

*The Unquenchable Spark*

THE UNQUENCHABLE SPARK



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UNQUENCHABLE SPARK

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## *Guerrillas in Southern Kiangsi*

*Chen Yi*

Nearly dawn,  
Our men wake early;  
Dew-drenched clothes and bedding are chill even in summer;  
In the trees cicadas shrill,  
Grass clings to our clothing.

Nearly noon,  
Our bodies cry out for food;  
Three months have we been cut off from supplies;  
We can count the few grains of rice in our bags;  
So we boil a mess of herbs.

The sun is sinking west;  
We meet to discuss our plan of operation;  
There is no news of the scout who left this morning,  
It's already past the time for his return,  
We must move our headquarters at once.

Marching at night is hard;  
Ten days we have pressed on through endless rain;  
Halting in the open without tents,  
We shelter beneath big trees till dawn,  
Dozing off we wake suddenly.



When the weather clears,  
We pitch camp under the moon;  
The gentle breeze brings slumber;  
A great host of dark pines soar like serried clouds;  
We dream of the enemy's movements in our sleep.

We must not joke aloud;  
Consulting together we keep our voices low;  
Outside the forest there may be enemy scouts,  
Once a man coughed and revealed our position;  
We must learn from our mistakes.

We are short of grain,  
For three months we have tasted no meat;  
In summer we feed on berries, in winter bamboo;  
Hunting wild boars we pant over the mountains,  
And after dark catch snakes.

The enemy searches the whole mountainside,  
Trees and grass are scorched and burnt;  
Never before was savagery like this,  
But our people resist with ever greater vigour;  
We shall give battle again.

We pay close attention to tactics  
And sit quietly assured;  
When the enemy wants a battle, we won't fight;  
When he's off his guard, we strike.  
He can do nothing but obey our orders.

We put our trust in the people  
And never forget their support;

They are second parents to us,  
We are good sons in the fight,  
The best soldiers for the revolution.

We must study hard,  
To fall out of rank would be bitter;  
A good groundwork laid today  
Will bring us glory in the wars to come;  
Then let us advance undaunted.

We shall not complain,  
But march on steadily year after year;  
A formidable foe has invaded us in the north;  
But our great army has gone west across the Golden Sand River,  
The resistance against Japan will surely grow in strength!

(Written in the summer of 1936)



## BITTER YEARS OF STRUGGLE

YANG SHANG-KUEI

1

After the main force of the Red Army had started on the Long March, a Special Party Committee and a Sub-Military Zone Headquarters were set up to intensify the struggle in the Kiangsi-Kwangtung Border Region. Li Lo-tien, a staunch fighter from the border region, was appointed secretary of the Special Committee and concurrently Commander of the Sub-Military Zone. I was made the deputy secretary. Other leading cadres were allocated to various important duties in connection with the work of the Committee. Li Lo-tien led a battalion of soldiers and a group of cadres—more than five hundred all told—in a drive from the town of Yutu in Kiangsi to the Kiangsi-Kwangtung border. Our task was to join with the other armed forces there, intensify the guerrilla attacks and force the enemy to concentrate on defence of their own local position. This meant that we would co-operate with the Red Army on its Long March by detracting the attention of the enemy. We were also to strengthen and expand the guerrilla base and link up with the guerrilla forces on the Hunan-Kiangsi and Hunan-Hupeh-Kiangsi borders and in southwestern Fukien.

Work around the guerrilla base on the Kiangsi-Kwangtung border had been well carried out and the people in the area

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were politically aware of the issues involved. This area was also the border between the region controlled by Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary forces and that dominated by the armies of the local Kwangtung warlords. Although they both wanted to crush the Communists, they disagreed on many other things. The Kwangtung warlords had already got a grip on the southern part of Kiangsi. A division of their troops occupied each of the towns of Tayu and Hsinfeng. Chiang Kai-shek distrusted them and was taking precautions against any further incursions to the north. The contradictions between the enemy could be used to further our interest. The region where we were fighting the enemy was mountainous and covered with dense forest, thus affording excellent cover for troop movement.

The main force of the Red Army on the Long March had just passed through southern Kiangsi and the region of the Five Mountains. This had both alarmed and unsettled the enemy and in turn made our own rapid advance towards the Kiangsi-Kwangtung border much easier. In co-ordination with attacks launched by the main force of our Southern Kiangsi Military Zone, we made a drive to the west after a series of swift manoeuvres and crossed to the west bank of the Peach River. This brought us to Yushan Mountain where we joined up with other units. Among the leaders there, were Liu Fu-chieh, the county Party committee secretary; Yeh Ming-kuei, head of a work team; and guerrilla battalion commander, Tseng Piao. All were men of outstanding merit.

The main force of the Red Army had reached the area around western Hunan and eastern Kweichow by January of 1935. Chiang Kai-shek had ordered his troops to pursue and prevent its further progress. At the same time he was massing a huge force in an attempt to smash the Central Soviet Area. The situation in the Central Soviet Area became very tense. This tense situation also spread to the Kiangsi-Kwangtung

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Border Region. The Kwangtung warlord, Yu Han-mou, had reoccupied the area of Tayu, Hsinfeng and Nanshiung with a whole army, and he launched a general attack against the guerrilla area in February.

When the troops of the Southern Kiangsi Military Zone broke through the encirclement from the Central Soviet Area, Yuan Hsiao-hsien, the secretary of the Southern Kiangsi Provincial Committee, was killed. Liu Po-chien, head of the Political Department in the Military Zone, was seriously wounded and captured. Later, he was murdered by the enemy. This action reduced the unit from a thousand men to 350. Tsai Hui-wen, Commander of the Southern Kiangsi Military Zone, and Chen Pi-hsien, the secretary of the Provincial Committee of the Communist Youth League, led the survivors to Yushan Mountain.

At the beginning of April, a number of others, including Comrade Chen Yi, arrived at our base. We learned that the Central Soviet Area had been completely overrun by the enemy. The scene of the struggle then shifted to the Kiangsi-Kwangtung Border Region.

Comrade Chen Yi quickly sized up the situation in this locality and made reports to cadre meetings at Talinghsia in Nanshiung and Changling in Tayu. He pointed out that the whole revolutionary situation was on the decline after the Red Army withdrew from the Central Base, but we were now between two high tides. The Kuomintang, he said, would expose its true traitorous nature to the people of the whole country through its policy of continuing to fight the Communists and refusing to resist the Japanese imperialists. The people would then be aroused to opposition and an anti-Japanese war would break out. The people would then look to the Communist Party for leadership. This would be the beginning of a new upsurge in the revolutionary movement. He assured us

that the revolution had a very bright future. His report demonstrated the need to adopt new methods to meet new situations and to follow Chairman Mao's guerrilla tactics of "enemy advances, we retreat; enemy halts, we harass; enemy tires, we attack; enemy retreats, we pursue". It also pointed out that we must intensify guerrilla warfare, amass and preserve our strength, and, when we had gained a foothold, strike at the enemy at the opportune moment. In this way our forces would be enlarged. Comrade Chen Yi laid special emphasis on the following points: Correctly explain the situation to the troops and the people within the soviet area and give them a clear-cut policy to follow; and prepare them ideologically for the coming storm. They must, he said, be ready to withstand a long and bitter struggle in the enemy's rear.

The meetings laid down the policy of "relying on the masses, being steadfast in the struggle, amassing and preserving our strength and creating conditions in readiness for the new upsurge". This policy was decided upon at a time when the enemy was far superior to us in strength. The essence of this strategy was to preserve the backbone of the Party during the period when the revolution had sustained a setback; and to tie down a part of the enemy in the Kiangsi-Kwangtung Border Region. This strategy was also designed to co-ordinate the guerrilla areas and the revolutionary movement throughout the country in order to create the conditions necessary to meet the coming upsurge. Corresponding resolutions were printed and distributed throughout the ranks. After the meetings, we immediately reorganized our troops, dividing them into three detachments, which were located at Hsinfeng, Peishan and Sannan (the Sannan locality included the three townships of Tingnan, Chuannan and Lungnan). Each detachment was subdivided into units of ten to twenty men, which carried out operations throughout the guerrilla area.



Guerrilla operations were to closely co-ordinate with political and educational activities and work among the masses. Our purpose was to strike at the enemy when possible, organize the masses, spread knowledge of our aims and carry on a persistent struggle against all retarding forces. When the situation became tense, comrades from the Special Committee and the headquarters of the Sub-Military Zone were assigned to the small guerrilla bands to form small, efficient working teams which would accompany the guerrilla unit. Their task was to lead the small guerrilla band to a particular district where it could operate independently.

A communication system was established with Yushan Mountain as the centre, its purpose being to co-ordinate the activities of the various guerrilla bands. One line of communications stretched from Yushan Mountain to Sannan, another from Yushan to Plum Mountain and then extended to Peishan. These were the main lines. Each guerrilla area had also its own branch lines. During that period, the communication network was our lifeline and therefore only the most loyal and trusted comrades were assigned to such duties.

## 2

1935 was the hardest year in the three years of guerrilla war in the south.

The pressure exerted on us by the enemy forces surrounding the Kiangsi-Kwangtung Border Region increased tremendously. The army of the Kwangtung warlord, Yu Han-mou, and the Kiangsi Security Corps were both ranged against us. Later on the enemy's 46th Division was also assigned to the region. At times a dozen or more regiments were concentrated in an encirclement campaign against the guerrilla areas. Our guerrilla base in the Kiangsi-Kwangtung Border Region extended for

more than a hundred *li*.<sup>1</sup> It was narrow and pencil-like in shape. The Peach River was to the east, to the north was the Changshui River, and the Tienhui River flowed on the southern side. The enemy held all the crossing points on these rivers. These points made up the main line of their blockade. Yushan Mountain was flanked by roads on the south, east, west and northwest sides, and there were enemy pillboxes along these roads. These formed their secondary line of blockade. Another network of pillboxes was built from the roads into the foot of the mountain. Each hamlet was fortified, and a line of pillboxes led from the hamlet into the mountain. This was the enemy's third line of blockade. Yushan, Peishan and the other areas were isolated from each other and completely surrounded. The enemy resorted to desperate and inhuman measures to annihilate us. They carried out a "scorched earth" campaign, cut down all trees, burned all houses and killed everyone they caught. Every day they probed the mountains or laid waste huge tracts of forest. They also enforced a tight economic blockade against us. They started it by combining several hamlets into one fortified village. The local people were forced to move from their own homes into these enemy-controlled posts. They carried out a policy of isolating us from the masses through which they hoped our forces would wither and die from starvation. They clamped down on the free sale of foodstuff and goods in the public markets. Each local resident was allowed a limited ration of grain, vegetables, oil, salt and other daily necessities. Anyone caught with more than his allotted ration was accused of assisting the "bandits" and punished accordingly. The enemy started a brisk propaganda campaign in conjunction with their military offensive and economic blockade. They strength-

<sup>1</sup> 1 *li* = 1/2 kilometre or roughly 1/3 mile.



ened the reactionary rule over the people by means of their tightly controlled *pao chia* system.<sup>1</sup> They widely distributed leaflets and posters, slandering us as "dangerous bandits". They also posted public notices offering thirty thousand silver dollars for the capture of Comrade Chen Yi, and similar "reward" for the capture of the high officials of the Special Committee. They cunningly attempted to undermine our guerrilla units by offering to pay money for every gun, hand-grenade or bullet turned over to them. Sometimes they even took members of our families prisoner, and then released them in the hope that we would worry and weaken in our determined stand. Using our armed guerrilla detachment as the backbone, we co-ordinated its activities with those of the undercover peasant-guerrilla units and the revolutionary people in small-scale, interspersed raids which were supported by the local people. Most of the young people living in the mountains were members of our undercover units. They collected information for us, carried out sentry duties, protected the local people, ensured production and co-ordinated closely with the guerrilla detachment in raids. These young people were exceptionally active in assisting the revolution.

When our guerrilla forces engaged in raids they followed the tactics of lightning attacks and ambushes. When the enemy searched the mountains for us, they would arrive at dawn and return at dusk. The guerrilla units combatted this by taking

<sup>1</sup> *Pao chia* was the administrative system by which the Kuomintang reactionaries enforced their fascist rule at the primary level. The system provided that the *pao* and *chia* were to be organized on the basis of households; there was to be a head of each household, of each *chia* which was made up of ten households, and each *pao* which was made up of ten *chia*. Neighbours were required to watch each other's activities and report to the authorities, and if one was found guilty, all others were to be punished. Various counter-revolutionary measures for exacting compulsory labour were also carried out through this system.

up positions on their return route and ambushing them. They would then cut off the enemy rear column and pick up the stragglers. Sometimes, when the countryside afforded favourable cover, we would fall upon the whole enemy column and wipe it out. At other times, when we found the enemy plundering one of the hamlets, we would make a lightning attack. Then, before they had time to recover from the attack, we would fade into the hills. Although the guerrilla units were tightly encircled and under a heavy blockade, they would sometimes infiltrate through the enemy lines and attack and disrupt their main positions in the rear. Such places were usually only lightly garrisoned. Places like Wuching and Chinglung fell prey to our attacking guerrilla units. The raid on Wuching had immediate consequences. The enemy's "suppression campaign" was being ruthlessly carried out at that time. Responding to a request by the underground Party branch, our detachment made a forced march under cover of night to Wuching, more than one hundred *li* away. It arrived at dawn and completely wiped out the puppet Self-Defence Corps and the enemy's district office. Chiu Kuei-hsing, the commander of the local Self-Defence Corps, was killed during the course of the raid. Following the battle, our men posted notices bearing misleading names of numerous detachments and units. The local people added fuel to the fire by deliberately spreading rumours about a huge guerrilla force. The enemy became unnerved by the reports which drifted in. They were confused about the actual number of the guerrilla troops in their rear.

Apprehensive that they were in grave danger from large forces behind them, they had no alternative but to recall their troops from the mountains and take up defensive positions. As soon as the Kuomintang troops started shifting back to their centre, the guerrilla forces disappeared. Our ability to



successfully carry out guerrilla tactics improved with each battle. We learned to employ new and better means of attack and mastered the subtle art of deception. For instance, we would stealthily set up an ambush near an enemy pillbox and then send out one of our men to lure the enemy into the open. Once they were outside the pillbox it was an easy matter to overcome them and take over the pillbox. Our aim was always to force them into a position where they were compelled to fight on our terms, then we would press our advantage and wipe them out. Another method of capturing a pillbox was to disguise ourselves as pedlars. The enemy troops could usually be lured from the pillboxes to make purchases. Then we would capture them and take control of the position. By adopting these tactics, we commanded the initiative in our struggle against the Kuomintang. The enemy was temporarily stronger than ourselves. In such circumstances we utilized the flexibility of our small units to confuse, disperse and tire them in a succession of raids. Our overall scheme was to defeat their superior forces with our smaller units, and turn a series of tactical victories into a great strategic victory.

Such tactics gave rise to a number of questions concerning troop movement. Our guerrillas usually dressed like the local peasants, a towel tied around the head and a pair of straw sandals on the feet. It was sometimes inadvisable to carry a long rifle on the shoulder, so our guerrillas would saw off the stock and conceal the weapon under their loose clothing. We directed that all movements must be calculated very carefully when on an assignment. Time must be allowed for the return trip to the cover of the base before the sun rose. Otherwise, the raiders would be without the protection of the revolutionary masses. If discovered, the enemy could quickly contact their various posts and concentrate a huge force to encircle the guerrillas. Such a dangerous situation was to be

avoided if possible. If one of the rivers had to be crossed during a mission, the crossing had first to be secured. In actual practice this was usually done by sending someone to enlist the support of the ferrymen. Extra care had to be taken to prevent the crossing from falling into the hands of the enemy.

In their desperate attempts to locate us, the Kuomintang troops learned through bitter experience to watch for three kinds of signs which would indicate that we were somewhere nearby. They were signs of smoke, tracks in the forest, and sounds of gunfire or movement in the bush. We learned to outwit them by using new and craftier tactics on our raids. For instance, they usually lay in ambush near important cross-roads. Suspecting their presence we would skirt around the cross-roads by taking the small footpaths. The enemy became wise to this and also started laying ambushes along the footpaths. After that we always travelled where there were no roads or paths. We were particularly careful about covering up any tracks we made in the dust, and always took pains to rearrange bushes or plants we had crushed underfoot. Sometimes we would tie our sandals on backwards and leave a maze of footprints on the mountain to confuse and mislead the enemy. At other times we walked in the centre of convenient streams and left no tracks at all. Of course, the best time for guerrilla movement was when it was raining. When we first arrived at the border region, we found small huts in some of the places. These we used as shelters. Eventually, all these huts were destroyed by the enemy, so we erected sheds made from bamboo, rushes and the bark of fir trees. These sheds quickly attracted the attention of the enemy when they started searching and burning the mountains. So we had to get out of them. Then each man was issued with an umbrella and whenever it rained we would sleep back-to-back under a large



tree, with the umbrellas propped over us. On fine nights we would hunt for an ancient grave and sleep on the stone slab in front of it. It was really not such a bad place to sleep!

We tried a number of methods to break the enemy's economic blockade against us. Lack of food was the greatest problem created by the blockade. The cutting of our food supply was the main purpose of the enemy's decision to combine the hamlets into fortified villages. However, when this policy was being carried out our underground Party and Youth League members and revolutionary supporters among the people also moved into the fortified villages. They would slip out whenever possible and bring us supplies of grain, oil, salt and other daily necessities. They would hide these things in the bottom of deep fish baskets and carry them to a designated point where they would be met and given money in exchange for the goods. Another way of smuggling was to fill hollow bamboo poles with grain and salt. The Kuomintang soldiers always forced the local people to go along and help them when they combed the mountains for guerrillas. The people would use this opportunity and take along the grain- or salt-filled poles. They would discreetly drop them at convenient places on the mountainside. They would sing mountain ballads to notify us that the supplies were delivered. During planting season, the peasants were allowed to return and cultivate crops. They would also use this opportunity to bring us some grain from the village. In addition to this help from the people, we were able to buy some supplies direct from the enemy-held villages through certain connections. Liuti was a large village occupied by the enemy, who did not always keep a close guard around it. Taking advantage of this, we would take up positions on the mountainside only five *li* away. When nightfall came, we would slip into the village and purchase grain, oil, salt, shoes, and batteries. At other times we got

supplies direct from merchants. They were willing to gamble with danger if a sizable profit could be realized. We sometimes made deals with those handling the business affairs of the Kuomintang officials and military officers. They hated us bitterly, but if a large profit could be made, they were willing "supply agents" for us.

