branch of the army, was on the repertoire of the musicians and dancers attached to the court of the Han dynasty (206 B.C. — A.D. 220). About 500 years later, the *Mask Dance of Prince Chi*, the fame of which spread as far as Japan, developed the form

further. The art was mature when it became an integral part of the operatic drama in about the tenth century. In this fruitful marriage it was perfected, enriched and evolved in a multitude of patterns.

THE choreographers of *Mount Yentangshan* use this art in fresh, creative fashion. Each gesture and movement expresses a definite action or emotion. The *chang kao* symbolizes a duel on horseback between two generals in full regalia, using spears and other weapons. The *tuan ta* depicts a battle between groups of lightly-clad swordsmen on foot. The role of the peasant chief, Meng Hai-kung, shows him as a man of courage and determination. Arriving before the mountain, Meng takes the ends of the two feathers in his head-dress between his middle and index fingers and brings them down to either side of his mouth, standing absolutely immobile. He is thinking tensely on the position of the enemy and what action to take. Then he releases the feathers, flicking them back with an abrupt motion of his wrists. He has decided to attack.

During his pursuit of the foe, Meng leaps up and comes down on the ground with legs astride. This means that his horse has jumped into the mud. He then uses short jumping motions, and we can "see" his horse extricating itself before galloping forward. Combat in the waters of a lake is vividly portrayed, some of the dancers making supple undulating movements to symbolize the waves.

IN the final attack, the fighters leap over each other in a kaleidoscopic riot of criss-cross

jumps ending in somersaults. It seems that the difference of a fraction of an inch or a split second would cause them to collide in the air. At the climax, they somersault into the fort over a six or seven-foot-high cloth "wall". The law of gravity seems to have lost its power over them.

The intense vigour and almost unbelievable accuracy of these movements is a result of long training and meticulously-worked-out cooperation between the actors. Even veteran performers still carry on an exacting programme of daily exercises. Leaps are first made over trestles and tables, then over the heads of other actors, and finally simultaneously in groups.

Basic "military role" training is combined with general dramatic instructions. It consists of three parts: dance movements of many kinds, tumbling, including leaps and somersaults, and fighting with different stage weapons in pairs or in groups. One can see it going on in two traditional drama schools in Peking, which students enter when nine years old, receiving ordinary education at the same time.



Students, in practice dress, learn acrobatic combat at the Peking Drama School

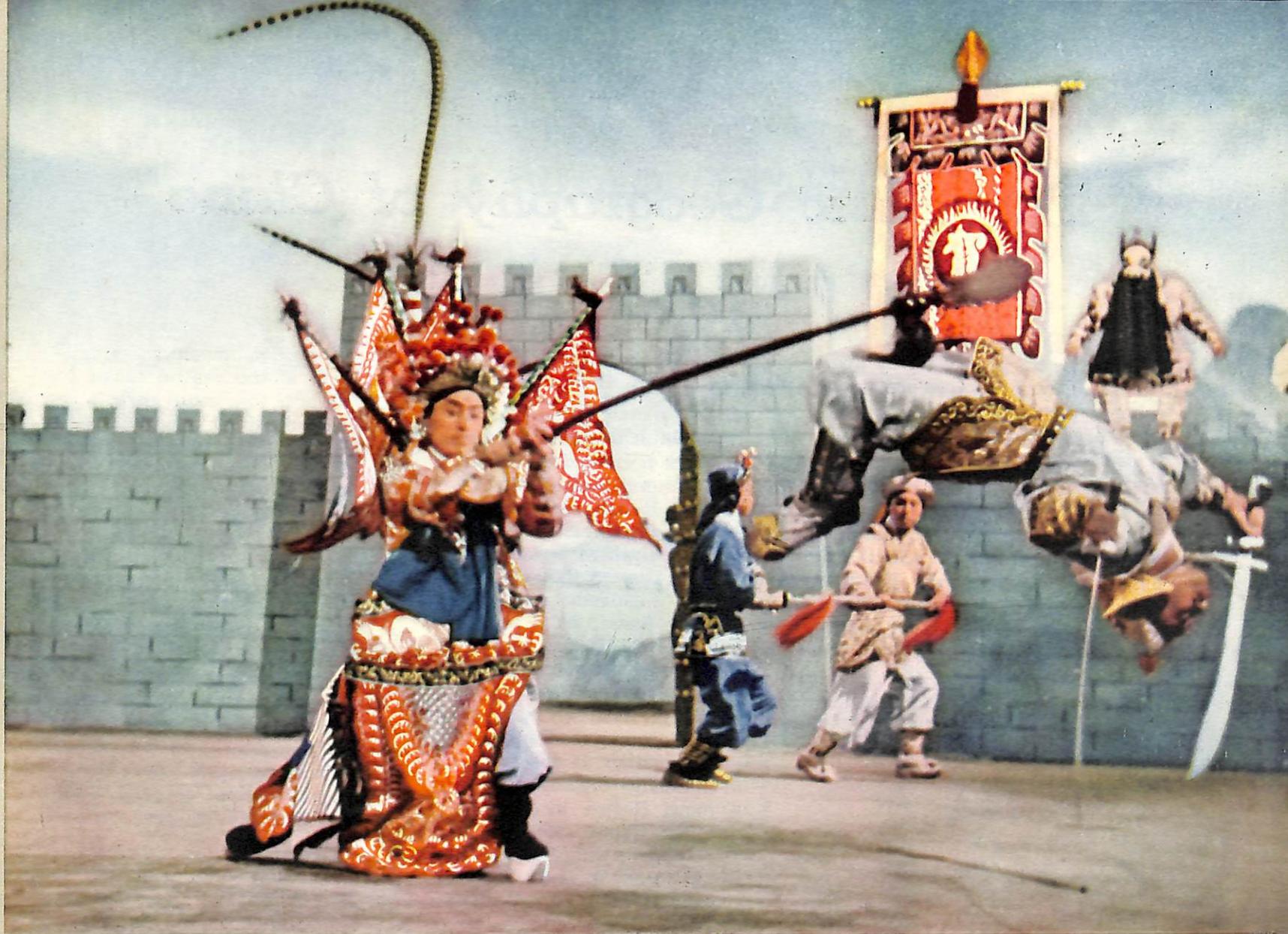
CHINESE ACROBATIC COMBAT

(Scenes from *Mount Yentangshan*)



Close fighting: peasant soldier with broad sword and imperial soldier with spear.





Meng Hai-kung, peasant general, "kills" an enemy.



Two scenes from the fight in the lake.

ft) Taking the fort—peasants leap over the city wall.

The Basic Geography of China

LO KAI-FU

CHINA is the size of all Europe, but does not resemble it in relief, mainly because of dissimilar effects of the movements of the earth's crust. Its climate too is different, due to its geographical position.

The land surface of China inclines eastward. It descends in gigantic steps from the Tibetan plateau, the part of the earth nearest the sun, through the fertile yellow loess highlands of the mid-

dle Yellow River, to the alluvial plain of North China and the sea.

If a line is drawn through Peking in the north and the mountains of western Hunan province in the south, it will be found that the territory to the east is largely lowland and nowhere higher than 9,900 feet. That to the west, by contrast, is highland, practically never lower than 3,300 feet and rising to over 29,000 feet at Chomolungma (Mount Everest), which lies in Chinese territory. The two main exceptions are the Tarim and Dzungarian Basins in the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region in westernmost China, which are, respectively, 2,574 feet and 627 feet at their lowest points. The Dzungarian Basin, incidentally, is also an exception to the west-east tilt.