We also managed to solve some of our own difficulties through campaigns against the local despots and bad gentry. The main purpose of the campaigns against these social bullies, was to bring down their arrogance. This stopped them from committing acts of violence against the people. We resolutely smashed and suppressed those that were most reactionary, thereby encouraging the people to support the revolution. We refrained from killing the local gentry who had only a moderately bad record. After capturing them and teaching them a lesson, we would let them go home if they promised to mend their ways and donate some funds to our cause. The more powerful local despots were in close league with the high officials and warlords. Sometimes the local despots were also high officials. They usually had an armed guard in personal attendance on them. However, they relaxed their guard sometimes. The news of an opportunity to catch them unguarded would always reach us. There was a powerful despot named Kuo Teh-ching in the township of Tayu. He was the commander of the local Joint Defence Corps, and was known throughout the district for his corruption and evil behaviour. We had been watching him for a long time, but had been unable to capture him. A messenger one day reported that Kuo Teh-ching had just gone to visit his mistress who lived in the small village of Chihchianghsu. We dispatched a pistol squad, who travelled all through the night and captured him. When he was brought back, the masses were amazed and declared: "The Communist Party must have ears in the walls."



Kuo Teh-ching hasn't been to this village for ages, but as soon as he appears, the Party nabs him." The people had a deep hatred for Kuo Teh-ching. We received a shower of letters, signed by numerous people, accusing him of countless crimes, and we executed him in reply to many requests. Everyone was glad to be rid of him. We caught another powerful local despot named Chiang Pi-shan in the district of Tengkung at Nanshiung. He "presented" us with a few dozen bolts of fine cloth, about thirty Mauser pistols, a large quantity of medicine and a substantial amount of financial aid. The life of the local despots and bad gentry revolved around gold. They treasured it almost as much as life itself. They knew their crimes were unpardonable, feared punishment and were willing to provide us with goods or pay any fines we put on them.

Raiding the enemy's supply trucks was another way of overcoming the shortage of goods. Although there were pillboxes along all the roads, there were always gaps beyond the field-of-fire of the pillboxes. Whenever the local people reported a convoy movement of supply trucks, we could successfully attack them at pre-selected points. Tseng Piao led the Yushan guerrilla units in a raid on a convoy of trucks transporting supplies over the Nanshiung-Tayu Highway on September 7, 1935. We captured three Kuomintang military trucks and a large supply of ammunition and medicine. We then explained our policies and aims to the captured drivers, and released them, giving them a lot of propaganda material to take back to Shaokuan. On their return home they talked about their experiences, and before long the whole town of Shaokuan was discussing the abilities of the Red Army guerrillas. This frightened some of the local despots into moving away to Canton.

We were often hungry in spite of our numerous ways of obtaining badly needed supplies, especially when the enemy's "suppression campaign" was at its height. Every man, from the highest cadre to the fighting man in the units, carried five catties of dry grain with him as an emergency food reserve and was not permitted to touch this ration in ordinary times. When the enemy day after day pressed forward with their "suppression campaign", there was no respite during which we could replenish our dwindling supplies, and our reserve rations were soon exhausted. Then, we were thankful for the flourishing growth of wild plants on the mountains. In the spring we ate our fill of tender young bamboo shoots, in summer there were delicious wild strawberries, and in the winter we gathered wild fruit. Small fish, prawns and a partridge were considered a delicacy, when we were lucky enough to catch them.

The area around the guerrilla base was completely devastated. The houses were all burned, the fields and woods were laid waste, and local people were forced to leave. None the less, our revolutionary masses were steeled through the course of struggle. Their class consciousness mounted and their enthusiastic support for the guerrillas increased. We accumulated a rich store of experiences during the struggle and with the help of the masses we finally surmounted the countless, inconceivable difficulties and victoriously weathered the year 1935.

The majority of the comrades maintained a courageous and determined stand against the enemy throughout those bitter days. They had full confidence in the Party, were convinced



that the revolution would be victorious and actively took part in the struggle. A very small minority wavered and could not face the gruelling struggle. They were frightened by the enemy and eventually turned traitor to the revolution. Kung Chu was one such traitor.

He was originally Chief of Staff of the Southern Kiangsi Military Zone. In the latter part of 1935, he was ordered to lead the Red 72nd Regiment to southern Hunan. It was then that he turned traitor. Our men in Yushan and Peishan Districts were unaware of the incident because communications were very bad and we were without radio contact. In January of 1936, the Kwangtung warlord Chen Chi-tang enlisted Kung's support in an attempt to destroy our guerrilla base on the Kiangsi-Kwangtung border. Kung knew that Comrade Chen Yi was with the Special Committee in the border region. He led a band of thirty reactionaries disguised as Red Army guerrillas to the Kiangsi-Kwangtung Border Region.

Tension mounted in Yushan District, and Comrade Chen Yi and the Special Committee moved to Peishan, secreting the important organizations, storehouses, repair shops and clothing and bedding workshops in the dense forest of the Crown Peak area. Kung Chu, following the trail he knew from experience with the Red Army, led his bandit band to Peishan where they encountered Ho Chang-lin, Chief of the Rear Defence Corps. Ho did not know that Kung Chu had turned traitor. The two had known each other for sometime, so Ho became careless in his talk and revealed a lot of information concerning conditions in our rear. Kung Chu asked Ho Chang-lin to call a meeting of cadres and to notify the leaders of the guerrilla bands also to attend. Ho did all this on his own authority and without seeking the permission of the Special Committee. Kung Chu's cut-throats surrounded the meeting place when the cadres arrived. He began to shamelessly as-

sert that the Communist Party was doomed and advised everybody to surrender. Many of the comrades realized that Kung Chu was a renegade and could not restrain their anger. They drew their pistols and tried to fight their way out of the meeting place but were overwhelmed by the enemy. Many were killed on the spot. One guerrilla leader received a wound in the foot. He tore a piece of cloth from the front of his coat to bind the wound, and managed to drag himself along. Mastering all his strength, he charged through the enemy line and rolled down the mountainside. The enemy fired a few shots after him, thought he was dead and did not bother any more. He ran through the woods until he was exhausted. After a rest he was able to walk for a time, but finally became so weak that he had to crawl. He was determined to warn the Special Committee so that they could move to safety. He was finally found two days and nights later almost unconscious by men from our communication post. This guerrilla team leader was an excellent comrade and I very much regret having forgotten his name.

Ho Chang-lin lacked a firm revolutionary will. He also became a traitor and followed in Kung Chu's footsteps. After these renegades had demolished our rear, hopeful of wiping out the Special Committee, they still continued to disguise themselves as guerrillas. Fortunately, they were not aware of the actual location of the Special Committee's headquarters. The best they could do was to search the areas with which they were familiar and hope for a chance encounter. They combed the mountains and one day stumbled on the place where we were staying. The sentinel on guard at the foot of the hill sighted them. He was suspicious and he fired three shots to warn the rest of us, who were at the top of the hill.

Comrade Chen Yi was playing chess when the three-shot warning rang out. He quickly disappeared. Chen Pi-hsien,



Li Lo-tien, two members of the guard and myself, scattered and took cover. We had no time to gather up our belongings. The following day we made contact with the other members of the Special Committee at the agreed emergency rendezvous points. Reviewing the situation, we reached the conclusion that the traitors, fearful that we were in a strong position, had decided not to risk an ascent of the hill and had retreated. A scout was sent off to reconnoitre. His report confirmed our conclusions.

We believed that the enemy having discovered the whereabouts of the Special Committee would conduct a wanton "suppression campaign" against Peishan, and made immediate arrangements to move. We reorganized the five guerrilla bands which had been dispersed in the conflict and reinforced them with trained Party workers. We then moved to Yushan, together with the communication post and a number of the rear offices.

Just as anticipated, the enemy had set up an intricate network of guard-posts at all the cross-roads and strategic high-points. They had woven a net around the whole Peishan area in a very short time. We stayed under cover at a place forty *li* from Tamei Pass for two days and three nights. We assumed that the overconfident enemy had relaxed their vigilance and that it was now time to take advantage of their slackness. So, following information brought in by scouts, we avoided remote mountain paths and travelled along the main roads. We succeeded in giving the enemy the slip and safely passed through their defence lines at a point only two *li* from one of their posts.

The Peishan incident taught us a profound lesson. It made us realize that during times of severe struggle, we must maintain strong political and ideological leadership; that we must strengthen and clean up our ranks. Fighting against spies

became one of the big tasks of the guerrilla struggle after the Peishan incident.

It would have been very hard for us to persist in the struggle without the active support of the masses during the three years of guerrilla fighting along the Kiangsi-Kwangtung border. The revolutionary masses went through fire and water with us.

They were staunch and refused to capitulate even though the enemy had occupied our central bases. The people centred all their hopes on the Party, Chairman Mao and the Red Army. Many times they sent their representatives to contact the Red Army, but did not succeed because of the enemy's tight blockade. They were constantly subjected to lying enemy propaganda, but they never lost confidence in the ultimate victory of the revolution. They were convinced that the enemy's reactionary rule would not last long, that the Communist Party could not be destroyed, and that the Red Army, under the leadership of the Party and Chairman Mao, would reclaim the soviet area. They therefore disregarded the dangers and used every conceivable means to preserve weapons, ammunition, red banners, Party membership cards, copies of the *Red China News*, documents, banknotes issued by the government of the soviet area, silver coins, clothing, and other articles. They were preparing for the day of final victory.

The peasants at the small guerrilla bases in the mountains were also resolute and staunch. They expressed their determination in many and sometimes very impressive ways.

At one time, the Kuomintang's "suppression campaign" was very severe and it even went so far as to garrison troops in

Huangkeng, where there were only two households. We were staying in a hut on Changshuwo Mountain nearby. We refrained from cooking so that fires would not attract enemy attention, and depended upon Huang Chan-lung, Chang Chien-mei and Wu Chi-hsiu to send us meals. Huang Chan-lung was a great character, he never once failed to provide us with food and news. The area around Peishan and Yushan Districts was in a very tense state and it was dangerous for anyone to be seen moving about. Our existence depended on the little food that could be sent to us by our friends. Chang Chien-mei used her woman's wit to get food to us, especially when rice was scarce and the new harvest was not yet due. She made some rice-balls, placed them in a basket, covered them with grass, pretended she was out cutting grass, and smuggled the food to us.

We were staying close to the town of Tayu, and it was comparatively easy to buy things through the local people. They would think of every possible way to purchase what we needed and then send it to us. Chang Chien-mei would start off early in the morning with a load of kindling on a carrying-pole and proceed to the Tayu market place. There she would sell the kindling, buy cloth-shoes, galoshes and flashlight batteries, and afterwards, purchase vegetables and peppers to cover the other articles in the bottom of the baskets before returning to the mountains. The Kuomintang troops and police thought she was an ordinary young country girl carrying a load of vegetables and would not make a thorough search. She would thus pass safely through the enemy's check-points.

It was necessary to apply different tactics and methods to encourage the people in different regions to assist the guerrilla fighters. The people who lived in the region between the Red areas and the White areas were unstable and easily influenced. This was understandable for they suffered great hardships

through living in a constantly changing area, where two forces were engaged in a mighty seesaw struggle. The Kuomintang reactionaries were the direct cause of their sufferings, and they could be swayed into support for the guerrilla units if they were properly organized and trained. The proper organization of these people and the enlistment of their support was necessary for the consolidation and expansion of the guerrilla bases. We sometimes used open methods and sometimes half-secret methods to initiate the work among them. We formulated five slogans. They were based on the most urgent needs and demands of the people. These slogans called on the masses to oppose high rents, to oppose the heavy grain tax, to demand the cancellation of the large debts owed to the landlords, to oppose taxes, and to resist conscription by the enemy. We led the peasants in their struggles and co-ordinated their struggles with military action. When the enemy was pressing the conscription campaign, we warned the responsible reactionary *pao* chiefs and made them afraid to harm the people. We found out where the enemy had locked up conscripts, and our guerrilla units then raided the place and rescued them. Whenever we learned that heavy taxes were being imposed on the people, we destroyed the tax office and drove out the tax-collectors. At harvest time, the landlords, accompanied by their henchmen, went to collect a large share of grain as rent. When they started back with the grain, we would raid their transport and return the grain to the peasants. Our units improved and expanded this work among the masses, and before long, the people were whole-heartedly supporting us. Many of the local people joined in the fighting with their birding pieces and spears when we attacked the main enemy post.

Our policy in the White areas was to strive to win over the masses by extending our influence. The guerrilla bands frequently operated behind the enemy lines. They would go



through and distribute leaflets and paste up posters exposing the Kuomintang's deceitful propaganda. They also captured and exterminated the most hated local despots. This helped to extend our influence. One effective means of spreading our propaganda was through family contacts, working contacts or friendly relations between the people of the mountain interior and the people of the surrounding areas. The underground contacts we developed near Tayu and Hsincheng were initiated by these means.

We proposed that the cadres join the people in labour and other activities in order to further the Party work among the masses along the Red-White border and in the White area. It was a simple job to take off a pair of sandals and help the peasants in the fields. But wherever possible, cadres were to learn a particular trade and ply it among the people. Lai Wentai, for instance, learned to be a tinsmith and went among the people repairing their pots and pans. Chu Tsan-chen and Chu Tsan-jung learned to be tailors and travelled around the villages making clothes for the people. Tu Fu-piao, one of the working personnel from Plum Mountain, was a poultry expert, so he journeyed around offering his services. Those who did not learn a trade, helped the peasants with all sorts of manual labour, planting the crops and harvesting the grain. In this way we created bonds of friendship with the local people, were able to spread our revolutionary influence, gradually organize and become closely knit together with the local workers and peasants. We also sent some men to Hsihua Mountain and Piaotang where they helped the people mine tungsten, winning their support for the aims and objects of the Party. I was able to make bamboo baskets, and so could spread the Party's message to the people as I went among them selling my baskets. Once, when I was working at Huangkeng, some strangers appeared as I sat basket-making at my friend's place,



The People Bring Food to the Men in Battle  
A Chinese painting by Pai Fan



and asked questions about me. Huang Chen-lung and his wife, Ho Chiao-mei, said: "He's a bamboo worker doing some work for us." They inspected the fine basket-weaving and were convinced that I was a genuine craftsman, following my usual trade.

The reactionary Kuomintang set up the *pao chia* system. They thought to put more pressure on the people and tightly control any progressive activities by enforcing this system. However, not all the *pao* and *chia* chiefs were convinced reactionaries, so we adopted different policies to meet the different situations in different areas. We gained a firm grip on the *pao chia* system in the mountain interior by getting underground Party members and revolutionary supporters appointed to responsible posts. Some old and enlightened members of the community were also appointed to such posts, and we encouraged them to play the role of a double-agent. Sometimes these men would attend a general meeting called by the enemy. They would afterwards report the results to us. Whenever the enemy came snooping around they would manage to get rid of them or inform us of their presence. We had no choice in the mountain area bordering on the low-lands but to crush the more reactionary *pao* or joint-*pao* chiefs. After some had been subdued the others would be more willing to toe the line. The less corrupt were treated differently, our object being to turn them into double-agents. At Plum Mountain we crushed the reactionary *pao* chief Liao Kuei-shan, and on the outskirts of Tayu we induced Wu Chi-jui, a joint-*pao* chief, to help us. Later on, he brought us confidential reports and bought us goods that were unobtainable by ordinary people.

The effects of our work gradually spread from the interior to the outer ring of the mountains. We then extended our activities to the White areas and from there into the very



heart of the enemy strongholds. We sent some men to open a confectionary shop along one of the main streets in Tayu. At Yutu we opened a tailors' shop, and at Kanchou we opened a shop for making buttons. All these places were used as headquarters for our work.

## 5

The three years of guerrilla struggle were harsh, but they brightened and enriched our lives. We developed a deep feeling of comradeship and devotion to the revolution.

Deep in the Five Mountains the weather was often cold. Comrade Chen Yi describes life there in one of his poems:

*Nearly dawn,  
Our men wake early;  
Dew-drenched clothes and bedding are chill even  
in summer;  
In the trees cicadas shrill,  
Grass clings to our clothing.*

We were housed in a shack. Nearly twenty of us lived together, including the members of the Special Committee, the members of the guard and the kitchen personnel. Each man had a blanket, and usually two or three of us huddled together but we still felt cold. All ranks fared the same, each of us being allotted one yuan a month for buying shoes. Leading cadres like myself would not wear out a pair of cloth-shoes in a month, but the soldiers were heavier on their footwear and would have to mend their shoes again and again. Therefore, we frequently bought shoes with our "shoe money" and gave them to the soldiers. There was no such thing as, "This is

mine and that is yours." Clothing, bedding, shoes, stockings — no one claimed any for himself. Whoever needed it, used it. When the weather was cold, Comrade Chen Yi would get up during the night and take a look at the guards. He would tuck the coverings around them when necessary. Our spirit of comradeship showed at its best during the marches when the cadres and soldiers helped one another with their loads.

Comrade Chen Yi loved to write poems. Whenever we were near a mountain or a lake and an opportunity arose, he would compose a poem. His poems described the life we were then living. The following is a good example:

*We are short of grain,  
For three months we have tasted no meat;  
In summer we feed on berries, in winter bamboo;  
Hunting wild boars we pant over the mountains,  
And after dark catch snakes.*

We could not go hunting for wild boars very often because the shots would betray our whereabouts. Comrade Chen Yi often led a few of us out at night, when the situation was relatively calm, to catch snakes and partridges. Sometime we would gather hornets' nests, cook the pupae and eat them.

During the fourth "encirclement and annihilation" campaign, Comrade Chen Yi was wounded in the hip. The wound repeatedly festered and reopened. He had great difficulty in climbing the hills and mountains during our marches. He did not make a fuss about it, and it was a long time before anyone knew that he was wounded. Medical supplies were very low at the time, and we had to rely on herbs to cure sickness and injuries. We had one tin of Tiger Balm, a "cure-all" ointment. Whatever the ache or ailment, we would use Tiger Balm. Comrade Chen Yi's wound was treated with

some of it. When his wound had reopened and was full of pus, he tied his leg to a tree and made one of the men squeeze out all the blood and pus. Then they put some Tiger Balm on strips of white cloth and with bamboo-slips packed them into the wound. Many of the men standing around found the scene too grim and turned away, but Comrade Chen Yi was not a bit disturbed and continued to laugh and talk.

We paid a great deal of attention to study and would discuss important current topics. There were very few books available. Our remaining copies of *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder* and *Problems of Leninism* were tattered and badly worn after repeated reading. The backs had been re-covered many times, and the inside had been repaired time and again. Everyone considered them to be among our most precious possessions. The men would fight for the privilege of carrying them when on the march. Everyone wanted to read them when we were in camp. We often organized a get-together to tell stories. Comrade Chen Yi was the best story-teller. His well-stocked storehouse of tales was never exhausted, and he always recounted them in a lively and colourful manner. His stories were so absorbing that the men often lost track of time.

The life of the guerrillas was tense but happy. When conditions permitted, they would sing from morning till night. Many of them were good at singing the song *Up the Mountain We Climb* from the opera *Picking Tea-Leaves*. The most popular song was *Twelve Months of Revolution*. I still remember a few lines of it.

*The dawn of the revolution is like the birth of a  
New Year,  
The proletariat everywhere is happy and full of good  
cheer;*

*Just like a caged bird liberated for flight,  
He flies from his prison and soars out of sight.*

The Japanese imperialists intensified their aggression against China in 1936. Shouting for "internal pacification before resisting foreign invasion", the reactionary Kuomintang clique continued to make compromises and great concessions to the aggressors. The people, however, were boiling with anger and demanded that the Japanese imperialists be resisted. During the first half of that year, the Kwangtung warlord Chen Chitang raised the slogan "Oppose Chiang and Resist Japan" in the Kwangtung-Kwangsi region. The Kwangtung-Kwangsi Incident<sup>1</sup> was nothing but a case of dog-bites-dog, but it was a clear indication of the differences arising within the ruling class. The tide of resistance against Japan was swelling, and the national situation was about to undergo a rapid and great change. The Special Committee called a meeting to discuss the current situation. The meeting sent out a call to the people to "End the Civil War and Unite to Resist Japan". Following the meeting, our political work was intensified and we took advantage of every opportunity to spread our propaganda, distributing leaflets and posting slogans wherever possible. I was at Anpeikeng, near Plum Mountain, carrying on political activities among the masses. One day I wrote up scores of leaflets and posters. During the night Huang Chan-lung

<sup>1</sup> In June 1936, the Kwangsi warlords Li Tsung-jen and Pai Chung-hsi, together with the Kwangtung warlord Chen Chitang, launched a campaign against Chiang Kai-shek under the slogan of "Resist Japan and save the nation". In August of the same year, the movement disintegrated because of Chiang's policy of dividing and bribing them.



and Hsiao Wen-tien pasted these brightly coloured propaganda sheets all over the walls and arches in the southern part of the town of Tayu.

Morning came, and the townspeople saw and read the posters. The rumour spread around that a detachment of the Red Army had passed through during the night, and that the Communist Party was not defeated because its posters were going up all over the place. Some people in the White areas had been deceived by the deceptive propaganda of the reactionaries and had believed that the Red Army had really collapsed and that the Communist Party was completely defeated. The posters now revealed that the enemy's propaganda was untrue. This greatly heartened the people.

The armed struggle was also intensified. During one operation we concentrated an attacking force of nearly two hundred men in the region surrounding the guerrilla area. It succeeded in smashing the enemy strongholds and expanded the guerrilla area, greatly inspiring the people. Every time we made an attack, the small peasant-guerrilla units which still tilled the land and the revolutionary supporters all took part in the action. During the battle of Chihchiang, several hundreds of these auxiliary fighters co-operated with the guerrilla forces in surrounding the town. The guerrillas blasted the Kuomintang district office open with a bundle of hand-grenades and captured some members of the local Self-Defence Corps. They afterwards destroyed pillboxes and other fortifications. The flames from this destruction leaped into the sky and the shouts of the people grew to a thunderous roar. The news of the victory of the guerrillas spread far and wide.

During this period the number of men in our armed units was further increased. The number of troops was doubled in less than one month. We extended our activities, rapidly pushing outwards towards the plains and the cities. We were pre-

paring to meet the new advantageous situation that was approaching, by increasing our revolutionary strength in every way.

The movement initiated with the Kwangtung-Kwangsi Incident failed less than two months later. We immediately changed some of our methods of carrying on activities in order to keep abreast with the current situation. The reactionaries as anticipated started a new offensive against us. The Kwangtung Army had been our immediate opponents; this time we had to deal with the "Central Army". This army was unfamiliar with the terrain. Moreover, the national situation had changed and our strength had increased, thus making it easier to carry out our activities and stiffen our resistance. The news that the Red Army had reached northern Shensi filtered through to us about this time. The comrades nearly went crazy with joy and raced around spreading the news. We were ready to meet the next battle with renewed determination.

We learned about the Sian Incident<sup>1</sup> through a copy of the Hongkong *Industrial and Commercial Daily*. Chiang Kai-shek had been detained in Sian by Chang Hsueh-liang and Yang Hu-cheng and forced to give his word that he would organize resistance against Japan. Everyone at the base was jubilant over this news. A few days later, while browsing through a progressive Hongkong magazine, we came across excerpts from the report given by Chairman Mao at a conference in Wayao-

<sup>1</sup> Under the influence of the Red Army and the mass movement against Japanese aggression, two Kuomintang armies, the Northeastern Army under Chang Hsueh-liang and the 17th Route Army under Yang Hu-cheng, supported the Communist proposal for a national anti-Japanese united front and urged Chiang Kai-shek to unite with the Communists and resist Japan. Rejecting their propositions, Chiang prepared to more actively suppress the Communists and massacred a number of patriotic youths in Sian. Chang Hsueh-liang and Yang Hu-cheng then arrested him in Sian on December 12, 1936. This was the famous "Sian Incident". They released him after he promised to unite with the Communists and fight the Japanese invaders.

pao.<sup>1</sup> The report gave us new insight into the national situation and encouraged us tremendously. The Special Committee concluded that the Chinese revolution had developed to a new stage. The Sian Incident was a clear indication that the question of resistance to Japan had assumed priority over the class contradictions inside China in the face of Japanese imperialist aggression. A new upsurge in the struggle against Japan was in formation. It was decided that the policies of the guerrilla struggle must be reviewed and altered, and that the cadres and troops must be informed and ideologically prepared to meet the new situation. It was also decided to augment our strength, to initiate a vigorous campaign in the countryside and towns for resistance against Japan and to save the nation, and to carry out extensive propaganda activities everywhere. We put out slogans calling for an end to the civil war and unity to resist Japan, and demanded that the Kuomintang cease its attacks against the guerrilla areas and allow the Red Army fighters to take up positions in the front to oppose the aggressors.

The reactionary Kuomintang clique obstinately persisted in their reactionary policies. The enemy's attacks on the Kiangsi-Kwangtung Border Region did not lessen but were intensified. Chiang Kai-shek plotted to concentrate his forces and annihilate our guerrilla units in every southern province. During these battles we lost a number of excellent comrades, including Yeh Ming-kuei and Li Lo-tien.

<sup>1</sup> On December 25, 1936, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party held a Political Bureau meeting at Wayaopao, northern Shensi. The meeting comprehensively analysed the international and domestic situation and the changes in class relations that had taken place in China, and defined the policy of the Party. The meeting, one of the most important ever held by the Party centre, refuted the mistaken view in the Party that it was impossible for the Chinese national bourgeoisie to join forces with the Chinese workers and peasants to resist Japan, and decided on the tactics of building up a national united front.

The fighting continued until July 11, then suddenly most of the Kuomintang regulars withdrew from the interior mountains.

The reason for this withdrawal was the outbreak of the Lukouchiao Incident.<sup>1</sup> The Japanese had also launched a savage attack on Shanghai. The reactionary Kuomintang still did not abandon its anti-Communist and anti-people policies. Although the Kuomintang troops stationed on the Kiangsi-Kwangtung border to attack the guerrilla regions made a few transfers, they never ceased their attacks against us. We kept on the constant alert and continued the struggle, reinforced our units, and conducted extensive activities to stir up resistance against the Japanese.

A call was issued under the sponsorship of the Kiangsi-Kwangtung Border Region Special Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, and the Kiangsi-Kwangtung guerrilla units to "End the Civil War and Unite to Resist Japan". It received the enthusiastic support of the people. Vast movements to resist Japan and save the country arose everywhere. The Chinese people demanded that the Kuomintang end the civil war and unite all forces to resist the Japanese aggressors. The units of the Kuomintang's Kwangtung Army were the first to react under the pressure of the masses and the national upsurge to resist the aggressors. The magistrates of Tayu, Nankang and Hsinfeng Counties were then forced to issue a statement concerning "negotiations for peace" with the Communist Party.

Our Special Committee made a careful examination of the situation, and after due consideration, decided to take this opportunity to negotiate. The Committee also resolved to

<sup>1</sup> On July 7, 1937, the Japanese aggressors attacked the Chinese troops stationed at Lukouchiao, a bridge about ten kilometres southwest of Peking. Influenced by the nation-wide popular anti-Japanese upsurge, the Chinese troops resisted the Japanese. Thus began the Chinese people's heroic eight-year War of Resistance Against Japan.



vigorously augment our strength for the coming resistance against the Japanese. Important questions concerning political principles and troop movements were referred to the Central Committee for decision. Soon afterwards, Comrade Chen Yi left the mountains to carry out the negotiations and make contact with the widely dispersed guerrilla units.

He journeyed to Tayu, Kanchow, Chian and Nanchang, where he received the enthusiastic welcome of the broad masses of the people. The Kuomintang officials had no alternative but to give him a "courteous" reception. The Kuomintang magistrates, special commissioners and military officers said: "We have long looked upon you, Mr. Chen, as an anti-Japanese patriot. We have always greatly admired you!" The Tayu County magistrate even said: "Mr. Chen, there are only eight Security Corps in the whole of Kiangsi; Kiangsi is yours." Behind all these expressions of "goodwill", the reactionaries still took every opportunity to stab us in the back. The Kuomintang newspapers headlined the proclamation, "Yushan Communist Bandits Surrender". This enraged Comrade Chen Yi. The Tayu County magistrate hurriedly explained: "I'm very sorry, Mr. Chen. The story of Communist surrender was only intended for British and American consumption. Actually, we are supporting you so that you may become a high official." Comrade Chen Yi immediately issued a stern protest.

The next day, the Kuomintang newspapers hastily changed their tune and reported, "Communist representative Chen Yi has come to negotiate about co-operation in the War of Resistance."

While the negotiations were proceeding, we made contact with the Party's Central Committee through a comrade who had been sent to meet us. Under the directions of the Central Committee, we negotiated with the Kuomintang for the withdrawal of their troops from the guerrilla areas, the release

of political prisoners and the reorganization of the Red guerrilla corps into the New Fourth Army. We also dispatched men to the other guerrilla areas to inform the comrades there of the Central Committee's directives. A cease-fire came into operation at the conclusion of the negotiations.

The guerrilla units in the Kiangsi-Kwangtung Border Region were concentrated, and we gradually shifted our base closer to the plains. We first moved to the small hamlet of Panpenghsia; later, we expanded as far as Chihchiang. Under the name of the New Fourth Army, we established liaison offices at Chihchiang, Chian and Nanchang. We continued to train our units and organized propaganda teams to stir up resistance against the Japanese in the cities. We also re-established contact with some of our old comrades from the Central Soviet Area. We set up underground organizations at Kanchow, Juichin, Yutu and many other places.

The guerrillas in the Kiangsi-Kwangtung Border Region went through a long and bitter struggle. The comrades who survived it were staunch and experienced fighters. They were a valuable part of the Party. After the cease-fire, all the armed units, with the exception of those comrades left behind to continue the struggle in the border region, became part of the New Fourth Army.

The Red guerrilla units from eight southern provinces were moulded together into one mighty force. Under the Red flag of the New Fourth Army, they took up positions on the battlefields to the north and south of the Yangtse River in the enemy's rear. There, under the leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and Chairman Mao, they battled for eight years in the War of Resistance. Their fighting was meritorious, and they grew tremendously in strength.

## A NARROW ESCAPE

CHUNG CHUN-SHAN

After the Central Red Army had left on the Long March in 1935, our guerrilla units at Tinchow and Juichin Counties steadfastly carried on the struggle in the Huchu Mountains. The enemy stepped up their "mopping-up" operations against us. They built pillboxes and set up a close network of sentry posts at the foot of the mountains. Under the pretext of "village amalgamation", they chased all the inhabitants out of the mountains. This was a vain attempt to starve us to death by separating us from the people and cutting off our support.

Despite increasing difficulties, we tried to keep contact with the people, who continued to send us food and messages.

One day, Hu Cheng-teh, Yu Yu-hui, two other comrades and myself went on a reconnaissance mission to Lantienkeng Village at the foot of the mountain. We also intended to get food for the guerrilla forces. Shortly after we entered the village, the enemy surrounded us. We had been followed by their agents. We decided to break through the encirclement in order not to jeopardize the safety of the villagers. Just as we were about to do so, Li Tsui-hua hurried over and stopped us.

Li was a peasant woman about thirty years of age. Her husband had gone to the north with the Red Army, leaving her and their two children, one aged four and the other nine.

She always treated the guerrilla men like kinsfolk, risking her own life to send us food and deliver messages for us.

She told us: "The White bandits have completely surrounded the village. Trying to break through now is like delivering yourselves to the butchers." Without waiting to hear our explanation, she quickly took us to several chosen families for shelter. I hid myself in a haystack at her home.

A while later, gongs and voices were heard in the streets. I could not make out what was going on. Then I heard a villager came speaking to Li, "The enemies are ordering everyone to go to the threshing ground. Hurry up. They say that those who don't go will be arrested, and that they'll search every house."

While I was trying to make a quick decision, Li walked over to the haystack and said, "Come on, let's all go there." I replied, "I think I'd better force my way out, if they should find me, the whole village will have to suffer."

"Never fear," she said. "Your face doesn't betray you. As long as nobody informs them, they'll never know that you are a Red Army man. Let's go. You'll be safe with us."

She was right. As we often visited this village, everyone was friendly with us and on our side. I knew we would not be betrayed. Li took the 4-year-old in her arms while I held the hand of the elder one. We followed the crowd to the threshing ground.

When we arrived, it was already crowded with people who had brought their families with them. I saw many of my acquaintances who reassured me by a firm look. I saw that the other four comrades were all there. We exchanged a quick glance. They all appeared quite confident.

An enemy officer flanked by guards stood in the centre of the crowd. The threshing ground was surrounded by sentries, who watched the crowd like a pack of wolves.



The officer picked out an old peasant, pretended to be friendly, and in a soft voice said, "Where are the five Communists hiding? They've just come from the mountains."

Several hundred eyes roundabout were focused on the old man. Shaking his head, he replied rather humorously, "Do you expect them to sit round and wait to be captured? Of course they've run away!"

The officer questioned several others who made similar answers, saying they had not seen any strangers around. The officer stopped before a woman named Chang. Taking her 11-year-old boy from her, he asked, "Tell me, kid, where are the Red Army hiding?" and dangled a packet of sweets in front of the child. "If you tell me, the sweets will be yours. Look, how delicious!"

The boy was so scared that he could not utter a word and clung desperately to his mother.

"Tell me!" roared the officer in a great temper. "I'll beat you to death if you don't tell!" he barked, raising his whip high above his head.

Petrified by the sight of the whip, the child still held frantically to his mother. She shielded the boy with both arms and protested, "Why do you have to frighten a child? How can he know about the Red or the White armies!"

Violently pulling the child away from his mother, the officer heavily slashed his head and body. The child shrieked with agony, flopped to the ground, curled himself up and continued to howl with pain. Mother Chang leaped forward and covered her son with her own body. She angrily shouted, "Go and get them if you can! Why do you beat my child?"

"You damned crook, so you are trying to be tough, eh?" the officer cursed in a rage as he rained blows on her head, cutting several slashes across her face. Mother Chang kept back her tears and glowered at the enemy. It was torture

for me to watch the whipping of Mother Chang and her child. I could hardly contain myself. Burning with hatred, I thought, "How can we let the people suffer on our account?" I clenched my fists, made up my mind to jump on the enemy and finish them off one by one. As the idea flashed into my mind, someone pulled my sleeve. I looked down. It was Li Tsui-hua. The firm and serious look in her eyes calmed me down.

A group of enemy soldiers came back and reported, "We've searched every house but have not found any guerrillas." The enemy officer scowled, paused and then ordered, "All men line up on the east side. Women and children line on the west. Then the women must identify their husbands and other male members of their families and take them home." Apparently, the enemy suspected that we were mixed up in the crowd and thought to sift us out this way.

The crowd began to disperse in two directions. I kept worrying about Mother Chang and her son. This village used to be an old base of the Central Soviet Area. Chairman Mao Tse-tung had once been there leading the peasants in the struggle against the local bullies and the division of the land. Almost every family had someone in the Red Army. So they were ready to protect their own army. . . . While I was turning this over in my mind, Li Tsui-hua took her elder child from my hand and pointed her chin in the eastern direction indicating that I go there. I could feel that she wanted me to understand that I was safe as long as I remained with the villagers. I was reassured. I glanced significantly at my four comrades, trying to indicate that we should fight it out with the enemy if necessary.

The identification test went on. Women closely watched by the enemy walked to the east side and picked out their menfolks. I watched intently. Among them was one of our men.

Later another two comrades were taken home.

Then a girl came to me saying, "Come on, let's go home," as she grabbed my sleeve. We walked off together. She was so steady and acted so naturally that I was filled with gratitude and respect for her.

The men on the east side gradually thinned out, until only a few remained. Among them were some old men and Hu Cheng-teh, the last of the five comrades. The enemy grew suspicious. They walked around Hu Cheng-teh looking at him closely. I was worried. Had the women made a slip in their arrangements, and not made sure that someone was responsible for him? At this critical moment, Li Tsui-hua picked up her child and strode towards Hu. "You silly ass, what are you standing here for? Go home now," she said as she handed the child to him.

As they turned to go, an enemy soldier blocked her with his rifle. "What relation is he to you?" he rapped.