Mountain Systems

Structurally (geomorphologically), the country's skeleton comprises three mountain arcs, and, along with them, a range running for 1,240 miles from west to east. This starts as the Kunlun range in Tibet, continues in the Altyn Tagh and Chilien ranges, both being to the north of the Tsaidam Basin, then goes on to the Tsinling range at the foot of which, on the north, lies Sian, the ancient political and cultural centre of China. East of the Tsinlings, the central range divides into two branches, ending with the Tapiéh mountains in Anhwei province, north of the Yangtze River.

Kunlun mountains, Tibet

The Mongolian mountain arc, lying north of the central range, bends toward the south like a giant wide-curved "U". Beginning with the Tien Shan mountains in the west, it is connected by the Yin Shan range, which shelters the great bend of the Yellow River, with the Great Khingans in Northeast China. The Mongolian arc was raised, together with the major part of the central range, by the "Hercynian movement" approximately 203 million years ago. It rises from a rock platform formed very early in the earth's existence. The platform, in present-day China, includes the deserts of Sinkiang—the Takla Makan and part of the Gobi, and the steppes of Inner Mongolia.

The Tibetan and South China mountain arcs lie south of the central range. It is at its highest point that Chomolungma (Mt. Everest) is located. Formed during the "Himalayan movement" only about 12 million years ago, this arc embraces the Tibetan plateau, often referred to as the "roof of the world". Its ranges are bent northeastward, with the Chilien and the Chiunglai mountains as the vertex. The Tibetan arc is part of a great world-wide mountain system. On the one hand, it is connected by other ranges with the Alps in Europe. On the other, it links with ranges that run south through the Indo-China peninsula, swing in a great curve through the Indonesian Islands, turn north through the Philippines, Taiwan, the Liu Chiu (Ryukyu) islands, Japan and the Aleutians, and then, on the other side of the Bering Strait, become the American Rockies and the Andes.

The South China arc comprises all the mountains of that part of the country south of the Yangtze. It is a group of ranges first trending from northeast to southwest (as do those of Chekiang and Fu-



kien provinces), then changing its direction to northwest-southeast (as in Hunan, Kweichow and Kwangsi provinces). Most of these mountains are parts of old platforms reinforced by the Yenshan movement of the Jurassic age, 150 million years ago. They are more dissected by rivers than those of the other two arcs.

Places of contact between mountain arcs are often areas of great earthquakes. This is true of both the meeting-place of the Mongolian and Tibetan arcs, around Kansu and Shensi provinces, and between the Tibetan and East China arcs, around the provinces of Szechuan, Kweichow and Yunnan.

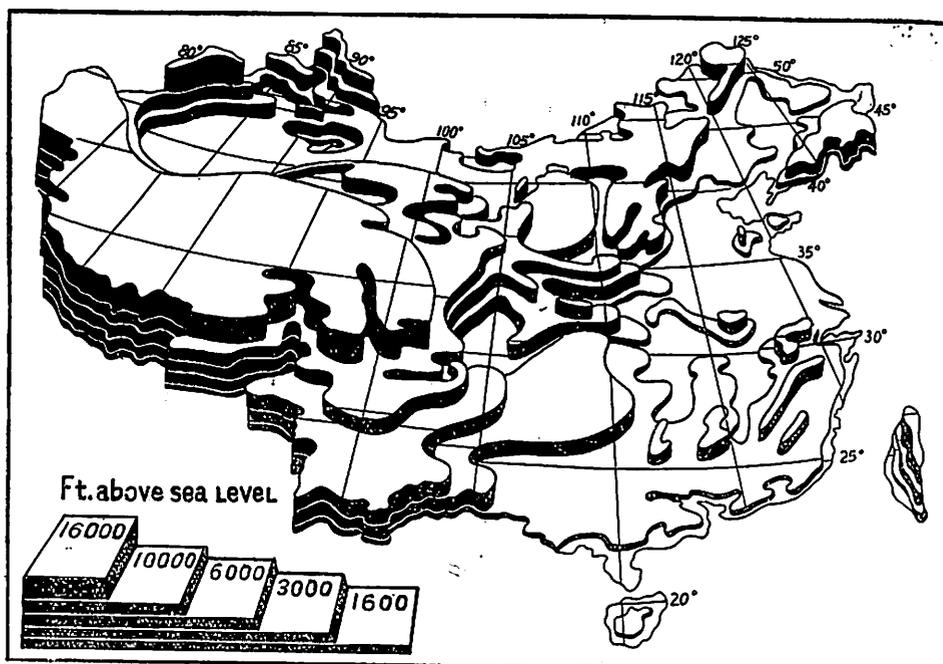
Seas and Coastlines

The so-called "festoon islands" of Asia are a part of the Himalayan alps. They represent mountain ranges running from the islands of Japan to the northern Philippines, separating the China seas from the Pacific ocean. The 124-mile-wide Taiwan Straits separate the deep, coral-reef studded South China Sea from the shallow waters to the north: the East China Sea, the Yellow Sea and Pohai Gulf.

These shallow northern seas are even at the bottom, which is only 66 feet deep in some parts of the Pohai. Their longshore currents change direction in accordance with the monsoon winds. The South China Sea, on the other hand, is over 13,200 feet deep in some places; while in others the bottom rises above the surface to form islands such as the Sisha (Paracel Islands), Tungsha (Pratas Reef), and the Nansha group. The eddies of the ocean currents in the South China Sea also show seasonal changes in direction.

China has a varied coastline. South of Hangchow Bay, the famous tidal spot, there are innumerable bays and promontories where the mountainous land abuts on the sea. Good harbours abound here. These shores are fringed by islands.

By contrast, the shoreline north of Shanghai runs smoothly along



"The land surface of China descends in gigantic steps to the east. . ."

alluvial plains, and it is on the Shantung and Liaotung peninsulas that good harbours appear, for example Tsingtao and Talien (Dairen).

Although the general aspect of the coast, the indented shore and numerous islands indicate a sinking coast, there is evidence that both the rugged and the smooth shores are now rising as a result of the after-effects of the Himalayan movement. Past cliffs, raised beaches and sand dunes, elevated sea caves and uplifted abrasion platforms are seen everywhere along the South China coast, as well as along the Shantung and Liaotung peninsulas.

Climate

Being situated at the eastern end of the world's greatest land mass, China has a strongly continental climate. The "monsoonal shift" dominates the air circulation over most of the country, for most of the year. The westerlies exert their influence north of 40° latitude, particularly in the spring and summer when the monsoons are not in full swing. The coasts, especially in the south, are occasionally visited by typhoons.

The cold Gobi Desert constitutes a high-pressure centre from which winter monsoons flow southwards into lower pressure areas over the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific.

Generally, less than 10 per cent of the annual precipitation occurs in the winter, when this continental air mass dominates the country.

During the summer, the situation is reversed. The ocean warms up more slowly than the land, and a high-pressure area is created above it, sending air currents into the lower-pressure area over the land. Laden with the moisture evaporated from the sea, the wet summer monsoons result in China's "rainy season", which lasts from April to September in the south and from June to August in the north. About 60 per cent of the annual rainfall in the north, and about 50 per cent in the south, falls in the three summer months.

The westerlies, on confronting the Tibetan plateau, divide into two branches, blowing respectively along its northern and southern edges. Beyond the eastern end of the plateau, they come into conflict with the monsoons and create the cyclones which follow the northern path in the summer and the southern one in the winter — in accordance with the latitudinal move of the westerlies. It is these cyclones that account for the winter rains in the Yangtze valley. The westerlies also enter the Dzungarian Basin, where rainfall varies seasonally in the same way as in Central Asia further west.

The typhoons, or tropical cyclones of Asia, are similar to hurricanes in origin. They are another rain-bearing element. In places affected by the typhoons, autumn rainfall is increased.

Temperatures in China are rather even in summer, when the whole countryside is so overheated as to make each latitude rather higher than the worldwide latitudinal average. In fact, China's northernmost province, Heilungkiang, is sometimes as warm in this season as is her southernmost province, Kwangtung. The warmest spot is not in the south at all. The highest temperature is recorded at Turfan (48°C. or 118°F.). The most unbearable summers, however, are in the Yangtze valley, where great warmth lasts all day and all night and temperatures are higher than in South China.

In winter, the latitudinal difference is much more pronounced. If a daily temperature of 10°C. (50°F.) is set for the limit of thermal winter, then thermal winter does not exist along the Pearl River (around Canton), but lasts eight months along the Heilungkiang (Amur) River on the Chinese-Soviet border.

Tibet, the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region, and the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, are the dry parts of China, all being deficient in air moisture. Sinkiang is more than 300 miles from any ocean. Inner Mongolia is beyond the reach of the summer monsoon. The access of moist winds to Tibet is blocked by the Himalayas.

Rivers

China's many rivers, like those in other countries, play an important role in the life of the people. It is estimated that she has over 58,900 miles of navigable inland waterways. Most Chinese rivers flow from west to east, i.e. from arid to humid areas. Consequently, they all collect tremendous amounts of water in their lower reaches. This makes it clear why so much effort has been put into river control since the liberation.

The two biggest rivers, the Yangtze and the Yellow River, both rise in the mountains of Chinghai province, but they empty into the



One of our country's broad rivers, the Chu Kiang (Pearl) at Canton.

sea some 500 miles apart. The Yangtze, in its upper course, runs parallel to three other great rivers, the Nu (Salween), Lantsang (Mekong) and the Mailikai (Irrawaddy), the last three flowing through western Yunnan. The Yangtze is 3,473 miles long, the fifth longest in the world, and has a catchment basin of 65,300 square miles. Of all China's rivers, it has the highest economic value. Winter cyclones maintain its flow in the dry season and keep it relatively even the year round. This creates high navigability. The water power potential at the famous Three Gorges in the middle reaches, above the busy port of Ichang, is estimated at ten million kilowatts. The numerous lakes along the middle and lower courses regulate the river, provide fishing grounds and benefit agriculture greatly.

The Yellow River is not quite as big as the Yangtze, being 3,000 miles long with a catchment basin of some 287,000 square miles. But like other rivers of North China, it is rated low economically because of its enormous silt content. Most of the silt is collected through erosion of the loess plateau in its middle course. Loess is extremely susceptible to erosion. This problem, and the resultant flood threat, will be overcome on the completion of the control scheme on which China is now working.*

Another big river is the Huai, with a history closely connected with that of both the Yellow River and the Yangtze. Lying midway between the two, it waters one-seventh of China's cultivated land. Long known as the "river without a mouth", the Huai has emptied or spilled its waters almost entirely into the Yangtze, leaving a negligible flow to the sea through its silted outlet. A constant source of floods, it was the first river for which an over-all control project was mapped out immediately after liberation.

The most considerable river south of the Yangtze is the Chu Kiang (Pearl) River, which, after catching the water of the Si Kiang, the Pei Kiang and the Tung Kiang, empties into the sea through the Canton delta. In Kwangtung and Fukien provinces in Southeast China, there are many shorter rivers valuable as a source of electric power, on account of their large volume of water and swift flow.

In Northeast China, the most important river is the Heilungkiang (Amur), along the Sino-Soviet border. It too is valuable for navigation and as a power-source,

*See "The Yellow River Will Run Clear", by Li Fu-tu, in the November 1955 issue of *China Reconstructs*.



Terraced rice-fields in Yunnan province.

but only in the warm weather, as it freezes for six months in some parts.

Population

Of the 600 million people counted in China at the last census, taken in 1953-54, about 80 per cent live in the eastern, wetter half of the country. Concentration is especially marked in the North China plain, the Yangtze and Pearl River deltas and the Szechuan Basin. The latter is in reality a dissected hilly land, a great part of which lies about 600-1,200 feet above sea-level, surrounded by mountains over 6,500 feet high.

One reason for the concentration of the population in the moister half of China is that her economy, for 2,000 years, has been predominantly agricultural and therefore dependent on sufficient rains as well as on flat land. A further reason was the growth of big cities along the coast and on the main rivers.

Gradual population shifts are now to be expected. Although agriculture in the dry west cannot be as productive as in the east, it can improve with afforestation, irrigation and other technological developments. The exploration of mineral resources, and the progress of industrialization, moreover, will

modify the population pattern. It should be stressed here that the distribution of population is not determined by natural conditions.

Natural Regions

There are striking differences between the wet and dry parts of China as well as between the warm and the cold parts.

Wheat is the predominant grain crop in the north, where the people eat noodles and steamed bread, and where farming stops in the cold winters. In the south, rice is the main staple food, and cultivation continues the year round. On the basis of climate, soils and vegetation, China falls into a number of regions.

In the south, we find the Pearl River valley (mainly in Kwangsi and Kwangtung provinces) is tropical with long, warm summers accompanied by heavy rainfall. The winter months are frostless, and three grain crops, or as many as seven vegetable crops, can be grown each year. Rice, sugarcane, tobacco and tropical fruits are important products. The limestone areas of Kwangtung, Kwangsi and eastern Yunnan have left a well-developed "Karst" topography. The fantastic groups of hills and caves in Kwangsi have been one of the favourite subjects of Chinese painters throughout the ages.

China's two largest islands, Taiwan and Hainan, which are covered with luxuriant forests, may also belong to this region, as does the coastal province of Fukien.

The eastern area, between the Pearl River valley and the Huai, may be named Central China. It has an evergreen forest zone in the south and a zone of deciduous trees, mingled with evergreens, in the north. Red and yellow soils intermingle in its complicated pattern. The climate is warm and wet. The main grain crop is rice, and the region is renowned for its excellent tea. Tung oil, citrus fruits and bamboo are also abundant.

The Yangtze valley is known as "the home of rice and fish". The delta is famous for its sericulture, as is the Canton delta.

The temperate part of North China, stretching up to the north-east border of Hopei province and the southern edge of Inner Mongolia, is a belt of deciduous forests. In the west, the loess plateau covers east Kansu, Shansi and Shensi provinces. Loess, strictly speaking, is not a soil but a fine wind-blown deposit, which yields crops just as soil does. In fact, it has been bearing crops year after year without fertilizer. The dense net of eroded gullies gives the loess plateau a unique topography of canyons and escarpments.

East of the loess area is the alluvial North China plain. Still further east are the brownsoil peninsulas of Shantung and Liaotung.

North China's main crops are wheat and cotton; millet and sorghum are also extensively cultivated. Apples, pears, plums, apricots and other fruits grow well.

The cold temperate zone stretches northward from beyond the Liao River valley to the Heilungkiang River on the border. In the centre of this area, which comprises northeastern China, is the black soil ("chernozem") steppe. It is the world's foremost producer of soya beans. The greatest contrast to the tropical south is found along the Heilungkiang River, with white or grey ash-like soils ("podzol") characteristic of cold

regions under coniferous forests. The wealth of China's northeast also derives from its minerals and industries. Extensive deposits of iron supply the rapidly expanding steel city of Anshan. The Fushun coal pit is now the largest in the country. Along the Sino-Soviet border in the north there are rich gold mines.

The rich coniferous forest covering the Greater and Lesser Khingan mountains in the north and northwest of this area, and the Changpai mountains in the northeast, are among the most valuable timber stands of the world. They are also famed for the number and variety of their fur-bearing animals.