"He's the papa," Li answered in a confident voice. Just then, the child called out, "Papa, Papa!" He was probably reminded of his father when he heard his mother mention Papa. Responding alertly, Hu patted the child and said, "Quiet, let's go home now." The enemy, unable to detect anything wrong, let them go. The few old men were also taken home by their daughters or daughters-in-law.

No man was left unidentified. The enemy officer was enraged, but had to give up the search. The villagers had all gone home. Only the frustrated enemy soldiers remained on the threshing ground. From the distance I could hear the raging voice of the enemy officer shouting, "All of you are Reds, all of you!"

## HOLD ON TO THE STRUGGLE IN THE HUNAN-KIANGSI BORDER REGION

TUAN HUAN-CHING

1

Not long after the Red 6th Army withdrew from the Hunan-Kiangsi Border Region in the autumn of 1934, the reactionaries again started to launch large-scale attacks against this area. The three enemy divisions occupying Chian and several other cities of Kiangsi and the 4th, 6th and 10th Security Corps of the Kuomintang combined with the local landlords' troops which had escaped to Kanchow, Chian and elsewhere. They launched a "mopping-up" campaign from the north and east against the various border region counties. Blood was flowing all along the Hunan-Kiangsi Border Region, and our base area was hacked into a dozen small areas. The Red 5th Regiment and the Independent Regiments in the various areas were the only troops left behind at the time. After contact between the Provincial Party Committee and the various Independent Regiments was cut off, the Provincial Party Committee marched with our 5th Regiment to the Wukung Mountains, where we were to continue leading the people's struggle throughout the border region.

At first the Red 5th Regiment successfully employed the old methods of struggle. We burned down enemy blockhouses,



drove out the local forces, held accusation meetings against the local tyrants and issued grain to the people. Our large-scale movements attracted the attention of the enemy. Li Pao-ping, the enemy divisional commander, quickly brought in large reinforcements. We had a skirmish with them on Lion's Head Peak and wiped out an enemy battalion in the encounter, but unfortunately Peng Hui-ming, Commander of the Military Zone, sacrificed his life. This was a great loss and was followed by many setbacks. Hsiung Shih-hui's main forces launched an "encirclement and suppression" campaign on the Wukung Mountains. The Provincial Party Committee decided that in order to smash the enemy's attack, it was necessary to reorganize the 3rd Independent Regiment into the Red 5th Regiment with Tseng Kai-fu as regimental commander. We immediately descended the mountain, broke through the encirclement and moved to the sector along Chaling, Yuh-sien and Lienhua Counties. Here we were still faced by an enemy force ten times our own strength. The encounters were many and bitter. The comrades used up all their cartridges in the battles from hill to hill, and then fought on with sticks and rocks. Our losses became heavier and heavier. We were faced with a serious situation. The Provincial Party Committee then instructed us to move to southern Hunan to make contact with Fang Wei-hsia and Tsai Hui-wen.

Our troops needed reorganizing, but we would not delay. We were also in need of a rest, but the enemy was on our heels. We had neither maps nor compasses and dashed forward with only memory of the terrain and the stars to guide us. One evening, just as we reached the Lienhua-Lungtu Highway, our advance guards ran into the enemy again. In the hand-to-hand combat which ensued, bullets were of no use. We had to fight the enemy with rifle butts and bayonets. By this time, the rest of the comrades in the main column had climbed onto

a cliff on the right flank and were supporting the advance guards from there, providing cover for them to pull safely out of the melee. It was daybreak when the last of the advance guards climbed the hill. Here the terrain was extremely unfavourable to us, and it would be dangerous to stay long. We buried our fallen comrades, marked the position of their graves and departed.

When we reached southern Hunan, we were unable to make immediate contact with Fang Wei-hsia and Tsai Hui-wen. We were a big target, and the enemy soon discovered us. They surrounded our base with ring upon ring of troops and searched the mountains day and night. A series of setbacks made us realize the importance of undercover struggles in such situations. We, therefore, hid in the mountains by day and made surprise attacks by night.

Location in the mountains meant that we were cut off from the masses, and food supplies became an acute problem. Hunger gripped us like a vice. Whenever we rested, the fighters, eyes sunken and pale-faced, would fall asleep leaning against rocks or trees. They were completely exhausted. Some never woke again.

In this difficult situation we could not contact Fang Wei-hsia, and the enemy's "encirclement and suppression" was daily becoming tighter. We decided to withdraw from the area. We split up into two units in order not to provide the enemy with a big target. One unit led by Regimental Commander Tseng Kai-fu marched first and the others about a hundred in number were in my charge. Both units set out one after the other for the old soviet area.

As we neared it, we came across a number of reactionary posters. One day Hsiao Li angrily threw down a newspaper and several mimeographed leaflets in front of me. The first thing which caught my eye was a big headline, "Communist



Party Provincial Secretary Chen Hung-shih Surrenders". The leaflet stated: "There is no way out for you on the mountain. If you do not surrender, you will starve to death . . ." under-signed by "Special Recruiting Officer, Chen Hung-shih".

The shameless crook! We had never suspected that he was a traitor.

We speeded up the march in order to inform the Provincial Party Committee about this treachery and to contact Tan Yu-pao, Chairman of the Hunan-Kiangsi Border Region, as soon as possible. Three days later we arrived at a tiny village of three families at the foot of the Kantzu Mountains. There we rested. On our arrival at the village, we noticed a peasant girl passing by in great haste, as if she had some urgent task to carry out. I laid aside all precautions, in order to try and make speedy contact with Chairman Tan and quietly asked her: "Hey Miss! Would you mind telling me if there are any Red Army men around here?"

"Red Army men?" she said quite naturally. Then apparently she thought again and changed her tone, saying, "Red Army men? How should I know!"

I could tell by her accent that she was not a local girl, so I asked: "Do you live in these parts?"

"No! Where are you from?" she flashed back.

"Who? We . . . you don't have to be afraid, we know that there are no White troops here!"

"Who cares?" she said somewhat ill at ease, as she walked away.

She did not seem to be one of our enemies from her appearance and speech. After she had gone someone said, "She's bound to be one of us, let's catch up with her and let her take us to see Chairman Tan." "Wait a minute," I said. "She'll be back soon."

Soon afterwards, a villager with firewood on a carrying-pole came by. After careful scrutiny he turned out to be Wu Chin-lien, the county Party secretary. When he realized who I was, he shouted, "Tuan!" and then could not utter another word. The comrades gathered around Wu Chin-lien, unable to find anything appropriate to say. Suddenly someone shouted: "We've found our family!" Yes, we had found the Party organization. The forty of us were like lost children who had just found their mothers.

Wu Chin-lien led us up the mountain, and the other fighters ran out to embrace us. Here also was the girl we had seen at the foot of the mountain. After telling the comrades that we had come from southern Hunan to find the Provincial Party Committee, Wu Chin-lien introduced several of the comrades to us. The girl blushed when she was introduced and I hastily put in, "We met long ago! She was our guide!" "You didn't look like bad people, but . . ." she said apologetically, adding, "You'll have to forgive me for what happened just now!"

The struggle had taught us to be vigilant. So we approved of this girl's behaviour. "You did right, Comrade Fa Ku. We're the ones who should criticize ourselves!" I said.

Wu Chin-lien took us to the Provincial Party Committee that night.

## 2

We found the Provincial Party Committee and Tan Yu-pao in a straw hut on the Chess Board Mountains situated on the border of Lienhua and Yuhsien Counties. I would not have recognized Tan Yu-pao if Wu Chin-lien had not shouted his name. He was wearing a little jacket which had been patched and repatched, his face was colourless and his eyes deep in



their sockets. When he saw me, he hastily laid aside his work, caught my hand in a tight clasp, looked me up and down for a long time, then said, "You've had a hard time!"

A meeting was held at which I made a report on the situation in southern Hunan, gave a detailed account of the incidents which had happened on our way and handed over the money that I had brought to Chairman Tan. Chairman Tan assured us that the revolution would not fail, and that we would finally see victory. Although Chen Hung-shih had betrayed us, the Red revolutionary flag over Hunan and Kiangsi would not be lowered. He said that the fact that we could victoriously return from southern Hunan was proof of that. It was already July 1935, when we met and discussed internal unity, and laid down tactics for the future struggle. The Provincial Party Committee used every possible means to summon the forty cadres from the nearby guerrilla areas to this meeting. The meeting place roared with condemnation against his treachery when Tan Yu-pao spoke of Chen Hung-shih. "This base on the Hunan-Kiangsi Border Region was set up by Comrade Mao Tse-tung himself. Chen Hung-shih has betrayed us, but he could not take the people's hearts with him. The Red flag now waving here will never be lowered!" Tan Yu-pao declared as he concluded.

"It will never be lowered!" we shouted in unison.

The reactionaries took Chen Hung-shih's surrender as an opportunity to carry on large-scale propaganda in the hope of lowering our fighting morale. At the same time they increased their activities in the mountains. We had to wipe out the bad effects of Chen Hung-shih's betrayal and to unite the masses around the Party for continuation of the struggle.

The meeting had decided to strengthen the leadership and set up a Provisional Provincial Party Committee with Tan Yu-pao as its secretary. The Hunan-Kiangsi Provincial Govern-

ment was dissolved and a Military Committee and a Guerrilla Command Post was set up with Tseng Kai-fu as commander, Tan Yu-pao as political commissar and myself as chief-of-staff. Our units were regrouped into three battalions. Later we collected more men and rifles in Yunghsin, Pinghsiang, Fenyi and other areas. These new assets combined with the rifles already in the care of the Lienhua County Party Committee boosted our strength up to six battalions. We prepared for guerrilla warfare and issued a declaration to the people telling them that the Provincial Party Committee and the guerrilla corps under its leadership would not leave this border region. We gained a clearer understanding of the new situation from the meeting, and our tactics in struggle were changed accordingly. The Provincial Party Committee and the Guerrilla Command Post with the Wukung Mountains as their centre led three detachments and operated in the sectors along Chaling and other counties. The people were mobilized and peasants' associations, Youth League branches, women's associations and other mass organizations were re-established secretly. The peasants dug up the spears and local-made rifles that they had buried, and initiated a struggle against the local reactionaries and feudal bullies.

The enemy was panic-stricken. They blockaded the mountain passes and highways, arrested and killed people on the least suspicion. They carried on a campaign of "encirclement and suppression", searched the mountains and burned down the trees and undergrowth. They aimed to break our contact with the masses, and starve us to death. They could never understand that we had an unbreakable tie with the masses. There were villagers who would rather give their lives than help the White army and there were others who braved death to bring us news and grain. One of them, a woman named Wang Kuei-lien, was caught by the enemy and asked to lead their search in



the hills. She knew quite well that we were on the eastern mountain, but she deliberately led the enemy up and down the other mountains on a wild goose chase. Neither their curses, insults and beatings could make her betray us. They then resorted to torture. They gouged her eyes out and killed her. There was quite a number of similarly heroic men and women who sacrificed their lives in the Hunan-Kiangsi Border Region rather than betray the Red Army.

## 3

During the winter our situation improved a little. The Provincial Party Committee often held meetings with the leaders of the Guerrilla Command Post. One day we were in Chairman Tan's hut discussing our work. Chairman Tan was listening to our opinions while he poked the fire. "The revolution," he said, "is just like this fire; it's rising higher and higher." Just as he spoke, laughter was heard outside the door. It was someone bringing Fa Ku into the room. On seeing me she seemed shy. She had been sitting outside, too embarrassed to come in because of my presence.

"Fa Ku," said Chairman Tan. "Come in and warm yourself."

I got a good impression of her the first time we met at the foot of the Kantzu Mountains. Later on our work brought us in constant contact with each other. Thus we began to know each other better and fell in love.

"Sit down and warm yourself!" said Chairman Tan as he brought out a seat for her. After talking to Fa Ku for a while, Chairman Tan said: "A happy event is going to take place in our guerrilla corps today," looking first at Fa Ku and then at me. The Provincial Party Committee had known of

our intention to marry for some time, but the enemy had not allowed us time for the ceremony. Before we discussed our work that day, the subject of our marriage aroused everybody's interest. Lo Wei-tao was exceptionally enthusiastic. He busied himself making arrangements for our wedding. I knew what Chairman Tan meant by "a happy event" and had been thinking along these lines but was too bashful to say anything. Perhaps Chairman Tan had read my mind. He said, "This will be the first wedding in the guerrilla corps in two years. This is another proof that the struggle has taken a change for the better." He drew in a mouthful of smoke. "The enemy says that we're at the end of our tether, that we're living in constant fear of coming danger, that we're demoralized. This proves that the enemy can never understand us. They don't realize that we Communists are capable of planning our future life. Even if times get worse, we shall never reach the end of our rope, we shall never be deprived of a normal life, because the Party and the people are with us."

Chairman Tan called a man to fill out the marriage certificates, handed one each to Fa Ku and me saying: "Everything has been carried out in proper order, and according to regulations in the old soviet area."

The comrades gave us their best wishes hoping we would become a model revolutionary couple and that we would strive and progress together in struggle.

Fa Ku and I were too moved to know what to say in reply to their congratulations.

Just when the wedding feast was in progress, a man dashed into the room. He paused a while before Fa Ku, then turned and walked over to Chairman Tan. They talked in low voices, but Chairman Tan's last sentence, "Can't you think of someone else to send?" was overheard by both Fa Ku and myself. "This is a mission for me," whispered Fa Ku. "I must leave

right away." And before I could say a word, she was standing before Chairman Tan saying, "It's best that I be sent!" Looking at me as if to ask my opinion, Chairman Tan said: "All right!" He turned to Fa Ku and continued: "Right! It's best that you should go."

I gave the cover that I had been using as a quilt to Fa Ku as a wedding present and advised her to take great care.

The snow was whirling and the northeast wind was whining as Fa Ku threw the cover around her and hurriedly set out. I stood on a mound and watched her form fade in the distance.

Fa Ku came from a poor family and had very little knowledge about revolution and things in general. Through Party education and practical struggle, she had already become a staunch Communist. I had implicit faith that she would carry out the delicate mission the Party had entrusted to her.

Fa Ku did not return that night. Two days, three days . . . passed and still she had not returned. We later on learned that because communications were cut off, she had been kept to work in another area.

Another severe winter passed. When spring came, the guerrilla fighters again became active. The Red 5th Regiment led by the Provincial Party Committee started new operations, based on Comrade Mao Tse-tung's guerrilla tactics — "Enemy advances, we retreat; enemy halts, we harass; enemy tires, we attack; enemy retreats, we pursue." The Provincial Party Committee decided that the time had come for the Red 5th Regiment to take every opportunity to deal blows upon the enemy.

The enemy took advantage of our lack of field-guns to build redoubts everywhere. They sent out troops to search the hills and to "mop up" by day. They withdrew to their redoubts at night. At first they put out sentinels but later on stopped posting them. The Provincial Party Committee seized this

opportunity and called on the army and the people to burn the redoubts.

We waited until dark, split up our forces and felt our way in the dark to the redoubts. Then we stuffed grass soaked in kerosene or resin in the openings of the redoubts and set fire to them. A few minutes later the opium-smoking, card-playing bandits were screaming for dear life. By this time we had withdrawn and were watching the blazing flames. As we listened to the enemy's frantic cries we rejoiced in our victory.

We dealt a big blow against the enemy. But they were quick to recover. The enemy in the Wukung Mountains area heightened their vigilance and used other tactics against us.

As the situation had now changed, we also changed our tactics.

One day, Liu Chuan, the Party branch secretary of the 3rd Battalion, sent a man to report: "If the Security Corps and the Kuomintang government officials in Chouhu Township are not swindling, arresting and killing people, they are somewhere playing cards and getting drunk. Sometimes they do not post sentries at night."

Chouhu is a big township in Anfu County, western Kiangsi Province. It was the centre for the Kuomintang county government and a company of Security Corps was garrisoned there. We immediately decided to select a hundred or so men from the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Battalions and dispatched them to Chouhu to wipe out the reactionaries and drive out the Kuomintang county government.

One foggy and cloudy day at dusk, when I could scarcely see my hand before me, Liu Pei-shan and I set out with a hundred or more shock troops calculating that the enemy would never expect us on a day like this. The rain began to pour after we had covered a distance of twenty *li*. With the



lightning as our guide we dashed along to Chouhu Township. We covered eighty *li* on a forced march in six hours.

Despite the rain and lightning, the troops carried out the operation according to plan. In the glare of the lightning, several dark shadows could be seen making their way up to the mud wall around the township. They disappeared over it, and a short time later the wooden gate opened. Then the rest of the troops stole quietly inside. After the advance guards had jumped over the wall, the sentry in the guard tower at the gate was caught napping and was captured.

After we entered the township, Liu Pei-shan, acting according to plan, led the men of the 2nd and 4th Battalions and surrounded the company of Security Corps in the blockhouse. I took the troops of the 3rd Battalion and charged the county government headquarters. Chouhu Township was soon seething. The sound of rifle shots and trumpets and men shouting and carrying torches announced our arrival to the people. The enemy in the blockhouse were so frightened that they hid, not daring to come out. The county government officials were so alarmed that they crawled under the bed for cover, and before they had time to realize what had happened they were all prisoners.

The county head and the head of the 1st Department were among the prisoners. They were men who could kill a peasant without blinking an eye. Groups of people came with torches to demand that these two be shot. We declared their crimes in response to the people's demand and then shot them. The rest were released after we had explained our policy to them.

We issued all the confiscated grain, clothing and furniture to the people. When we announced our decision to do this, all the people raised their torches high and shouted that the Red Army had helped them stamp out evil. Liu Pei-shan

stood a little away from the crowd and in a loud voice declared, "This base on the Hunan-Kiangsi border was set up by Chairman Mao himself. The Communist Party will not leave here and the Red Army will never abandon this region. . . ."

When the sun rose, we sent the people off home with their grain and other things. We then collected up all the captured machine-guns, rifles, pistols, clothing, documents and records of Anfu County and left Chouhu Township.

In this battle at Chouhu, unfortunately, I was wounded and had to be left on the mountain to recover. Chairman Tan with great consideration had Fa Ku transferred back to work and to care for me. The day she returned marked both the seventh month of our marriage and separation.

With mass support and under the Party's leadership, our troops smashed one enemy "encirclement and suppression" campaign after another and repulsed countless enemy attacks. By the winter of 1936, our guerrilla base had been expanded, and the number of our rifles and bullets had increased. The guerrilla detachments were also enlarged.

In autumn 1937, we again went to the Nine-Dragon Mountains for a rest and to consolidate our ranks. No one knew how long that would take, so we worked hard improving our living conditions. We built houses with pine bark roofs and made roads along the undulating mountain slope to link up the camps of the different squads. Vari-coloured wild flowers grew around the houses and along the road. We studied military science and politics, and engaged in other cultural activities.

One day, a man carrying a letter of introduction from the Special Party Committee arrived. The letter read: "The Party has specially sent Comrade Chen Yi to make contact with you."

Chen Yi talked to Liu Pei-shan and I about the internal and international situation, and explained in detail the Party's policy and the Ten-Point National Salvation Programme for Resistance to Japanese Aggression.<sup>1</sup> Deep in the night, he showed no signs of fatigue as he explained, "Now we need co-operation between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang to defeat the alien foe. We should concentrate all our efforts on defeating the Japanese invaders. We think that the guerrilla forces in the eight provinces in the south should go down from the hills. . . ."

We could see reason in what Chen Yi said, but when we recalled the fact that Chiang Kai-shek was devising every means to annihilate us, we felt that co-operation was impossible, especially as the Kuomintang troops were still garrisoned at the foot of the mountains. Descent of the mountain seemed a rash act. Chen Yi decided to consult with Tan Yu-pao and asked to be escorted to him.

At sunrise the next day, Comrade Chen Yi came to the drill ground, when he saw me he asked: "Do you always drill and go to classes?"

"We never let an opportunity to improve ourselves go by," I replied.

"You're right!" said Comrade Chen Yi, smiling satisfactorily. "In addition to fighting, collecting funds and doing propaganda

work among the masses, we must train our soldiers, teach them politics and give them an education."

We sent Huang Ping-yuan, Li Shen-chi and some other comrades, with a scout, to escort Chen Yi to Chairman Tan.

Several days later, a man arrived with a letter written by Chairman Tan himself, ordering us to prepare to go down the mountain.

In November 1937, we bid our fallen comrades farewell and left the deep forests of the Wukung Mountains, Nine-Dragon Mountains, Wuli Mountains, Niuhsin Mountains, Kantzu Mountains and the Myrtleberry Mountains which had been our homes while we were carrying on the struggle. We headed for the designated point of assembly—the Lungshang Township of Lienhua County, Kiangsi. It was only then that we learned that the great full-scale War of Resistance Against Japan had broken out. This was our new mission. Our troops from the guerrilla base on the Hunan-Kiangsi border, after persisting in the struggle against the Kuomintang, were then regrouped into the 2nd Regiment of 1st Detachment of the New Fourth Army. Soon afterwards we marched to the enemy's rear south of the Yangtse and undertook the glorious task of national salvation.

<sup>1</sup> Not long after the outbreak of the War of Resistance Against Japan, the Chinese Communist Party put forward a Ten-Point National Salvation Programme for thoroughly defeating the Japanese invaders. It is as follows: 1. Down with Japanese imperialism; 2. General military mobilization throughout the country; 3. General mobilization of the people of the whole country; 4. Reform the government structure; 5. Anti-Japanese foreign policy; 6. War-time financial and economic policy; 7. Improvement of the people's living conditions; 8. Anti-Japanese educational policy; 9. Elimination of collaborators, traitors and pro-Japanese elements in order to consolidate the rear; and 10. National solidarity for resisting Japan.



## FLAME ON HIGH MOUNTAINS

PENG SHOU-SHENG

## OFF FOR REST AND RECUPERATION

It was during the autumn of 1934 that I was wounded in battle. I was then detailed by the leadership to lead six other casualties to a remote hospital for treatment.

Our destination—the hospital—was unnamed and had no known address. The only information Political Instructor Lin could offer upon our departure was that it would probably be situated somewhere to the northwest of the Nine-Dragon Mountains, and that Instructor Kuo was in charge.

The Nine-Dragon Mountains, with which I am quite familiar, are the dividing barrier between the counties of Anfu and Pinghsiang. Precipitous and huge, they range for dozens of *li* and link up with the Wukung Mountains forming a solid chain. Huge trees and a tangled undergrowth blanket the slopes, and the narrow paths are uneven and circuitous. All combined to make travelling extremely hazardous. The journey over the mountains would tax the strength of a healthy person, not to mention a wounded one. None the less, we planned to make the trip that night and hoped to reach the top before dawn.

After sunset, we all fortified ourselves with a stick for support, and assisting each other, we set off at a moderate pace

in the direction of the Nine-Dragon Mountains. On our persons we each carried some food wrapped in a towel.

Before long the heavens darkened and a few stars appeared in the sky, glimmering like hovering fireflies.

"Come on, speed it up!" I repeatedly urged the others. But it was to no avail, for with the exception of Little Ho and myself, who were only slightly wounded, all the others were serious casualties. Under normal circumstances they should have been carried on stretchers. But we were without rear service units so stretcher-bearing was out of the question. I supported Little Chen as best I could, and Little Ho assisted another wounded soldier. Little Chen was wounded in the head and bleeding profusely. He staggered at every step. Stumbling along together, we frequently lost our balance and on a few occasions nearly took a disastrous tumble. We barely crept along. We moved like ants ascending a rocky incline. We climbed the most of the night, but still had not covered half the distance. Exhausted and hungry, we sat down in a small hollow and devoured our food.

"When shall we arrive?" Little Ho impatiently asked while he was eating.

"It's not far off now," I replied casually. But truthfully speaking, I myself did not know when we would find the place.

Hearing that the hospital was near, he began to conjure up a beautiful image of the soothing comfort near at hand. "Ah, when we find the hospital we'll get some sound sleep," replied Little Ho winking at me. "I only want to stay three days; just long enough to get this hand bandaged properly, and then . . . ." The image receded into the background as his thoughts shifted to a new subject.

After chatting for a while, everyone was in normal spirits, so, sticking close together, we bore off to the northwest and again attacked the formidable slopes.

We saw the stars vanish and the dawn of a new day approach. On and on we trudged. Then finally, when the sun had reached its zenith, we located the unnamed, remote hospital in the hills.

A young man in a frayed military uniform directed us to a rock cave. This was the hospital's ward. Stooping low, we entered; the inside was damp and gloomy. The wounded were lying on makeshift beds of tree branches. The young man gestured towards the empty beds at the head of the row on the right and bade us lie down.

None of us had ever been in a hospital before; some had never even seen one. So although this one was not as nice as anticipated, it was much better than sleeping under the open sky.

After making the sleeping arrangements, the young man accepted my letter of introduction and glancing at it asked me: "Are you the squad leader?"

"Yes, and you're. . . ."

"Kuo Meng," he replied smiling.

Realizing he must be the political instructor, I started to give him a formal account: "Altogether there are seven of us: two head casualties, two wounded in the feet, and. . . ."

"All right, sit down and rest. You've been walking all night and must be tired," he said interrupting me. So we sat on the bed and conversed for a while.

From his conversation we gathered that the conditions there were very poor. The enemy was all around; we were cut off from the masses; and the remaining food and medical supplies were insufficient. However, he had a ready answer for all problems. In short it could be summed up in one sentence—we must rely on our head and two good hands.

## BESET WITH DIFFICULTIES

We had been at the hospital for eight days. Life there was quite cheerful. Our daily two meals of gruel were monotonous but filling. A salt solution and pork grease were the only medications for our wounds. Although they pained when the dressing was applied, the wounds gradually healed. Seeing our wounds heal improved the spirits of everyone. Except for the breaks when we ate or had our wounds re-dressed, we spent all our time in the cave talking and laughing.

During those days we made friends with many of the other comrades. One of them was nicknamed Big Fellow. He had a serious wound and was compelled to lie motionless in bed all day long. He even had to be fed by others. But the pity of it all was that his gaping wound refused to heal. However, he was as cheerful as any. He had full confidence in his recovery, and was even making plans for the future. The wound troubled him, but he bore the pain without flinching. His greatest delight was to laugh and talk with others. He would tell us of his plans to get married and to bring up his sons as soldiers who would one day join the struggle against Chiang Kai-shek. He was also fond of smoking, and comrades were always willing to run outside where they could gather a few tree leaves and roll them into a cigarette. Whenever one of these lighted cigarettes was placed between his lips, he would chuckle and say: "Damned if it doesn't rival those from the city." Big Fellow's optimism spread to the rest of us and we spent most of the day composing songs and telling stories and jokes. None of us felt that life was harsh. On occasions, the cave would resound with laughter and one of the attendants would come in to see what the commotion was about.

Difficulties cropped up one day at sunset, when we were about to take our evening meal. Little Ho stood holding a



small bowl at the cave entrance—he wanted to get a bowl of the thickest gruel for Big Fellow. I was sitting on the bed holding a battered enamel bowl. A long time elapsed, but still the attendants did not appear with the food. Everybody was puzzled. Then suddenly, Little Ho shouted from the entrance: “Here it comes!” The food was coming all right, but now we were even more perplexed. Instead of the usual three, only one pan of gruel was being brought to us. One pan would not feed forty people.

The political instructor was also coming. Smiling as usual, he entered and addressing us said: “You must be tired of waiting!” No one replied, for we were all searching his face for a clue that would explain matters.

Walking to and fro he continued: “Yes, the sun has already set and it is long past mealtime. Comrades, I must be frank with you. The difficulties we had anticipated are now at our door. There are no more provisions. This is all we have left—one pan of thin gruel. Everyone eat a mouthful and tomorrow we’ll try to figure out some solution to the problem.” As he finished speaking, he took the steaming pan of thin gruel from the attendant. For some reason, it seemed to have a specially appetizing aroma. Silence descended on the room; with a decisive movement some of the comrades put their bowls aside.

“Instructor Kuo, we can’t eat this pan of gruel!” I looked in the direction of the speaker and saw Platoon Leader Fang stride forward. He continued: “I suggest we give the gruel to Big Fellow and the other three seriously wounded men.”

“Right you are!” chorused everybody.

“No!” came a dissenting reply from Big Fellow as he struggled to sit up. Steadying his bloodshot eyes on the political instructor he continued: “We all must eat some of the gruel. If we live, we live together; if we die, we die together!”

The political instructor hastened to his side and supported his sagging body. After a silent interval, Instructor Kuo turned to us and said: “You comrades are right! This food should be given to the more seriously wounded men. We’ll think of some way. . . . I’m sure something can be found to eat.” With these words, the men standing around him put aside their bowls and dispersed to their beds. The steaming pan of gruel was left deserted on a stone support in the centre of the cave.

“Come, comrades, let’s sing and liven the place up a bit!” I shouted as I rose and dashed to the centre of the cave. The spirited sound of singing resounded throughout the cave:

*The Red Army Fighters, heroes true and right;  
On mountains or in forest, they camp through  
the night. . . .*

Sometimes soft, sometimes loud, the singing continued on and on. Even Big Fellow, lying on his bed, joined in with an effort.

Bedtime came and we all went to bed; but who could sleep! I could hear Little Ho tossing and turning next to me. He was only a 14-year-old kid. He should be home under the protection of his family. But here he was, sharing a harsh life with us. A wave of pity welled up within me, and leaning nearer I inquired:

“Little Ho, are you asleep?”

“Not yet, Squad Leader,” he answered in a hoarse voice.

“You’re crying, aren’t you?”

“No!”

“You hungry?”

“No!”

“Brave lad!” I could not resist praising him. I was impressed by the wilful lad; I was also contented by his presence.

## A COW-HIDE

Our grain was exhausted, but we still managed to find an edible plant—bitter greens.

True to their name, they remained bitter even after being boiled several times. We were forced to cook them without grease or salt (salt was an indispensable medicine and our reserves were already low). One's stomach digested them reluctantly; the more we ate the more pallid our skin grew. However, the source of our temporary sustenance was not inexhaustible. At first bitter greens could be found growing all around the vicinity of the cave. Later on, we did well to find them after searching for many *li*.

The situation became critical. We could not just sit there and starve, so the Party branch resolved to send Quartermaster Li and one attendant to the foot of the mountains in search of grain. This was a dangerous assignment, but it was necessary.

No one slept that night. We were deeply concerned about the two comrades. We also hoped they would manage to bring something back.

At dawn the next morning, Little Ma, Little Ho and myself arose at the same time. We instinctively crowded through the entrance and went outside where we stood scanning the distant approaches to the cave. Hour after hour slipped by, but there was still no sign of them. None the less, we continued our vigilant watch.

After a long time, Platoon Leader Fang suddenly shouted: "Instructor Kuo, look!" Looking in the direction he was pointing, we could see black dots moving over the fields in the distance. They were returning.

Little Ho, discovering that the quartermaster was carrying something, inquired of the political instructor: "What are they bringing with them?" It was some time, however, before we

could clearly make out what the object was they were carrying. It turned out to be the hide of a cow.

On nearing the cave, the quartermaster, seeing us waiting there, hastened towards the entrance excitedly shouting: "Instructor, we picked up a cow-hide in one of the ravines; it's edible!" He was breathing heavily and his face was the colour of wax. Running the last few yards, he stumbled, fell, and lost consciousness. Instructor Kuo quickly propped him into a sitting position. Leaning against the instructor in a state of semi-consciousness, he opened his eyes and uttered: "My head is spinning, please . . . let me lie down." The journey had completely worn him out.

Little Ma assisted Quartermaster Li into the cave. The rest of us set to work on the cow-hide. It had already begun to smell a little; we assumed it had been thrown away by the White army.

The thirty of us spent most of the day stripping the hair from the hide. When finished, we cut it up into small pieces and put them all into a large pan. We put it to boil, and it was well after sundown before it was cooked through. Everyone was given a bowlful. The remainder was put aside to be eaten later. The effects of the meal were apparent the next day. None of us had eaten any greasy food for a month or more, then, at one meal we had overindulged ourselves. Some had bloated stomachs for three days, some were even afflicted with loose-bowels. However, no one condemned the cow-hide as the cause of their distress. On the contrary, we were all eagerly hoping that another one would be found.

## BIG FELLOW DIES

During the following days it seemed as if Heaven itself had censured our existence. A heavy snowstorm added to our



problems. We frequently sent parties of men down the mountain in search of grain, but each time they returned empty-handed. When the pangs of hunger became unbearable, the best we could do was drink cold water and then sing or tell a story or joke. To go without food for one or two meals is not so bad, but you cannot expect wounds to heal if the proper treatment is not forthcoming. We were in very serious trouble by this time. The salt water solution was exhausted. As a result everyone's wounds festered and became worse. Big Fellow's condition became critical. During the day he would not utter a sound, but as soon as he thought we were asleep, he would groan very lightly. The attendants used the last of the pork grease on his open wound, but it did little good. In our hearts we grieved for him.

"Old Peng, please roll me a cigarette," he asked just as I was crawling into bed one night. I quickly rolled one, lit it and handed it to him. It was only then that I discovered he was trembling very badly.

"What's wrong? You seem. . . ."

"It's nothing," he broke in. "I'm just cold and I don't have any strength in my hands." His voice was so faint that it was barely audible. Throughout that night I was restless with anxiety for him.

Dawn came at last, filtering through the flakes of snow still falling outside. Little Ho usually joked with Big Fellow the first thing every morning, and today was no exception. He climbed out of bed and shouted over his shoulder: "Come on Big Fellow, time to wake up!" Instead of a cheery reply, his greeting met with a stony silence.

"All right then, I'll pull the covers off you!" said Little Ho as he lifted the edge of the quilt. "Oh, Squad Leader!" he called in a horror-stricken voice. I dashed across to the bed-

side and reached down for Big Fellow's wrist. His body was already cold and stiff. A flood of hot tears welled into my eyes and streamed down my face. The others silently gathered around with bowed heads. His death was a very sad shock to our little group. The political instructor rushed over as soon as he heard of the tragedy. Although a calm and strong-willed person, he was terribly upset over the death of Big Fellow.

The comrades silently wrapped the body in a bed sheet and four of them carried it outside. The wind was gusty and the snow lashed against our faces and hands. It was intensely cold, but we were oblivious to it. The burning sorrow pent up in our hearts numbed our senses. Fighting the wind and snow, the four men carrying Big Fellow's body took the lead. Using sticks for support and assisting each other, all the wounded comrades formed up in the rear and escorted the body of our comrade-in-arms to its grave.

After laying to rest the body of Big Fellow, the political instructor fashioned a board and on its surface he carved the words: "A glorious comrade-in-arms". He placed it at the head of the grave, then turning around he spoke to us: "Comrades, we're going to live on; we're going to tell our offspring how Big Fellow died! We're going to ensure that the flames of revolution continue to blaze, that they spread until everywhere becomes a blazing sea of flames!" The political instructor's words thundered through the morning air. We stood there in silence, gazing at the snow-covered land around us.

## BACK INTO BATTLE

A few days after Big Fellow's death, we moved a few dozen *li* away to the Wukung Mountains. At this place we could

exist for a while on wild greens, tree bark and bamboo shoots. Our wounds had also begun to heal.

One fine morning in early spring, the political instructor called a general meeting. We sat facing the sun on the edge of a small grove of trees. Opening the meeting he asked: "How do you all feel now, comrades?" But before anyone could reply, he continued: "There's no denying it, we're living a hard life. But just why are we able to persist?" Jumping to his feet, Little Ho answered: "Because we are the Red Army!" "That's right, we are the Red Army!" echoed the instructor raising a clenched fist. He then informed us of the Party branch's new resolution. Explaining it, he continued: "Everyone's wounds have begun to heal up. Therefore, since we still possess half a dozen rifles, we have decided to leave the mountains and organize an armed force. We will establish a new base and operate against the enemy. This bold step will also solve our problem of supplies."

"Right! We will go down." The valley resounded with the unanimous chord of assent.

Before long we had organized our striking force. The instructor decided to leave the more seriously wounded men at the hospital to rest in order to allow the unit more freedom of movement.

At our departure, we were all concerned over the problems of insufficient food, shelter and medical supplies still confronting the comrades remaining behind. However, they were confident, and in saying farewell they all repeated: "We will wait for your return." The political instructor left the last of our leather belts with them, saying: "We're leaving these belts with you. Use them as food when nothing else can be found. And remember, you must wait for our return."