One other region, which also lies in China's wetter half, is the mountainous area of Southwest China, including the province of Yunnan and part of Szechuan. It differs from those already described in several respects. The closely-packed high mountains and deep valleys run in a north-south direction. Due to the sharp gradients and heavy rainfall, erosion in this region is very marked. On the lowlands, the tropical climate, the red soil, and the luxuriant vegetation resemble those of China's far south. The heights, by contrast, are cold like Heilungkiang in the northeast, with corresponding "podzol" soils and

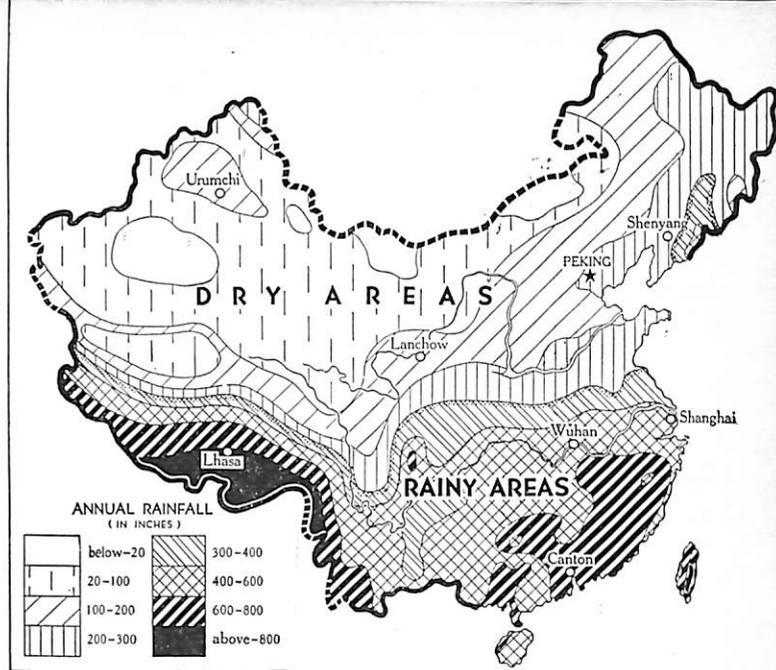
forests of conifers. This is also the home of some ancient types of trees (Sequoia and Gingko), and animals (Ailuropoda and Ailurus), the so-called pandas or "cat-like bears".

The dry region of China runs from the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region in the north to the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region in the west. On the Mongolian steppe, life has always been mainly nomadic and pastoral, but industry and cooperative organization are changing the picture. Sinkiang enjoys an abundance of sunlight. Cotton grows excellently in the oases.

The Tibetan plateau is the least well-known area of China. Scientific expeditions which went there in 1952 and 1953 have made preliminary surveys of southern areas around the Yalutsangpo River (or Upper Brahmaputra). But the north, the desolate Chang Tang, is still unstudied. Tibet's vegetation varied from alpine meadows and shrubs in the east to virtually barren wastes and "cold desert" to the west. The Yalutsangpo valley is

agricultural. New crops there have produced extraordinarily heavy yields, and vast mineral resources have recently been discovered there. By reason of the great elevation, Tibet offers a good location for future research into solar power and for observations in the coming geophysical year.

We know already that the sparsely-peopled dry areas of China have untold wealth in minerals (great oilfields, for instance, have recently been located at Karamai in Sinkiang and in the Tsaidam Basin of Chinghai). Conditions are being created, in short, for making these regions economically productive and hospitable to man.



Sketch map by Liang Yi-jou



The scenic town of Yangso, set among the "Karst" limestone hills of Kwangsi province.

Story Told at a Wedding

YU LIN

Weddings everywhere are a cause of joy and merry-making. In China now the ceremony is rather simple—but some colourful old customs have been retained. Close friends tell stories, true or purporting to be so, about other marriages, their own or those of others, meant to amuse or to instruct. Here is one I heard recently of a personal problem solved against the background of our country's recent history.

* * *

I WAS married in 1945, the year the Japanese surrendered, in one of the liberated areas of North China which was then beleaguered by the Kuomintang. My wife-to-be had only recently arrived. She was six years younger than I, fired with patriotism and romantic ideas, exuberant as a child.

Not long after we were married she went to the Bethune Medical College* to study medicine. Dressed in a cotton-padded military uniform and cloth shoes, she had lost her city look, and resembled a guerrilla fighter of long experience. Every Saturday she came climbing over the mountain that separated the college from the organization where I worked, and we spent happy week-ends together.

Not long afterwards, Chiang Kai-shek attacked the area. My organization was ordered eastwards across the great plains. Her college was sent deeper into the mountains. Should she give up her studies and come with me, or should we separate for a time? It never occurred to me even to discuss the question with her. I was older and more experienced; she was pregnant with our first child.

I promptly decided that she should come with me, so I could take care of her.

Thus ended her studies to become a doctor.

ALTHOUGH carts had been prepared for the pregnant women, my wife preferred to march with the rest of us. We spent long days crossing mountains and rivers and our spirits were high with their beauty. Coming down to the plain, we had to cross a railway which was in enemy hands. The night we picked for this dangerous job was rainy and pitch dark. I went ahead with an advance party to establish contact with our forces on the other side, then returned to meet the others. Standing there watching the shadowy figures run past, I heard a short, sharp cry as somebody slipped. It was my wife. I ran towards her. Catching her breath, she leaned against me and whispered into my ear, "Oh, what fun!"

Since I had always thought her timid, I was amazed by her words. But there was no time to talk. The rain was coming down in

"After telling me briskly how good the baby was, she began to ask about various land reform matters. . ."

sheets. I helped her to the village where we were to assemble, and went to see if everyone had found a place to rest. When I came back, she was already settled in a peasant hut. An old lady had just finished making her some ginger broth while she sat on the brick bed, wrapped in a quilt. I could see that she had made friends and was glad she was being taken care of. That she could take care of herself never occurred to me.

On the road the next day I asked her what she had meant when she said "What fun".

"The night march," she beamed. "It made me feel I was really a part of the revolution."

"What a romantic you are," I said, a little put out. "I worried all night about you, but that was all you thought about." "Who asked you to worry?" she flashed. I had nothing more to say.

ON reaching our destination I was immediately sent to the front. When I came back, my wife had already had our baby — a boy.



She was fully occupied taking care of him, and I went off shortly to take part in the land reform in another county. Whenever I could, I came home for a visit.

Once, when I arrived, I was shocked to find the house deserted. A neighbour told me that my wife had gone to a meeting of poor peasants. "Is this how she takes care of the baby?" I thought, and rushed off to look for her.

The land reform was now going on in our village too and I found her at a small gathering, recording reports in a notebook while an older woman was holding the baby. She smiled happily when she saw me but didn't get up. I had to wait until the meeting ended.

"Can you manage this kind of work?" I asked her, while I carried the baby home. "Didn't you see me doing it?" she asked, her eyes dancing with excitement.

"Doesn't the baby cry?" I searched to find some reason against it. She didn't seem to notice my irritation. After telling me briskly how good the baby was, she began to ask about various land reform matters.

Instead of answering, I asked: "Was it your idea to get into this?" She was surprised by my tone of disapproval, but looked me straight in the eye. "Of course," she said. "Don't you think it right? I have nothing to do except look after the baby. You're not home. Everyone is taking part in the land reform. When the drums beat and gongs sound and all the people shout, I can't sit at home. Am I wrong?" I had to say: "Of course not. It's a big thing and everyone should contribute whatever he can."