Under the leadership of the political instructor, more than thirty of us descended the mountains into the lowlands. Rely-

ing on our determined will to struggle, we scored victory after victory and soon had a firm foothold in a new area. Later, when conditions permitted, we brought the other comrades down from the mountains and placed them in the homes of some of the local peasants where they were given good care.

Thus, through these gallant struggles we managed to forge into being an armed company from the stricken casualties of a remote field hospital. During the following months of struggle we expanded our unit and enlarged our area. After steadfastly carrying on protracted guerrilla operations for three years in the south, we became a unit of the New Fourth Army.



## TRUE FRIENDSHIP

TAN CHI-LUNG

## 1

Herewith I record an unforgettable episode in my life.

The event happened at the time of the Lukouchiao Incident,<sup>1</sup> when the Japanese were attacking northern China in 1937. The Kuomintang and the Communist Party were co-operating in fighting the Japanese invaders, but the Kuomintang reactionaries were "encircling and suppressing" our guerilla forces in the south at the same time as they were negotiating with the Party.

One day a bullet pierced my foot as we were breaking out of the Hunan-Hupeh-Kiangsi Military Zone Headquarters when it was encircled by the enemy. When the bodyguard saw that I was hurt, he immediately tore a strip from his shirt and bandaged it up. Then he put my arm over his shoulder and helped me along. We had only gone a few steps when I fainted and sank to the ground, and blood was gushing from the wound. An artery in my foot had been severed.

As I recovered consciousness I heard a familiar voice saying, "What's the matter, Comrade Chi-lung?" When I opened my eyes I saw that it was the political commissar of the military zone, Fu Chiu-tao.

<sup>1</sup> See note on page 33.

"A bullet's grazed my foot," I said offhandedly.

The bodyguard corrected in a loud voice, "An artery in his foot has been severed."

The enemy was drawing near. What was the best thing to do in this emergency? Fu Chiu-tao seemed to be in a dilemma.

"Comrade Chiu-tao, you go first," I said. "You have to command the troops; I'll soon catch up." When I said this I knew in my heart that it would be very difficult for me to catch up with the troops. Chiu-tao hesitated a moment before he said, "Chi-lung, you hide here for the time being." He left a medical orderly, a bodyguard, and Lao Ko, a carrier, to take care of me. On parting, he grasped my hand and said: "Comrade Chi-lung, you'll make out all right, won't you? We'll be back for you as soon as the battle is over." I replied, "If I'm still alive I'll certainly be right here."

The troops were already far away when we four started to climb the mountain. I could not walk a step and Lao Ko and the others tried carrying me on their backs in turn, but that was no good. Blood streamed from the wound as my foot dangled. Then, acting on the medical orderly's suggestion, they used a strip of cloth as tourniquet to stop the bleeding and Lao Ko carried me in his arms with my foot raised. The bleeding was then negligible even after travelling quite a distance. Lao Ko was out of breath and almost exhausted from the exertion. I had worked with him for a long time and knew his temperament well. No matter how tired he was he never complained.

Feeling ill at ease after he had carried me some distance, I demanded, "Lao Ko, put me down!" He paid no heed to my demand, just continued on and on, his face expressionless. The bodyguard and the medical orderly both wanted to relieve

him but, gasping for breath and great beads of perspiration on his forehead, he refused all offers of help. After passing another hill I again asked to be put down, but Lao Ko only answered softly: "I can't do that; I have a responsibility towards you."

The sun set and night spread her garment over the mountain. We could not stop, the enemy was diligently searching for us. I could not see Lao Ko's face but I could hear his rapid breathing.

After a few more hours of rough going we reached our destination and I was put into a cave. I had been losing blood all the way and again lost consciousness. Someone seemed to be calling me from a distance and in a hushed voice. My face was icy and my foot felt as though it would burst. I tried to force my eyes open but could not. My head was spinning and I again fell into a dead faint. . . .

When I revived I could see an opalescent patch of sky. We had safely passed the night. I looked around and saw that all three of the comrades were there. I felt happy, but when I examined myself I got a shock. My injured foot was in a sling suspended from a tree. It had swollen to grotesque size and was tightly bandaged.

"Commander, does it hurt much?" asked Lao Ko, running over to me when he heard me move. His face was drawn and tear-stained. I noticed that the two "little devils"<sup>1</sup> also had traces of tears on their faces. I realized that my comrades had been worried about my condition.

I raised myself and with deep feeling said, "How tired you all must be!" When Lao Ko saw me trying to raise myself

<sup>1</sup> "Little devils" was the term endearingly given to young soldiers in the Red Army.

he firmly but gently pressed me back saying, "Lie down! Lie down!" as he placed a cup of water in my hands.

"Is there water here?" I asked in great surprise.

"Oh, we've been exploring," Lao Ko replied, with a trace of a smile. I asked the "little devils" what had actually happened, and after being urged a little, they told me the story in simple terms.

My collapse the previous night had given them a fright. They had carefully lowered me and placed a cold towel on my forehead. Just at that moment they heard some of the enemy groping their way up the mountain. The medical orderly had seen a flicker of light in the rear, then noise was heard and we knew the enemy was approaching. What was to be done? It was impossible to run. Lao Ko was proved to be very resourceful. He asked the two "little devils" to carry me out of the large cave, to hide in a more concealed but smaller one, where I lay motionless. The enemy looked into the large cave and withdrew.

I was still unconscious, and as soon as the enemy had gone my comrades shook me. They decided that the place was too dangerous and that they would again move me. Lao Ko carried me in his arms. We followed a winding mountain path to a rocky slope covered with trees. We were surprised to discover the enemy had once more drawn near us. It was again Lao Ko who issued instructions. He told the "little devils" not to move but stay with me. He went among the trees, purposely stamping his feet and swinging the branches as he proceeded. The enemy heard the noise, took aim and fired as they gave chase. Fortunately they missed, and Lao Ko returned to us.

"He hasn't been back very long!" the bodyguard said, looking at Lao Ko who seemed awkward and stood motionless.



I knew that Lao Ko was embarrassed by praise, but all the same I said to him, "I should thank you especially, Lao Ko."

## 2

At dawn, when I was just considering what our next move was to be, Lao Ko suggested that we find a place to hide where the trees grew close together. "Then," said he, "even if the enemy comes, we'll be in a more favourable position." After thinking it over I accepted his advice.

We found a safer hiding place and shared out the provisions. Suddenly one of the "little devils" whispered: "Listen! A rustle; it's footsteps!" I listened, and sure enough, there was someone there. We crouched close to the ground, each comrade with his gun at the ready.

A number of enemy troops were coming down the mountain. They were led by a fellow with his cap on the side of his head. He was probably a squad leader, for behind him straggled ten others.

"If *we* only had a squad. . . ." I thought.

The enemy seemed to be blind. We were right there concealed in the grass before their very eyes but they did not see us.

The enemy leader issued an order. "Go in again. Comb the hills. They can't have left the mountain, with our troops stationed all around it." So his men filed off, staggering along the stony path as if they were drunk.

It seemed like a game of hide-and-seek, the enemy searching for us and a number of times almost discovering us. The situation was, however, critical, for the enemy had men picketed around the mountain and we had no way out of the encirclement. We had no alternative but to hide in a cave.

We found a crevice between two cliffs that could accommodate several people. A rocky protuberance at the right of one cliff provided a hiding place for us, and there we stayed.

The enemy systematically searched for us and several times we heard footsteps overhead. We spent a day and night there, and in that time had only one meal.

That night there was a flash of lightning followed by a cloudburst, which soaked us through. Suddenly I heard the bodyguard call. When I replied, he said:

"Commander, we can't stay here like this. Who knows when our troops will come." In the dim light I vaguely saw him lower his head.

"What? You're losing heart?" I asked.

"No!" he firmly replied, jumping up. After a while he said, "I suggest that we send someone to contact our troops and get some rice. Otherwise, if our unit should send someone to look for us they'd have no way of knowing that we're here."

That was an idea. The exploit would be very dangerous. Who should we allow to carry it out? Before I could speak each one of them volunteered to go down the mountain. I hesitated. Only the pounding of the raindrops on the rocks could be heard.

After a momentary pause, the bodyguard said, "Let me go. Lao Ko can't go; he has to take care of you. I still have six silver dollars in my pocket. If I don't find our troops I can buy some rice to bring back." Seeing that I was still unconvinced, he added: "Let me go while it's still dark and raining."

I finally agreed to his request. As he was leaving he put out a moist hand and resolutely said, "Commander, don't worry, I shall certainly come back!" I firmly grasped his hand and said, "Take every precaution. Go! Mark this place. We'll wait here for you!"

We sat up all that night in the drenching rain, waiting for the "little devil" to return. At daybreak the rain stopped but water kept dripping down from the roof of the cave. The more I listened to it the more agitated I became. The sun peeped out and we calculated that it was time for the "little devil" to be back. There was no sign of him and our anxiety increased.

"You don't suppose anything's happened to him," Lao Ko whispered into my ear.

"Impossible!" I said, knowing full well the danger, but trusting that nothing had happened to him. "I know he will return."

"Of course he will. But now . . ." Lao Ko said as if talking to himself.

"Now? Meanwhile where is he?" I could not help asking. I began to conjure up all kinds of possibilities. I knew that our "little devil" was brave and clever and not one to yield to difficulties. Still he was young and had never had to solve problems alone. Suppose. . . .

We moved to a more secluded cave nearby, where we passed another day and a night in eager expectation, pricking up our ears at the slightest sound in the hope that it was the "little devil" returning.

Another day dawned. This was our fourth day on the mountain. The "little devil" had been away thirty hours. The last of our precious little store of provisions had gone. Lao Ko felt cramped in the cave and went out to stretch his limbs. We were all mystified because we had heard no signs of the enemy since noon of the previous day.

"I'll go down the mountain and have a look!" said the medical orderly, anxious to probe into the mystery. My head was full of speculations, and my foot was giving me great pain.

"Listen!" Lao Ko suddenly warned, as he withdrew into the cave. There was a sound of footsteps, and we listened breathlessly. Someone was calling.

"Lao Ko! Lao Ko!" It was the voice of the "little devil"!

Lao Ko was annoyed. "The enemy is on the mountain; how dare he shout so loud!"

There was our "little devil", with a bag of rice slung over his shoulder, a hen under his arm and a small bag hanging from his right hand. He ran to our first hiding place shouting at the top of his voice. Then, unable to find us, he put down the bag of rice, grasped the hen and searched the cave. His shouts became louder and finally he burst into tears.

"Go and get him, Lao Ko!" I said anxiously. Lao Ko crept up to the little bodyguard, who was then sitting on the bag of rice smoothing the feathers of the hen and weeping.

"Little devil!" Lao Ko whispered.

"Ah, Lao Ko!" the bodyguard said, wiping away his tears with the back of his hand. "How about the commander. Where is he?" Not waiting for a reply he pulled at Lao Ko. Lao Ko picked up the bag and brought the "little devil" over to me. Our lovable "little devil" had come back at last. How happy we were!

Later I learned that, unable to find our troops the day he went down the mountain, he decided to buy some rice. Then he overheard some people say that the Kuomintang and Communist Party were going to co-operate. But he did not believe that such a thing was possible. That night he found the comrades working underground and learned that it was indeed true. He was very happy and ran back to the mountains as fast as he could.

As long as I live I will never forget Lao Ko and the two other comrades. Now, after many years, I am still inspired by their lofty revolutionary friendship.



## UNDER THE ENEMY'S NOSE

HUANG CHIN-SZE

1

After the 25th Army of the Red Army had entered Shensi towards the west, the revolutionary struggle in Hupeh-Honan-Anhwei Soviet Area gradually dropped to a low ebb. Most of the local soviets were dissolved, and only four small base areas were left at Chihcheng, Chihnan, Liuan and the mountain regions in northeastern Hupeh. Their total population dropped to less than three thousand, including government cadres and armed forces. The soviet areas, repeatedly sacked by the enemy in a blood-bath, were a scene of utter desolation. The enemy had chopped down all the trees on the mountainsides in order to prevent the guerrillas finding cover. In some parts they had left the land so bare that even the birds had to go elsewhere to build their nests.

Chiang Kai-shek sent 150,000 men to "mop up" the revolutionary armed forces remaining in the four base areas. His army consisted of the 13th Division of the Central Army, two divisions of the 11th Route Army, the 32nd Division of the 25th Route Army, five divisions of Chang Hsueh-liang's troops and nineteen local Security Corps.

Faced with tremendous odds, we had to fight at the rear of the enemy lines. We set up guerrilla bases behind their rear in order to carry on the struggle in Hupeh, Honan and Anhwei.

Hsu Kuo-shun and I were instructed by the leadership in November 1934 to form a plain-clothed detachment of a dozen Red Army men to operate in the vicinity of the Linshan Mountains in the White area east of the Peiping-Hankow Railway. Our task was to establish ourselves in this mountain area and then secretly mobilize the local inhabitants against the enemy and by this means to find new recruits for the Red Army. The plain-clothed unit had also to care for and protect the wounded, furnish the Red Army with supplies and information and also set up local soviets.

When we first arrived in the mountain area we hid during the daytime and we quietly emerged from the mountains and called on the poorest families in the nearby villages during the night. We told them about the crimes committed by the Kuo-mintang reactionaries against the people and explained the policy of the Red Army.

An old man by the name of Huang lived in Huangchiachung Village at the foot of the Linshan Mountains. When we first met him, he was so scared and nervous that he refused to have anything to do with us. His apprehensions were allayed when we explained things in a friendly manner and showed him that we were well disciplined. The whole family was quite at ease when we called at his home for the third time. Mao-tou, Huang's third son, was about fifteen years old. He asked our Little Ko and Wu Chan-hsing to sing. The Red Army often used songs as a means of propaganda, and Little Ko and Wu sang *The Peasant's Misery* for him. It was then a popular tune in the soviet areas:

*The poor man's life is truly hard,  
He hasn't any cloth to patch his garb;  
Groaning in hunger and shivering with cold,  
He's ghastly and pale like a skinny old ghost.*

Mao-tou and his parents were delighted. The old man and his wife asked us to sing again. This time, Little Ko sang a song by himself.

*Old Mama is very sick,  
Moaning unceasingly in her bed;  
I've no money to call a doctor,  
All I can do is to boil an egg.  
An egg is better than ginseng. . . .*

Before Little Ko had ended his song, Grannie Huang drew a deep sigh and interjected, "When my mother was sick, I didn't even have an egg for her!"

After that they wanted Little Ko to sing for them every time we went to their home. The songs brought us closer to each other, and before long, we were like one family.

Shortly before the lunar New Year, Grannie Huang asked us to spend the New Year's eve with her family. We did not want to put an extra burden on her so we stayed in the mountains that night. There was a snowstorm and a biting wind swept across the forest. Firecrackers were exploding in the villages at the foot of the mountain and 13-year-old Ko could no longer resist the temptation to join in the celebration.

He asked, "Instructor, why can't we go to Grannie Huang's tonight? She invited us, didn't she?" Before I was able to reply, Hsu Lu-chun said, "The village folks are enjoying the New Year eve with their families. We'd better stay out." I added, "That's right. After all, it isn't easy for them to get something extra for themselves at the New Year. We shouldn't let them give it to us." Little Ko was convinced. Curling up by the side of a rock, sheltered from the wind and snow, he hummed his favourite songs of the soviet area.

The night following New Year's day, assuming that the New Year celebrations were over, we descended the mountains. When we passed Grannie Huang's door, she saw us and insisted that we go in. Then she scolded us for not coming on New Year's eve.

We stayed with the Huangs until midnight. "Comrade Huang," the old man said, "you've been talking about punishing the rich to help the poor. When are you going to do it?"

Grandpa Huang's question made me ponder. "He's right," I thought. "The people are not satisfied. It will be quite impossible to mobilize them for further actions if we merely talk about the merits of the soviet system."

When I returned to the mountains that night, Hsu Kuo-shun told me that he had been asked similar questions by the villagers. We discussed the matter and decided to act without delay. We would strike at a number of local bullies, seize their grain and share it among the people.

Following out this plan, our detachment a few nights later set out for the house of a notorious local bully. Grandpa Huang and several dozens of poor peasants followed behind us, each one bearing a pair of baskets and a carrying-pole. When we were about two *li* from the house, we told the villagers to remain behind at the foot of a mountain, so that the local militia would not see them. Our detachment went on alone.

We evaded the militia and burst into the courtyard of the landlord's house. His whole family, men and women, young and old, were cornered in a small room. Hsu Lu-chun guarded the door with his gun, I flashed my torchlight on the group and declared, "We are from the Red Army. We are going to collect grain from you, but will not harm you."



The landlord dropped to his knees. Hsu Kuo-shun found the granary, filled up the baskets, and quickly carried them away.

The dogs began to bark as he left the courtyard. Our men then walked down the streets, calling out, "Don't be afraid, fellow villagers. We are from the Red Army and have come to punish the rich and help the poor!" The local militiamen, scared by the might and prestige of the Red Army and completely ignorant of the size of our forces, dared not fire a shot.

We left the village, loaded with grain. The villagers came to meet us. On our way home, we shared the grain among them.

We tackled several other local bullies during the following days. The masses rallied even closer around us after they had seen how the Red Army served the poor people. One old man said, "The Red Army and the people are together like fish and water. When there is water, the fish will live. The Red Army will surely triumph in the end." When we visited the villagers, they would send out their own sentries to watch for the enemy in the direction of Tuchi and Liulin. Any movements of the Kuomintang forces and the local militia were immediately brought to our attention.

More and more people came over to our side as time went on. Many underground peasant units were established, and Grandpa Huang was elected the leader of one of the units.

The units became very active. They collected information about the enemy, gave asylum to wounded Red Army men, sent their young men to join our army and secretly extended

the influence of the soviet among their friends and relatives. Consequently, our position was very much strengthened.

When Battalion Commander Yu of the 28th Army of the Red Army was wounded and unable to move on with the rest of his troops, we had to find accommodation for him until he was well again. We carried him on a stretcher to the house of Old Chang, a member of the peasant unit. His house was within five *li* of the enemy's militia guards at Liulin, but Old Chang had no hesitation in accepting him and in a confident voice said, "I'll hide him in the hay shed behind the mountain. I'm sure nothing will happen to him." Commander Yu stayed in the shed for two months. His wound healed and he was able to return to his battalion. The militia guards were completely unaware of this happening. The 28th Army sent more wounded men to us and with the help of the peasant units, every one of them recovered.

One day, the Party's Special Committee of the Loshan-Huangpo-Hsiaokan District requested us to purchase some medicines. Under the enemy's tight blockade, medicines were hard to secure even at extraordinarily high prices. I talked over the situation with Hsu Kuo-shun and we came to the conclusion that the only place where they could be obtained was in the town of Mount Chikungshan in the south.

Mount Chikungshan was situated between Hupeh and Honan Provinces. It was famed for the surrounding scenery. The town had broad streets and brightly painted houses. It was a flourishing mountain resort with many foreign residents and a garrison of selected Kuomintang troops. It would be very difficult for our detachment to get into the town. We discussed the matter with Chou, the leader of a peasant unit. He shook his head and said, "We'll be in trouble if the enemy should notice how much money we spend. Besides, how are we going to get the purchases down here?"

"What type of people go there?" I asked.

"Rich fellows who wear a hat and carry a cane," he replied.

"All right. We'll get a hat, a cane, a pair of spectacles and a silk suit and make you look like a wealthy merchant. If the enemy questions you, just say that you have come from Hsinyang on business. How will that do?"

"Not a bad idea, only I may not really look like a merchant."

The next day, Chou put on his disguise, and, cane in hand, set out for the mountain resort.

We were worried, fearing that he might make a slip. He returned by dusk, however, with a large package of medicines. I was elated. Grabbing his hand, I asked, "Chou, are you sure you bought the right stuff?"

Smilingly he replied, "Funny names such as 'Ar-s-pee-rin' and others. Never heard of them before. The man in the drug store asked me what I wanted. I said, 'It is all on the list.' I don't know whether I've bought the right stuff."

We all roared with laughter.

A few days later, a message came from Hu, leader of the peasant unit operating in the neighbourhood of the city of Liulin. The message said that the enemy battalion which was garrisoned at Huangchiawan railway station had been transferred to Hsinyang. The militia at Liulin were being shifted to the railway station at Huangchiawan to guard it until the arrival of new garrison troops next day. We decided to seize this opportunity to deal a head-on blow to the enemy and burn down the pillboxes at Liulin which were for the moment empty.

After sunset, we left the mountains in order to contact a dozen or so peasant units. About fifty peasants wanted to participate in the action. We got them organized and, leaving at midnight, we soon reached the neighbourhood of Liulin.

Not a light was to be seen in the dozens of pillboxes around the town. Normally they were lit up throughout the night. Several members of our detachment went close to the railway station to keep watch over the militia there. The peasant units placed bundles of firewoods over the pillboxes and set fire to them one after another. In a few minutes, columns of fire and smoke enveloped the town. The militiamen were tied down in the pillboxes at the railway station. Although they were less than two *li* from us, they dared not leave their hide-outs and had to content themselves with firing blind shots in our direction. After burning down all the pillboxes at Liulin, we closed in on the railway station and broke into one of the pillboxes. There, we captured a number of rifles, a mimeograph and a telephone set. We left a large number of pamphlets behind us and quietly withdrew.

At the break of day, rumours spread among the inhabitants in Liulin — "Four or five hundred Red Army men broke into Liulin and Huangchiawan railway station last night!"

The people had more confidence in our plain-clothed detachment after this operation. Many of them brought their sons, asking us to let them join the Red Army. Grandpa Huang's Mao-tou also volunteered to join the army. We sent the volunteers in batches to the Independent Regiment and to the hospital under the Party's Special Committee of the Loshan-Huangpo-Hsiaokan District.

We were elated when Chou and Hu, two peasant unit leaders, asked our permission to organize small plain-clothed detachments. Commander Ting, who had taken the place of Hsu Kuo-shun transferred elsewhere, replied cheerfully, "Go right ahead, but keep your activities well under cover. Otherwise, our work will be disrupted by the enemy." Thus, with our assistance, two armed detachments of the people were



"What type of people go there?" I asked.

"Rich fellows who wear a hat and carry a cane," he replied.

"All right. We'll get a hat, a cane, a pair of spectacles and a silk suit and make you look like a wealthy merchant. If the enemy questions you, just say that you have come from Hsinyang on business. How will that do?"

"Not a bad idea, only I may not really look like a merchant."

The next day, Chou put on his disguise, and, cane in hand, set out for the mountain resort.

We were worried, fearing that he might make a slip. He returned by dusk, however, with a large package of medicines. I was elated. Grabbing his hand, I asked, "Chou, are you sure you bought the right stuff?"

Smilingly he replied, "Funny names such as 'Ar-s-pee-rin' and others. Never heard of them before. The man in the drug store asked me what I wanted. I said, 'It is all on the list.' I don't know whether I've bought the right stuff."

We all roared with laughter.

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added to our strength on the northern and southern sides of the Linshan Mountains.

The mounting Red influence among the local people greatly upset Chou Kan-kuei, the chief of a joint-*pao*.<sup>1</sup> He made repeated requests to the Kuomintang for help, and finally enemy troops were sent to garrison his old retreat at Choukuangkeng. Chou cleaned up a large temple on a nearby mountain in preparation for the billeting of the garrison troops. We burned the temple to the ground before they arrived. Under the joint assault of our forces and the people, Chou sought refuge near the Huangchiawan railway station. He dared not levy any more taxes, neither had he the audacity to return to his old retreat. Seeing that even Chou Kan-kuei couldn't do anything against us, the landlords with lesser holdings and the rest of the *pao* and *chia* chiefs, whom we had deliberately refrained from physically injuring, adopted a neutral attitude.

Consequently, the Linshan region was actually under our control, although it was nominally administered by the *pao* *chia* chiefs. Our armed men could safely travel between the small villages in broad daylight, or stay overnight in the villages if we happened to be held up by rain.

In the spring of the following year, a whole platoon from the New 5th Division of the Northeast Army stationed at Huangchiawan came over to our side. The platoon leader and his men influenced by our propaganda went to a large temple in the Linshan Mountains. The leader showed the monks one of our pamphlets and told them that they had decided to turn their back on the Kuomintang and come to join the Red Army. The monks at once passed the message on to us. With the aid of our special service corps, we took in the whole platoon. Handing me a pamphlet, the platoon leader asked:

<sup>1</sup> See note on page 10.

"Sir, is this your pamphlet?"

I looked at the discoloured paper. It stated: "Brothers of the White armies. Come over to us with your guns. Those who wish to join the Red Army are welcome. Those who do not wish to join may go home to their fathers, mothers, wives and children. . . ." It was one of the pamphlets we had left with the Kuomintang troops. The platoon leader then declared:

"We can't stand our bullying superiors any longer. We heard from the people that there were four or five hundred of you attacking Liulin that night. We also saw your pamphlets. So we decided to quit the Kuomintang for ever."

I was very much amused. Our men were far more than four or five hundred, but they were not troops, only peasant secret units.

## 3

In autumn 1936, the Party's Special Committee of the Loshan-Huangpo-Hsiaokan District instructed our detachment to operate in the Hsuehichung mountain areas west of the Peiping-Hankow Railway. During our first few months there, we followed the usual strategy of carrying on propaganda work through the mobilization of the local people, suppression of the local bullies and the division of their grain among the peasants. In order to prevent the landlords from taking their revenge on the peasants, we confiscated the grain in one village and shared it among the peasants of another. But as the peasants had to travel some distance, they were hesitant to come for the grain, for fear that they might encounter the enemy. We devised a new plan and went to consult Old Shih at Shihpitzekou.

Old Shih was a tenant farmer and lived in the mountains. His landlord, Yang, lived on the plain. Every year Shih had



to pay him a rent of three *tan*.<sup>1</sup> I said to him, "Grandpa Shih, here is a note which certifies that we, the Red Army, have taken three *tan* of grain from you and that your master must therefore not collect another three *tan* of grain from you. Dare you take this note to Yang?"

The old man looked at the note hesitantly. After a long time, he said, "I'll go and try."

I carefully explained how he should act. He then took the note to Yang. The landlord was very angry and bellowed, "So you people have contacted the Communists in the mountains!" Old Shih looked helpless, sighed and then replied, "What can we poor men do? We'd love to leave the mountains for the plain, but we have no land to work on here. You wronged us by saying that we contacted the Communists. It is they who sought us out. If you don't believe me, go to the mountains and investigate the matter yourself."

The landlord changed his tone: "Did the Red Army mention my rent? Are they going to take all my rent in the future?"

Old Shih replied, "The Red Army said that they would take half your rent and leave the other half to you. If you don't agree, they'll come and arrest you."

Having heard that he would be allowed to keep half of his rent, he hastily said, "But I must get my half share, not one grain less. Do you hear me?" Old Shih readily promised, "As long as the Red Army doesn't take all of it, I guarantee to pay you the other half."

Old Shih returned and told me what happened. Greatly satisfied with the result, I explained, "Grandpa Shih, this is the way to fight the landlords." He brightened up and laughed heartily.

Now that we had tested this plan on Yang and met with success, we applied it to many landlords in other places. Con-

<sup>1</sup> 1 *tan* = 50 kilogrammes or 110 pounds.

sequently, our influence spread much faster than when we were in the Linshan mountain area. In less than a year, peasant units were set up throughout the region.

Later we had another useful experience. In addition to relying on the strength of the masses, it was necessary for us to try to win the support of every possible ally. The need for this strategy came to our attention in the following incident.

Huang was the chief of a *pao* in our locality. He was not a landlord, and was not quite as reactionary as some of the Kuomintang agents. One day, we learned that his son had been kidnapped by bandits in the mountains. We rescued the boy and took him to his father. Huang was deeply grateful. He offered us a cash reward in appreciation. We refused it saying, "You are not a landlord. You till the land and live on your own. We know that you have not much money. We do not want your money. All we ask is that you do a little service for the Red Army if you can in the future." Huang readily agreed.

One night, I went to his home at Huangchiawan with Hu Shao-ching and Chang Yung-ching of our detachment. We wanted to consult with him about the best way to tackle the militia at Yangchiakang. As we entered the front door of his house, I saw five young men seated around a table on which was a lamp and five cups of tea. Huang was standing up and paying them compliments. I entered the room. Huang signalled a warning to me. A quick glance at the group revealed that the collars of their uniforms were showing above the collars of their plain clothes. They were surely White agents, but there was no time to pull out my gun. An idea flashed into my mind.

"Where did you five Reds come from?" I sharply rapped out.

They looked at us uncertainly. After a pause, a big fellow screwed up his eyes and asked, "Where did *you* come from?"

"We came from Hsiaoho to take a census," I replied. Hsiaoho was the site of Fu Wen-feng's office, and Fu was the chief of a joint-*pao* who often sent his militiamen to check over the census in the surrounding villages.

"Where are your credentials?" the big fellow demanded.

"Blast you! So you want to turn the tables and question me, eh?" Turning to Hu Shao-ching, I shouted, "Junior!" and taking my cue, Hu Shao-ching pulled out his gun. At this juncture, Huang turned to the big fellow with a sheepish smile and said, "They often come from Fu's office to check on the residents here."

The big fellow smiled at me apologetically, "I beg your pardon. Please don't misunderstand us. We are Kuomintang regulars stationed at Yangchiakang."

"Show me your credentials," I demanded.

"We forgot to bring them. Check with Chief Huang if you don't believe me."

Without waiting to hear Huang, I said to the big fellow, "You don't have to be afraid if you are not Red Army men. We'll take you to Chief Fu. When he verifies that you are really from Yangchiakang, we'll release you! Come, Chief Huang, get me some rope."

Huang threw up his hands in a helpless gesture and brought me several pieces of jute cord. We disarmed all the five of them, bound their hands together, and ordered them to march. As soon as we were out of Huangchiawan, we headed straight for the mountains in the east. The big fellow suspiciously asked, "Isn't Chief Fu in the north?"

I had prepared my gun for action some time previously and replied, "We are going first to the mountains to check the census figures."

Back in the mountains, we closely interrogated the five men. We learned that the enemy had got wind of the activities of the Red Army guerrillas in the mountains. The five men had been sent to pick up information. We would have released them had they been ordinary enemy soldiers, but they had revealed themselves as spies. If we set them free, they would hasten to tell the enemy all about us, and Huang's life would be in danger. So we kept them in custody.

During the ensuing days, the enemy at Yangchiakang kept up their search for the five men, trying to find out how they had "disappeared". The people kept saying, "The five men were arrested by the Kuomintang army." Although the enemy did not believe it, they could do nothing.

We set up over five hundred peasant units and many small plain-clothed detachments throughout the Linshan and Yingshan regions, and recruited between four and five hundred into the Red Army, during the three years between November 1934 and October 1937. We also helped with the accommodation and treatment of many of our wounded men and furnished the Party's Special Committee of the Loshan-Huangpo-Hsiaokan District with funds and medical supplies. In the course of three years of hard struggle, we also expanded our own ranks. We captured four to five hundred guns and tracked down over a thousand bandits without suffering a single casualty.

The arduous guerrilla activities came to an end in October 1937. Our detachment was instructed to proceed to Chilipin, the principal city in the Hupeh-Honan-Anhwei Border Region. There we awaited further orders for regrouping before proceeding to the front to fight against the Japanese invaders.



## THRICE WE FOOLED THE ENEMY

LIN WEI-HSIEN

These events all happened in February 1936.

Our Red 28th Army, outnumbered one hundred to one, had been holding out in the Hupeh-Honan-Anhwei area and now faced a concentrated attack by the enemy in their "May Campaign of Annihilation". Our commanders decided, as a counter-move, to break up our forces into independent battalions, penetrate into the enemy's rear and fight a guerrilla war. Two battalions were put under my command, my task being to manoeuvre in the vicinity of Hsiaokan County. One day, with the co-operation of the Loshan Independent Regiment, we routed a battalion from the 102nd Division of the enemy's Kweichow Army. Then their main force advanced to encircle us. We successfully covered the retreat of the Loshan Independent Regiment, and the same night we ascended the Mountain of Gathering Mist.

As soon as we reached the mountain top, the local people informed us that the enemy were hot on our heels. We looked down and saw torches glittering for miles around and gradually closing in at the foot of the mountain. The enemy's intention was clear, and we prepared to withdraw to Macheng before daybreak.

We donned the uniforms recently captured from the enemy, and wrapped our heads with white towels in the manner of Kweichow soldiers. There were not enough uniforms for all, so some of our men changed into plain clothes and walked

beside us like peasant carriers. One of our company commanders was sent ahead as the "squad leader of advance guard". He had in his possession a name card captured from a regimental commander of the 102nd Division of the Kweichow Army. I was dressed as a regimental commander. We descended the mountain while it was still dark.

### THE FIRST HURDLE

At dawn we reached the highway near the town of Liushihfan, which was situated close to the railway, where a regiment of the enemy's Security Corps was stationed.

As our vanguard approached the town, an alert was sounded from a blockhouse about three hundred metres off the highway. The sentries shouted, inquiring who we were. Our "squad leader" informed them that we belonged to the 102nd Division and were pursuing the "bandits". He stood by the roadside ready to answer questions while I ordered our men to proceed in quick steps.

Four men came out of the blockhouse. In order to prevent them coming close to our troops, our "squad leader" went to meet them.

"Hey, you!" snapped one of them who looked like an adjutant, "Who are you anyway? Where're you going? Why haven't you contacted us before?"

Our "squad leader" glanced at him, pulled out the card out of his pocket and handed it to him without saying a word. The fierce expression on the man's face softened, as his eyes caught the title of regimental commander of the 102nd Division. In the White army, rank was considered something awesome.

Seeing that the adjutant continued to read the card without comment, our "squad leader" said to him:

"We can't be held up here. Our regimental commander has gone ahead as the job of pursuing the bandits is very urgent."

The adjutant was really not so innocent as he appeared. He stared at the card, made no reply but glanced sidelong at our troops.

Seizing the card from him, our "squad leader" said, "If you don't believe us, you can come with me to see our regimental commander."

The adjutant once more sized up our "squad leader" and then followed him to the head of our troops to see the "regimental commander".

I saw them coming and quickened my steps to draw the four enemy soldiers further away from their blockhouse. As soon as they caught up with me, I ordered the "squad leader" and my men to disarm them. They became our prisoners without knowing why. Perhaps the enemy at Liushihfan was still waiting for them to return to report on us.

Thus we cleared our first hurdle and captured the enemy's adjutant.

#### ENEMY MILITIA AS OUR GUIDE

It was bright day when we left the town of Liushihfan. We kept marching lest the enemy had discovered our identity and was now in pursuit. We covered twenty *li* and came to Tumenkang which was guarded by a twenty-man platoon of township militia. Regular troops were considered the superiors of the Kuomintang militia. Therefore, we had a good chance to frighten them into submission.

Our "squad leader" at the head of the column shouted: "We belong to the 102nd Division. We're going to Tungyangkang. Come down quickly to guide us there!"

The platoon commander who was immediately on the alert poked his head out of the blockhouse and sized us up, but made no move to come down.

Our "squad leader" again urged him: "Why are you wasting time? Hurry up, get your men together and show us the way. We've an urgent job to carry out!"

He hesitated, then said: "I'm the platoon commander. If we leave here, who's going to guard this blockhouse?"

"You needn't trouble with that. Our main force is coming up right away and will take over the defence from you. Get your men together and guide us. If anything happens because of your delay, our regimental commander may demand your head. You'd better be careful!"

Threatened with the loss of his head and assured of the arrival of the main force, the platoon commander yielded. "Very well, we'll serve you as guides," he said.

When his whole platoon had walked some distance with us, we turned our weapons towards their chests and made them our prisoners. Only then did they realize who we were.

#### CAPTURE OF TUNGYANGKANG

After Tumenkang we came to the third and last hurdle, Tungyangkang. This was quite a large stronghold held by a company of the 8th Regiment of the Hupeh Security Corps.

Our advance guard encountered a squad of enemy patrol, when they were ten *li* from Tungyangkang. Our "squad leader" first sighted them resting by the roadside and shouted, "Hey, what troops are you?"

The enemy soldiers jumped up steadying their rifles. The one at their head shouted: "We are the 7th Company of the 8th Regiment of the Security Corps. Where are you from? Stop! Not a step forward!"

Ignoring the warning our "squad leader" kept advancing with his men and answered: "We are the 102nd Division under orders to suppress the bandits."