But I felt how hollow I sounded. Here I myself was deep in the land reform, responsible for its organization in three counties. I felt a real closeness to the poor peasants with whom I lived and worked; my whole energy was directed to helping them win the land. But when it came to my wife taking part, I felt different. Her job was to feed and look after the baby.

When we got home my wife brought it up again. I didn't put my foot down outright, but

raised all kinds of problems. Would the baby get proper care? What if he got sick? Behind it all was the fact that I just could not stand the idea of my wife going out to work. "I must look after her," I told myself.

In the end my wife gave up the idea of working, and did not do so throughout the whole period of the War of Liberation. As for me, I was always running from one place to another, coming home whenever I could and feeling very satisfied with my life and family. My wife was an excellent housekeeper.

AFTER the victory, we moved to the city. I was given a responsible post and became immersed in my job. One evening when I was working late, my wife came to my office. I raised my head slightly and saw her sit down on the couch. I didn't stop what I was doing. After a while I heard her go quietly to the door.

"Just wait for a few minutes," I said. She didn't even turn her head as she answered: "Go on with your work. It doesn't matter." There was such hopelessness in her voice that I got up with a start and went over to her. She looked so forlorn, standing there by the door. I wanted to comfort her, but the only thing I could find to say was: "I'm really very busy. Don't you understand, this work is for the revolution." She only gave a little sigh. I said no more. If only she would understand about politics, she would understand one better, I thought.

She never came to the office again. Sometimes I got home at night only to find that she had gone off with the child to visit some friend. We seemed to have little in common except to play to-



She was lonely and tried to learn the guitar.

gether with the child and discuss a few household details. I knew now that she was unhappy and made up my mind to spend more time with her. Every Sunday I took her shopping and we bought all kinds of things that we did not really need. Once she told me she wanted to learn the guitar. A man in our office, who had had some musical education, had offered to teach her. "Why not," I thought, "if that will occupy her mind." I got her a guitar and she started to take lessons.

IN 1952, when the *san fan* movement against corruption, waste and bureaucracy was launched, something happened which made me see myself in a mirror. My office colleagues pointed out that I had become very bureaucratic in my work. They also criticized me "for not helping my wife". All this was a shock to me. I considered myself the hardest worker among them, and a good family man too. After all, I had been the first to make a self-criticism and was leading the whole movement in our office. This took up so much of my time that I paid even less attention to my wife than before.

The first culprit we caught was the man who had been giving my wife guitar lessons. He had pocketed public funds. Cartoons

illustrating his misdemeanours were posted on the walls. One evening the Communist Party secretary came to my room. His expression was troubled. What he had come to tell me was that there was all kinds of scandal going around—it was said that the thief had spent some of the stolen money on entertaining my wife.

This was a terrible blow. Previously I had felt guilty at not paying enough attention to her; now I began to hate her. I sat nursing my grievance until long after dark and the building was quite empty. I suffered, and was angry with her because I suffered. What next—divorce? The break-up of my home?

I WENT back to the house in a daze. My wife was sitting by the fire in the bedroom, the child asleep in her lap. In the dim light I could see she was hugging the child close, her face pressed to his hair, tears streaming down her cheeks.

Suddenly I felt overwhelming pity for her. She had been exposed in public and was facing the loss of the home to which she had sacrificed her work and her whole life. I stood there a long while, then said gently: "Give me the child while you go and fix yourself up." Without a word, she walked mechanically to the bathroom, washed her face, then came back and sat down again, taking the child in her lap.

"How did this happen?" I asked at last. "Let's first talk about the child," she said. "We must look after him. If you are willing," she went on with an effort, her eyes full of tears, "take him."

Why hadn't I thought more about the child before? My wife had marched uncomplainingly over the

"Thoughts of our life together flooded my memory . . . Who was to blame?"

mountains when she was pregnant. She had brought our boy through babyhood in the midst of the toils and dangers of the war and the tense land reform. Why hadn't I thought more about his future until now, when he was about to lose either his father or his mother?

"Wait," I said. I don't know if I said this to myself or my wife. Could waiting bring a solution? My whole body began to tremble. I remember feeling surprised that my wife, although obviously suffering acutely, seemed more resolute than I.

The boy woke and began to cry. My wife went over with him to the bed. Overcome with helplessness, I went out into the small study and paced the floor back and forth. I heard the child stop crying and watched the snowflakes gathering on the window panes. Time dragged by.

I picked up a book but could not concentrate, thoughts of our life together flooded my memory. I saw my wife in the early days of our marriage . . . coming over the mountain from the medical school every Saturday evening . . . on the rainy night, after she had dropped her studies, when we went through the enemy blockade and



Drawings by Ah Lao

she had laughed, "What fun!". . . her eagerness to work in the land reform . . . Now all her dreams and hopes had been crushed.

Who was to blame? Perhaps she hadn't been strong enough, but she had tried to find a wider meaning to life. It was I who had taken her for granted as my property, kept her at my side without a thought as to what work she should do. I had told myself that I was "taking care of her". Actually I had been destroying her life. How clearly I saw it now.

I WENT back to the bedroom. She was still sitting by the fire. I heard the soft breathing of the child asleep. "Let's talk," I said.

It was painful at first. Never before had I discussed anything with her on a footing of complete equality. There were long pauses and we both found it hard to control our emotion. But gradually, as we went from one thing to another, it seemed that a burden was falling from our backs. We got to the root of the trouble and began to talk about the kind of job my wife would like to do and how to arrange for the child so that she could do it. Her face lighted up with the old radiance and we felt happier than we had ever been since the early days of our marriage. Soon afterwards, my wife went to do clerical work for a trade union in a nearby cotton mill. She became as active and enthusiastic as before.

We still run into difficulties but now we talk them over. Our mutual interests have become broader and deeper. We have a new respect for each other. Our son is in school. We spend our Sundays together. Although we are busy, we have a close, warm family life.

*The Bethune Medical College, which today is in Tsinan, Shantung province, is described in "Doctors Serve, Teach and Learn", by Chang Wei-sun, in the No. 4, 1952 issue of *China Reconstructs*.



The author with Father Leonid.

HABIT, without doubt, saves a lot of wear and tear in life. But at the same time it is a most terrible enemy of sentiment. In our country, far-distant Greece, the sight of a priest of our church, which is called Orthodox, would have made no special impression on us. But to dine in Peking, in a characteristically Chinese restaurant, and suddenly to notice among the gentle and courteous Chinese friends around the table a serious-faced man wearing the cassock of a *papa*, who turns out to be the curate of the Orthodox Church in Peking! Well, that was quite another matter. The gazes of our Greek delegation were directed at this unexpected apparition. Each and every one of us wanted to inquire into the titles and activities of this man who sat beside us, so calm and so dignified.

The riddle solved itself on the morning of Sunday, September 9, when all members of the delegation went to the Orthodox Church in Peking to attend Mass. The church, erected in honour of St. Innocent, is situated in a poor but picturesque quarter of the north-east city. Built in Russian basilica style, but without a cupola, it is crowned with a belfry surmounted by a cross, the symbol of Christianity.

When we arrived, the service was already under way. But the curate with whom we had dined was waiting at the entrance of the church and welcomed us amicably, with a smile on his serious, youthful-looking face. Father Leonid, for that is his name, is a slender man of medium stature, courteous and intelligent. One would set

In an Orthodox Church in Peking

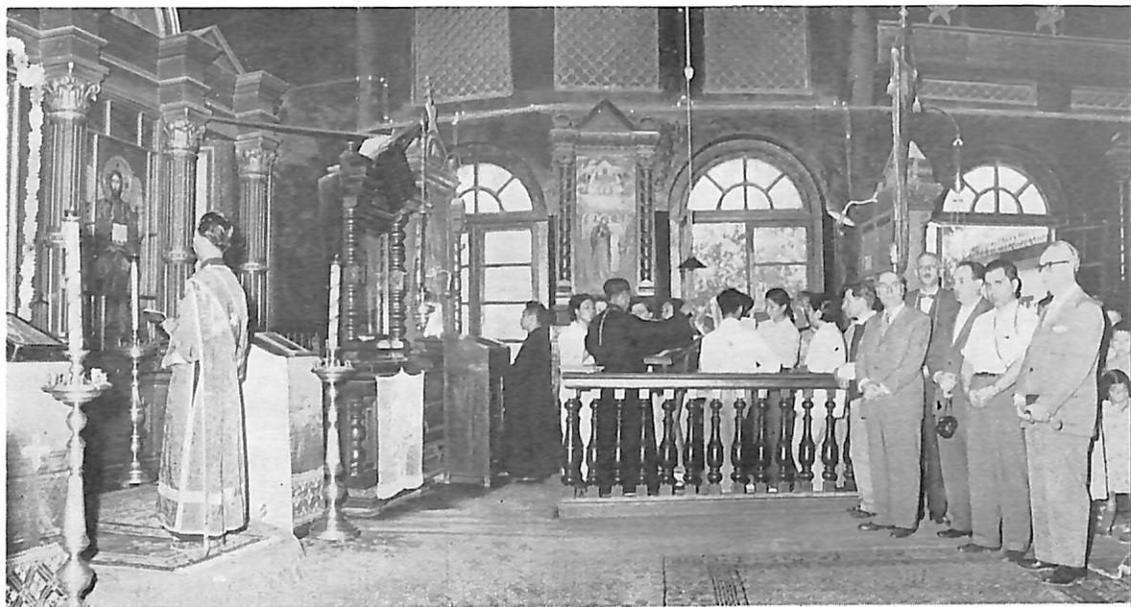
EVANGELOS PAPANOUTSOS

his age at between 40 and 50. Within the small church, we found ourselves in surroundings familiar since childhood. In the capital of this great country of the East, the sight of people of another race who prayed just as we do, in a place of worship so similar to ours, surprised us and moved our hearts.

MASS was performed in the Slavonic tongue, the ancient language of the Slav peoples, so we could not understand the words of priests or choir. The songs of the latter were in the Russian tradition (polyphonic in the Occidental manner), by contrast to the Byzantine style which prevails in most churches at home. But the atmosphere, the familiar steps in the act of worship performed by priest and deacon, and the few words of Greek heard here and there or discerned in the chants—all these thrilled us. "Is it possible," we said to ourselves, "that we are actually attending an Orthodox Mass so far from our

own land, in the heart of traditionally Confucianist and Buddhist China—in Communist China?"

A Roman Catholic or a Protestant would hardly have the same feeling of wonder. Missionaries of those faiths have travelled all over the world and have established congregations almost everywhere. But the Greek type of Christian Church is not of a proselytizing but rather of a national character. Orthodoxy has always been linked to the Greek nation, to the various Slav peoples (Russians, Serbs, Bulgarians) who were converted by Byzantine monks long centuries ago, and to small minorities of Arab origin in Egypt, Syria and Palestine. In other parts of the world where Orthodox churches have been founded, as in North or South America for instance, this was done by Greek or Slav communities there, so they could worship in their own way. One can therefore understand the astonishment



Greek guests attend Mass at St. Innocent's Church, Peking.

we felt at seeing in Peking, Orthodox Chinese with their own church and clergy.

Yet here we were among our "homodoxes" (people of the same confession), their hearts stirred with faith, their hands crossed, their lips murmuring a prayer, attentive and devoted.

FATHER LEONID gave us brief and very instructive information on the history of this little community which is composed of some 80 families (in Peking, Tientsin and Shanghai the number of Orthodox Chinese amounts to 3,000 souls). The church was built nearly 300 years ago. Russians built its foundations after a religious mission was authorized by the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689, and it originally served, among others, a group of Cossacks—the Albazines—who had been captured in border warfare and had become Chinese in everything but religion. That is why the Mass is said, to this day, in Slavonic, and the clergy is still tributary, in religious matters, to the Patriarch Alexei in Moscow. The eleven priests and deacons in St. Innocent's Church have been trained in a special seminary. Salaries and church expenses are paid by the congregation, but the state too has come to the help of its always-unbalanced budget. Moreover the priests, Father Leonid disclosed with a satisfied smile, add to their earnings by working in a dairy products cooperative composed of members of the community.

We left the church with light steps, our hearts deeply moved. Some of our group did so because, always faithful to the religion of their fathers, they had started their sojourn in China by attending a Mass of their own confession. Others were uplifted at finding once more that men, living on this planet so troubled by wars and by rancour, are much nearer to each other in the realm of the heart than one could have supposed. And all were happy because they had seen with their own eyes, and admired, the tolerance of the People's Republic of China toward all forms of religious worship, for tolerance is always proof of high and authentic culture.

Language Corner



Looking Back—and Forward

WITH this lesson, "Language Corner" ends its second year. We started it in 1954 to introduce the Chinese language to readers, and to dispel the fear some of them had expressed that it was much too complicated and difficult to learn. So we began with some explanation of how the characters developed, along with a bit of general knowledge about tones and other peculiarities, and some practical lessons in conversation.

When it came to planning the second year, two things made us decide on a new approach. Friends abroad were asking for "real lessons". And the new phonetic script had just been published by the Committee for the Reform of the Chinese language. Since the new script was obviously going to make it easier to read (and learn) Chinese, we decided to give our readers a flying start on it, even before it had been finalized and formally adopted. We still printed the Chinese characters beside the English meaning and the new phonetic transliteration, but those who were not interested did not have to study them.

A good part of the 1956 course was devoted to instruction on how to make the sounds represented by the new phonetic script. These, of course, do not always follow the English rules of pronunciation, so they may have been a bit confusing at first. This is especially true of those consonants peculiar to the Chinese language—represented in the new script as *zh*, *ch*, *sh* and *r*—which are pronounced with the tip of the tongue curved back. But by now, followers of "Language Corner" who have mastered the sounds should be able to read aloud quite fluently from the new script, even if they don't understand the meaning of all the words.

Next year, 1957, we are going to devote more time to syntax—how to put words together to make sentences. Practical conversation lessons will go on as usual, and we hope to give new and useful words and phrases each month. In addition, we shall report from time to time on the progress of the movement to reform the language. This has aroused tremendous interest abroad, and *China Reconstructs* has received many comments and suggestions about it from language specialists, sinologists and common readers.

Conversation

If you meet a Chinese friend, and he asks how you are getting on with the language, you might answer in the following way:

我學習 中國話 已經 兩年 了。

Wo hyehi Zhungguohua jijing liang-nian le.

I have studied Chinese already for two years.

中國 拼音 文字 不難 學。

Zhungguo pinjin wenzi bu-nan hye.

Chinese phonetic script is not difficult to learn.

我已經 學會 了 很多 生字。

Wo jijing hyehui le henduo shengzi.

I have already learnt many new words.

明年 我要 學 更多 的 中國話。

Mingnian wo jau hye gengduod Zhungguohua.

Next year I want to learn still more Chinese.

New Words

hyéhí	to study	nán	difficult
Zhūngguóhuà	Chinese speech	hyéhui	to have learnt
jīgīng	already	shēngzì	new words
liáng	two	míngnián	next year
pīnjīn	phonetic	gèngduōd	more



Before the New Chief Arrives

Film Notes

THE Changchun Film Studios recently released a satirical comedy, *Before the New Chief Arrives*, the first of its kind on the Chinese screen. The "hero", a smug bureaucrat who struts self-importantly among his subordinates but tries to curry favour with his superior, evokes many a laugh from the audiences.

The film begins in a government bureau, in a hustle and bustle of preparation for the imminent arrival of its new chief. Administration Officer Niu decides that a former storeroom should be redecorated as the incoming chief's office. He himself plans to move into the one vacated by the former chief, which is of course better than the one Niu himself previously occupied. The three hundred sacks of cement in the storeroom are moved outdoors and left there. Niu orders a set of expensive soft furniture and a spring bed for the new chief, and his right-hand man, Tsui, goes to work energetically to get these. Just at that time, the unmarried men on the staff ask that the badly leaking ceiling in their hostel be repaired. They are brushed off with the excuse that the budget for the month has all been used up.



Told the identity of the new chief (right) by Su Ling (centre), Niu is in a fix and knows it.

Everything now seems ready for the new bureau chief's grand entrance. But things are not destined to go smoothly. Rain clouds gather, and Su Lin, a girl staff member, demands that the cement be put back into the freshly decorated office until the storm is over. In the meantime, unbeknown to anyone, the new bureau chief has inconspicuously arrived. He is more amused than impressed by the streamers of welcome plastered all over the walls, all signed by Manager Niu. The office caretaker mistakes him for a repair man who has been called to the office. This is easy to understand, because he has the same surname, Chang, and appears modest and enquiring.

AS the rain comes down, the young men on the staff whizz past the new chief in their hurry to get to the hostel and put out basins under the leaky ceilings. In the office, Su Lin, now desperate, mobilizes everyone she can to move back the cement sacks. The new chief, still incognito, rolls up his sleeves and pitches in to help. It is only now that Su Lin and the caretaker discover who he is, and they are overjoyed to find him so different from the bureaucrat they expected. Manager Niu and his faithful crony Tsui, however, are still happily in the dark. They shout over the phones that the sofas and spring bed must be delivered by closed truck so they will not get wet. Even when they read a note left by the new chief ordering the immediate repair of the leaky hostel ceiling, they think it is only someone's idea of a joke.



Manager Niu composes a welcome poster to please the new bureau head.

Finally, they are convinced by Su Lin that the new chief is not only on the spot, but very angry. Niu executes a 180-degree turn. He calls for the repair man, and phones to stop the sofas and spring bed from coming. When the "repair man", deciding to carry on his disguise a little longer, appears, Niu impresses him with the necessity of fixing the ceiling in a hurry, just anyhow so long as it is done fast. While doing this, he boasts that he and the new chief "fought together in the guerrilla wars and worked together in the land reform".

But the farce has to end sometime, and when it does, it is a sweaty moment for Administration Officer Niu.

* * *

Press notices and audiences alike applauded the long-overdue arrival, on our screen, of a satirical film. But one critic thought the punch of the comedy was cushioned by too much slapstick for pure laughs. Another wrote that the static performance of the new chief, who appeared mildly amused at everything, took the bite out of some scenes. The director of the film himself confessed that he had pulled his punches in the production. "The satire had been more penetrating on the stage," he said, but he had been afraid of overstepping what some might think were the bounds "between satire and slander" at the undesirable aspects of life.

The audiences, however, know what is good and what is bad in our life. It's true that they won't stand for libels on our new reality. But they want more and stronger satires directed at defects—with plenty of pepper in them.

Three Short-Sighted Gentlemen

CHANG SHOU-CHEN

The author of this stage monologue performs it himself. He is a famous *hsiang sheng* artist of Tientsin. *Hsiang sheng* is a form of cross-talk, generally by a comedian and his "stooge". One specimen was the humorous dialogue "Buying Monkeys", printed in *China Reconstructs* in October 1955. But in this variety, known as "one-mouth *hsiang sheng*", the actor tells the story himself and merely pretends that he has an interlocutor.

DID I ever tell you about the three short-sighted gentlemen? — they were my uncles, as a matter of fact.

What about my three uncles, you say? *Ai-ya*, the ridiculous things they used to do! They were so short-sighted, for one, that someone else had to lock up for them at night. If they tried to do it themselves, nine times out of ten the wooden door-bolt would slide right out. The tenth time they'd poke themselves in the eye with it, they had to peer so close.

Short-sighted? Let me tell you! There was the time my eldest uncle went off to a fair at Nanting. He didn't know how far it was, so he decided to ask the way of a man by the roadside. Can you imagine, actually it wasn't a man at all. What was it? One of those statues that stand in front of tombs.

"Excuse me, sir," Uncle asks it politely, "can you tell me how far it is to Nanting?"

No answer. Uncle asks again, four times, five times. The statue just stands there.

"Hey! Are you deaf?" Uncle yells, waving his arms.

Well, a crow happened to be sitting on the statue's head. When the shouting started, it got scared and flew away.

"You're a surly one!" laughs Uncle. "Won't show me the way, eh? Well, now the wind's blown your hat off and I won't tell you either!"

"That's the sort of thing my uncles did.

THE THREE old men lived in adjoining houses. One summer evening they all got together to

drink tea in First Uncle's courtyard. They chatted about this and that. Somehow the talk got round to eyesight. So what happened? You can picture it! Man's the kind of creature that always defends his weaknesses. Catch him admitting his worst defect?— Never! He'll insist it's the one he hasn't got. Every time!



"You know what?" says First Uncle, lying back on his couch. "My eyes are a lot better than they used to be. Why, a mosquito's only got to flit by and I can tell if it's a boy or a girl!"

Second Uncle pulls a face. "Come off it, Elder Brother," says he scornfully. "Wasn't it you that bumped into a steam-roller last time you went for a walk? What're you trying to tell us?"

"I've got what they call *nocturnal* eyes," First Uncle explains patiently. "The darker it gets the more clearly I see."

"Argue! Argue!" says Third Uncle. "Nothing's ever settled that way. How about a real proof? Tomorrow they're going to hang a new tablet over the temple gate at the end of our street. We'll go

out and see who can read what's written there from farthest away. Let's make a bet! Whoever has to get closest to the tablet will treat the others to a dinner."

"Done!" said the others. "We'll settle it tomorrow!"

FIRST UNCLE went to bed, but do you think he could sleep? "What shall I do?" he thought, tossing and turning. "They're both younger than I, and they'll be able to read the words better. Not that I mind paying for the dinner . . . but I'd hate to be called an old See-Nothing. And that's just what they'll say. They'll never stop teasing me!"

Suddenly an idea hit him. The monk who looked after the temple would be sure to know what was on that tablet. Joyful, Uncle jumps out of bed, tiptoes out and gropes his way to the temple. "Monk! Monk!" he calls softly, tapping at the gate.

The monk came out immediately. He was just saying his midnight prayers. That's why he heard my uncle calling.

"Hope you don't mind if I ask you something. . ." says Uncle. "You're having a new tablet put over the gate tomorrow. Do you know what the inscription will be?"

"Of course," says the monk. "It's in honour of Lord Kuan and has four characters — 'Thousand Years' Lasting Righteousness'."

"Ha-ha! 'Thousand Years' Lasting Righteousness,'" says First Uncle, nodding his head. "Thank you, *thank you!*" And he went away chortling. The monk couldn't make it out at all.

WELL, no sooner had that monk gone back to his prayers than he heard someone else at the gate. It was Second Uncle. He'd had the same bright idea? Absolutely correct. Actually, he'd passed First Uncle on the way but they were both so short-sighted they hadn't seen each other.

To make a long story short, Second Uncle asked about the tablet too, which struck the monk as very odd. Second Uncle was craftier than the first. He also found out the colour of the tablet.

A few minutes later that poor monk had to open the gate a third time. It was Third Uncle. On the same errand? Of course. He was the smartest as well as the youngest. He also asked who'd written and signed the dedication.

NEXT MORNING, First Uncle got up early. He was washing when the others arrived. "Ah! Brothers," says he cheerfully. "Come in for a cup of tea."

"Why tea now?" says Second Uncle impatiently. "Let's settle our bet first. We can drink all we like afterwards."

"Very well," First Uncle agrees promptly. And he runs out without even drying his face and hands.

No sooner had they got into the street than First Uncle called a stop. "Why bother to go any nearer?" he smiled. "I can see perfectly well from here!"

He screwed up his eyes in the direction of the gate. Really, he couldn't even see the temple. But did that stop him? No. "A remarkably good tablet," says he proudly. "See what is on it, 'Thousand Years' Lasting Righteousness'! The character 'Lasting' is written the best. What fine, bold strokes!"

"You've really got good eyes," says Second Uncle. "But as you can see so well, brother dear, please tell me—what's the colour of the background and characters?"

First Uncle was floored. "What a fool I am," he said to himself. "I forgot to ask!"

"Colour blind?" Second Uncle gibes. "Well, I'll tell you. It's a blue tablet with gold characters. Ah, you should see how clearly the gold stands out!"

"Your eyes are better than Eldest Brother's, sure enough," Third Uncle breaks in. "But anyone can see bright colours when the sun is shining. The real test is the small characters—the dedication. I'll bet neither of you can read them!"

Second Uncle was struck dumb too. He'd never thought to ask about that.

"Like me to read them for you?" said Third Uncle casually. "First comes the date. That's in red. Underneath it says 'respectfully dedicated by your faithful disciple so-and-so'. All the other letters are in gold, but the signature's in red again. So, there you are. I can see better than either of you. Decide which of you will be host, I'm going to eat free."

LET'S settle it this way," proposed First Uncle. "I agree that Third Brother should eat free. But who saw 'Thousand Years' Lasting Righteousness' first? I did. So I should eat free too. Second Brother will have to pay for the dinner."

"Ridiculous!" cries Second Uncle. "I saw the colours, that's more than you did! Naturally you should be host. But so there are no hard feelings, I'll pay twenty per cent. You pay the rest!"

"I won't, I won't!" First Uncle roars. "I insist on eating free!"

They shouted louder and louder, and almost came to blows. What stopped them? The monk. He came out of the temple to see who was making all that noise.

"Here's the man to judge for us," cried my uncles, and each tried to grab him.

"'Thousand Years' Lasting Righteousness'—that's the inscription on your new tablet, isn't it?" First Uncle demands.

"It is!" nodded the monk.

"The tablet is blue and the characters are gold, right?" demands Second Uncle.

"Right," the monk replied.

"The small characters are so-and-so—isn't that correct?" Third Uncle pipes up.

"Perfectly correct!" said the monk.

"Well then," said my uncles, "you're fit to be the judge. We have a bet on for a dinner. You'll eat with us, whoever pays. Just say who won and who lost?"

The monk looks at them and smiles. "I accept your invitation," he says. "Who'll pay? You can share the cost of the dinner between you. Because all three of you're losers."

"What!!!" My uncles were flabbergasted.

"Come up close and look," laughed the monk. "You're all too early—that tablet isn't hung yet!"



Drawings by Mi Ku



Making a Paper Whale

CHINESE children love to make things out of folded paper, and can produce some charming objects. Here is one of the simpler ones, a whale that "bites".

Step 1. To make a size that fits small hands, take a $4\frac{1}{2}$ inch square of heavy paper. Fold this in half and then in half again, so that it forms a smaller square. Then open it out and lay it flat (Fig. 1).

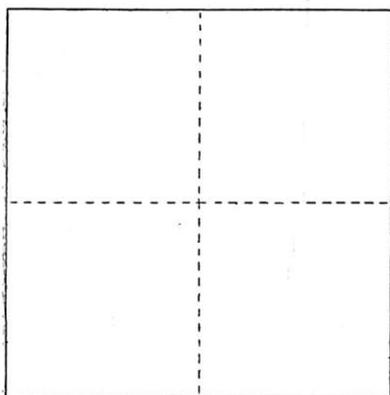


Fig. 1

Step 2. Fold the corners to meet in the centre (Fig. 2).

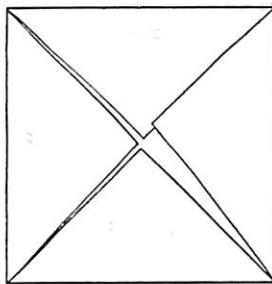


Fig. 2

Step 3. Turn the folded packet so that the loose corners face downward and again fold all the corners to the centre. It will look like Fig. 2 again. Repeat this step once more.

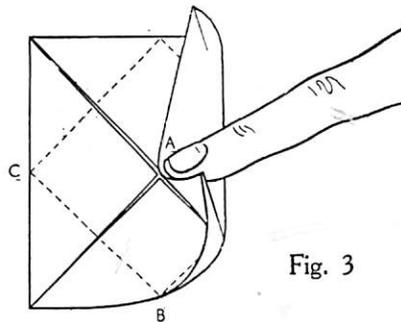


Fig. 3

Step 4. Open up the last two sets of folds and place the paper in front of you with the loose ends upward as it was when you finished Step 2. Bring points a, b, c and d on the middle of each outside fold to meet in the centre of the packet (Fig. 3) and crease on the dotted lines (Fig. 4) so that the corners stand up.

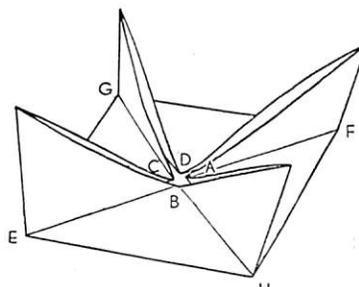


Fig. 4



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Step 5. Holding these corner flaps, fold points e and f backward until they meet and make the diagonal crease through the square between them. This forms the whale's tail. Place the middle finger and thumb of the right hand on points g and h and press them together to work the whale's jaws (Fig. 5). Poke your index finger into the whale's mouth and push the partitioning layers of paper to one side to keep the tail from flying apart, and draw in eyes.

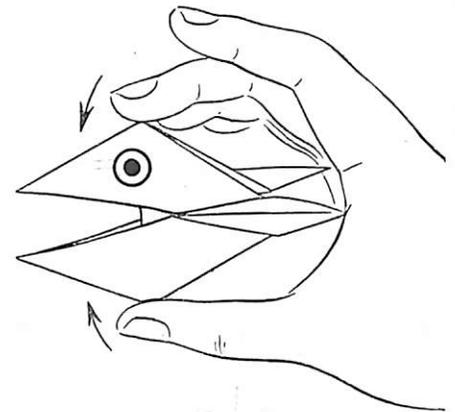


Fig. 5

Our Contributors

HO LU-TING, one of China's leading composers, is vice-chairman of the Chinese Musicians' Union and president of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. He has written many pieces of music in the national style, using Western compositional techniques. Between 1943 and 1947 he taught music for some time at the Lu Hsun Academy of Arts in Yenan and conducted the Central Symphony Orchestra there.



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TANG SHIH, before the liberation, was one of the editors of *Poetic Creation* and *Modern Chinese Poetry*. Among his works at that time were *The Bustling City*, a collection of poems, and the long poem *Heroic Grassland*. He is now one of the editors of *Drama Monthly*, a magazine of nationwide circulation.



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