The enemy would not take our word, and when we pressed forward they readied their rifles and issued another warning: "Stop, or we'll shoot!"

Hesitating for a moment our "squad leader" then continued to advance, threatening the enemy: "If you dare to shoot and hurt one of us, we'll make you pay with your whole company!"

This daring bluff worked. The Security Corps were the second- or third-rate troops in the Kuomintang army, and dared not risk shooting us.

As our vanguards approached them, they turned to run, our squad following closely at their heels. We surmised that they were going to report to their headquarters. We also had to be prepared against enemy pursuit from Liushihfan. So we left a platoon of our men three *li* from Tungyangkang while our main force pushed on towards the stronghold.

The enemy patrol entered the stronghold just ahead of us. We were stopped by two sentries with crossed rifles. As I arrived, our "squad leader" hastened to inform the sentries, "This is our regimental commander!"

I was wearing dark spectacles. Stick in hand, I strode towards them, the sentries hurriedly put down their rifles, stood at attention and saluted me. I gave them a slighting look without returning their salute. I shouted loudly at our "squad leader", "What're you standing here for? Let our troops go in and take a rest!"

Our vanguard squad stepped aside, and our troops streamed in. The two enemy sentries stood like dummies watching our entry into their stronghold.

A man looked down from the turret and asked: "What's all this noise about? What are these troops doing here?"

Before I could answer, one of the enemy sentries, addressing the man as company commander, reported what had transpired.

"So you are company commander!" I shouted. "Who do you think you are, stuck up there like that? Come down, you son-of-bitch!"

The sentry quickly informed the man that I was the regimental commander. Hearing my bad language, he straightened his uniform and came down.

The enemy company commander invited me to his headquarters after all our troops had entered the stronghold. I ordered him to give me a report on the situation in the surrounding areas. He reported that there were no large Kuomintang forces around. So I decided to let our troops rest for the night. I ordered the company commander to move his men away from the positions on the eastern side saying that it was necessary to have a better defence against the Red Army and that one of our companies would take over the position. This arrangement increased his confidence in us. He said he would assemble his whole company on a square west of the main street and requested me to address the men. Of course, this was an excellent opportunity, and I gladly consented.

"By the way," I asked him, "where're you going to put up our regimental headquarters tonight?"

"There's an inn on the main street. It isn't so spacious. I wonder if it will suit the regimental commander just for one night."

When he took me to the inn, I said: "You'd also better stay here tonight. We should be in close contact. It may be necessary for us to talk together."

He was quite pleased, repeatedly saying that the regimental commander honoured him.

One of our own company commanders came in to report that our men had taken over the defence positions and the local



troops were assembled on the square waiting for the regimental commander to give them a talk. I instructed the enemy company commander to remain in the inn so that my adjutant might know where to find him. I whispered an order to our guards to watch him and left for the square.

When our own company commander and myself arrived at the square, we saw the whole enemy company standing in good order; our men were stationed around them. Our company commander made a few introductory remarks and then called upon me to speak. I put on an angry expression as I began my lecture. I scolded their patrolmen and sentries for giving us unnecessary trouble and accused them of deliberately obstructing our "bandit-suppression" campaign. Then I announced that their company commander had been detained because he was guilty of collaborating with the "bandits". This was like a bolt from the blue to them. Our soldiers aimed their rifles at them while they were still dumbfounded. Then they realized that we were the Red Army. Obediently they laid down their arms.

I explained the Red Army's policy of dealing with prisoners and said that anyone who wanted to return home would be paid off. The news that we had captured a whole company of the 8th Regiment of the Security Corps without firing a single shot spread to the neighbourhood, and the townspeople rejoiced.

After a night in Tungyangkang, we set out again. The enemy company commander who still did not know our real identity asked if we wanted somebody to serve as a guide. I said: "Surely. Will you come with us?"

Three days later we successfully returned to Macheng and joined our main force.

## WE LEFT OUR MOUNTAIN BASE

HSU CHI-CHANG

It was a midday in September and not a breeze stirred the leaves on the mountain top. Resting in the woods on the slope, we heard somebody shouting: "Enemy in sight!"

Our leader, Chang Tse-li, Party secretary for Shangnan County, sprang to his feet. Raising his pistol, he ordered: "Ready for action!"

We quickly spread out. Someone swore: "Damn you! You've come at last! We'll show you what we are!"

At the foot of the mountain was the village of Huaishuping. It was now deserted, the villagers having been forcibly evacuated by the White army. The damaged houses and the barren mountain slope opposite us presented a picture of desolation.

We sighted a dozen men descending the opposite mountain. As they came closer we could see that they were wearing grey uniform—the Kuomintang army uniform. Such encounters were not new to us. For three years we had been meeting our enemy almost every day. Our Shangnan Guerrilla Detachment of sixty members including local cadres, sick and wounded soldiers, women and children had waged sustained struggles ever since the autumn of 1934 in the mountain area of Chin-kangtai in the Hupeh-Honan-Anhwei Border Region. It was in this area that the Kuomintang reactionaries had recently launched a mad "suppression campaign". They constructed blockhouses on the mountain tops and at strategic passes, tightly

blockading the mountain outlets and sending out patrols in search of us. We could hold out no longer and had to leave the place which had sheltered and nourished us for three years. We succeeded in slipping through the enemy lines and arrived in the Huaishuping mountain area in Shangnan County. During our tortuous and difficult trek which lasted two weeks, we had been constantly on the alert against possible enemy pursuit and interception. To our surprise our journey had been without incident. A week after our arrival at the new base they turned up.

Having descended to the foot of the opposite mountain, these men went into the village for a talk among themselves. Then they began to walk towards our side of the mountain.

"Stop! What're you doing here?" our guards shouted at them.

Jumping with joy, calling, shouting and running towards us, they replied, "Oh, we've found them! Hello, comrades, it's us!"

We were all puzzled and stared, open-eyed. Such a strange thing had never previously happened during our three years of guerrilla fighting. Enemy coming to surrender would not be so bold. If they were our own men, they would not be crying and shouting like this. We could not be sure! The White army might be lurking around, trying to play tricks on us!

As they came closer, our guards shouted at the top of their voices: "Stop!"

"It's us! We've come to contact you, comrades!" came the answer to our challenge. Were these our own men? We'd better be careful. We'd had enough of the enemy's tricks!

Chang Tse-li sent two men in plain clothes forward. It was like an ancient battle scene when the opposing generals exchanged names before the battle began. At last we knew they were really our own men.

They had been sent by the Red 28th Army. Among them were old acquaintances, Li Shih-yen and Shih Yu-tien, formerly of the pistol corps of the 28th Army. Li and his men had helped us to take a number of blockhouses and strongholds and rout the enemy, and Shih had been Party secretary of Chihcheng County.

It was a happy reunion. About thirty people, men, women, old and young, surrounded them, crying for joy and bursting with questions.

"Where have you been all this time?"

"Our commanders haven't forgotten us, have they?"

"Where's the Red Army's main force? Any news?"

For three years we had been without contact with our leadership and had been carrying on the fight in the mountains and forests alone. Now we saw our own kinsmen. Could anybody blame us for getting so excited?

Chang Tse-li, face gleaming, went up to Li Shih-yen and Shih Yu-tien saying: "Ah-ha! Old Li and Old Shih, you must be tired out. We're sorry we can't entertain you in this wild country. We have not even a cup of boiled water to offer you. But you just wait! When the revolution succeeds, I'll guarantee that I, Blacksmith Chang San, will slaughter chickens and a big fat sheep to feast you!"

There was laughter all around.

Li Shih-yen took a letter from his pocket saying, "This is from our commander."

Chang Tse-li's fingers trembled as he took the letter. He was overwhelmed with joy. The letter contained the Party's instructions and expressed its concern for us. It was like a mother's letter to a son a long time away from home!

He could only read a few words. So he turned the letter over to me saying, "Little Secretary, will you read it?"

I'd had two years schooling, but could only manage to finish reading it after much effort. The contents nearly struck me dumb:

"... Now the Japanese devils are invading China. The Central Committee has concluded negotiations with the Kuomintang to stop the civil war. The Kuomintang and the Communists will co-operate to resist Japan. As soon as you receive this order, you are to stop hostilities and proceed with Li Shih-yen and others to Chiliping, Huangan County, Hupeh, for re-organization."

"Oh..." we cried in one voice. We were all stunned and stared at Li Shih-yen. Joy was gone, and silence followed. Then the hearts of the guerrilla-men exploded, their blood seethed.

"What? Will the reactionaries, the local despots and bad gentry co-operate with us?"

"So! Chiang Kai-shek can become a Buddha as soon as he puts down his butcher's knife, and the reactionaries have become kind-hearted, eh?"

"This can't be the instructions of the Party's Central Committee!"

For three years, we had been without contact with the leadership, and had not been able to get any newspaper. We were entirely ignorant of the changes throughout the world. What we saw were the villages burnt down by the Kuomintang. In our hearts there was undying hatred for them. Our eyes would turn red with anger at the sight of the reactionaries. We wanted to tear them to pieces!

"Is it possible that Li Shih-yen and his group have...?" Merciless struggles and experiences gained at the price of blood had taught us to be vigilant. We had heard stories of men who wavered when they were threatened by death, of men who had retreated and become hirelings of the reactionaries.

Smiles vanished. Hands which had clasped each other fell apart. The crowd gradually dispersed.

With a stern voice and menacing looks, Chang Tse-li began his questioning:

"Where have you come from?"

"From Chienshan."

"How long have you travelled?"

"About a week."

"How could you walk so fast?"

"Now the Kuomintang and the Communists are co-operating with each other. We have a pass from Wei Li-huang, the Kuomintang commander..."

So, that was it! A Red Army fighter carrying a pass issued by the "Bandit-Suppression Commander" of the reactionary army and travelling without hindrance! Unimaginable!

Chang Tse-li glanced at our men in plain clothes warning them to keep a watch over the new arrivals. He ordered our patrolmen to be on the alert for enemy surprise attacks, and then called the leading comrades to a meeting in the woods.

Chang examined the letter over and over again. Suddenly he thought of an old letter which his commander had sent him two years before. He sought it out and compared the writing with the new one. The colour of the two impressions of the commander's seal was clearly different, one was fresh, the other had faded.

"So, they are trying to get us away from here!"

Then we asked ourselves: "If the enemy want to destroy us, why should they want us to go to Chiliping in Huangan, which is two hundred *li* away?"

When we thought of Li Shih-yen and Shih Yu-tien and their good reputation among the revolutionary comrades, we began to wonder if they could possibly become... It was puzzling.



The weather was hot, our hearts were troubled, and we all perspired profusely.

About the colour of the seal, the old letter was two years old, naturally the colour had faded. We checked the size of the seal and the style of the handwriting again. They were the same. The letter we had just received must be genuine!

After long hesitation Chang Tse-li suggested: "I think we'd better send them back and move away from here. We'll carry out the revolution to the end."

Nobody responded. The sun was setting. Worry was shown on every face.

Li Shih-yen, who had been kept waiting, became anxious and impatient. He rushed over to us. Fully appreciating the state of mind of the Red Army guerrillas, whose zeal for and devotion to the revolution knew no bounds, he tried his utmost to clear up the situation. He explained the policy of the Central Committee and the events which had brought about the armistice which the reactionaries in the south had been compelled to accept. He said that the task confronting our troops at that time was to leave the mountain base, get reorganized and form an armed force to resist Japan.

We still remained silent in spite of his long explanation. The air seemed stifling.

Li Shih-yen picked up a twig, broke it in two and solemnly declared: "I swear I'll be like this if I have spoken the smallest falsehood!"

After long deliberation Chang Tse-li finally made the decision.

"I'll obey the Party's instructions," said he. "But I don't know whether the reactionaries are really sincere in co-operating with us and what they have up their sleeve. I don't want to risk the whole of our revolutionary resources. I want to keep some sparks of the revolution alive here, so that somebody will

be able to carry on the struggle and develop it even if we are tricked this time."

He intended to leave our plain-clothed corps behind, and sent for its commander Tu Li-pao. None of us could go to sleep. For three years we had been steeled in guerrilla war, but we had never been worried by difficulties or hardships. That night we were restless and worried.

Tu Li-pao came the next morning. Chang Tse-li took his hand while giving him instructions: "We are leaving. We don't know what'll happen there, but we'll use our discretion. You must keep constant contact with us and will be informed of what happens on our way and after our arrival at Chiliping. If it is true that there is Kuomintang-Communist co-operation, we'll let you know right away. If it turns out to be a trick, you'll have to fight on. Of course, you'll be considerably weakened after we've left and things will be still harder on you, but the revolution must be carried on to the end — to the last man!"

We reluctantly left Huaishuping before sunset. Bidding our comrades-in-arms goodbye, we started our journey towards Chiliping.

We cautiously took a detour around enemy positions, traveling by mountain paths and desolate areas, starting out at dawn and resting only after dark. We were followed by two "tea merchants" — the men sent out by Tu Li-pao to maintain contact with us.

When we arrived at Chiliping, we were met by our own comrades. It was all true! We shed tears of joy.

We began attending classes to study the Party's policies. The Central Committee sent cadres from Yenan to give us talks. We gradually understood the Party's great and correct policy of the national united front and became even more confident

that, with the Party's leadership, China could never be conquered and Japanese imperialism would be defeated.

After the Spring Festival, 1938, we, the four thousand Red Army guerrillas who had been persistently fighting in the Hupeh-Honan-Anhwei Border Region, were reorganized into the Fourth Detachment of the New Fourth Army. Fresh and vigorous we marched to the war front in eastern Anhwei to take up our historic task of resisting Japan and saving the country.

## BEFORE THE EVACUATION

CHEN YUN-LUNG

After the main force of the Red Army had gone on the Long March, the reactionaries sent three divisions of troops into southwestern Fukien to surround our base area. The three divisions travelled by different routes, burning, killing, raping and committing all kinds of other atrocities. There was a reign of White terror in the soviet area, but the people were not cowed. They assisted the Red Army guerrillas and helped them launch attack after attack against the enemy. The people constantly supplied the guerrillas with information about the enemy, so that the guerrillas were able to strike at the enemy and get away without interference.

Although the enemy had entered the soviet area, they were still helpless in dealing with our guerrillas. The arrogant Wang Yi-chiu, Commander of the enemy's 83rd Division, could only shake his head and admit: "There's no way to wipe out the Red Army!" Finally they resorted to the barbarous policy of forcible mass evacuation in order to create a "no man's land". They imagined that they could wipe us out once they had separated us from the people, on whom we depended for food and help.

The enemy posted notices at the cross-roads and sounded gongs in the streets and alleys, ordering the people in the small villages to move to the big villages within a specified time. No one was willing to leave his own village and lose contact with

the Red Army. So they all refused to move. The exasperated enemy then began a frenzied massacre in the border areas between Yungting, Pingho and Nanching.

One day, when we were discussing measures to cope with this serious situation, a messenger arrived. He was a young man who had been sent by Wang Shu-fen, secretary of the Party branch of Wangchialiao Village, Pingho County. When he saw me, he called out: "Commander, Uncle Wang Kuei-tsai and his whole family have been murdered!"

"What! A whole family murdered?" I was shocked and hurried to question him.

Wiping perspiration away the young man spoke under great nervous strain: "The White bandits charged Uncle Kuei-tsai with being the leader of the opposition to evacuation. They arrested him early this morning, drove the villagers together and shot him in public. Uncle Kuei-tsai was really admirable. He cursed the White bandit commander: 'You are bandits and butchers, you'll be wiped out by the Red Army before long!' Then he turned around to speak to the villagers declaring: 'Everybody must fight to the end. The Red Army will soon be back to finish these bandits off!' This public condemnation made the bandits feel very uneasy. They tried to stop him from speaking by gagging his mouth, but fearless Uncle Kuei-tsai kept on with his denunciation until the last second. His last words were 'Long live the Red Army! Long live Chairman Mao!'"

We were all very disturbed and agitated as we listened to the story of Wang Kuei-tsai's heroic fight and death. We recalled how, eighteen months before, the 38-year-old Wang Kuei-tsai had established contact with us. This was before Wangchialiao Village was liberated. Rising early, going to bed late, braving wind and rain, he constantly risked his own life bringing us information about the enemy. More re-

cently after learning about the difficulties of the Red Army, he secretly brought us food, which he and his family had saved from their own meagre supplies. They had eaten bitter herb and drunk plain water to give food to us. Now he had given his life, and the lives of his wife and 16-year-old daughter had been taken by the enemy. Our hearts ached.

The young messenger continually wiped his moist eyes as he said, "Commander, the White bandits say that if we still refuse to move, they will start a roll-call with machine-guns. What do you think we should do?"

As he stared at me, I realized that it was not he alone, but all the villagers of Wangchialiao and the people of the whole soviet area who were looking to us for help. We must find a quick way of saving these revolutionary people.

That night none of us could go to sleep. Our soft straw mattresses felt like prickly carpets. We were wide awake and watched the stars twinkling and meteors dropping beyond the forest. I thought of the Wangs already murdered and the thousands still threatened with death. The Party had assigned us the task of persisting in the struggle in the enemy's rear. We worried. Could we fulfil our task? Could we allow the murder of our people to go on? We deliberated, thought of the past and tried to foresee the future. We could not convince ourselves that a head-on fight to the finish was the way out, especially with an enemy much stronger than ourselves. We decided that we should advise the people to move in order to save their lives and property, preserve the revolutionary strength and prepare for new struggles under new circumstances.

A meeting of the detachment was called early next morning. There was a heated debate. One speaker declared: "We and the people are as indispensable to each other as water is to fish. How can we live if we are separated from them? Besides, if we told the people to move away, wouldn't we be pushing them



into a hell of fire? How could we ever face the Party and the people again?"

Another asked, "Wouldn't we be walking into the enemy's trap if we tell the folks to move? The people are still fighting and the blood of the Wangs is not yet dry. Now we change our mind. Why the dickens should we do that?"

There was a break in the discussion and I stepped out into the open. I was agitated and full of conflicting thoughts. I looked through the trees at the white clouds and the distant mountain ranges, I saw the renowned Chinfeng Mountain rising majestically above others. It was October but the forest was still a vast green ocean. We had built our base in this beautiful region a year before. It had become our second hometown. Now it had fallen into the enemy's hands. Its loss would mean the cutting off of supplies. The villagers were dodging the enemy day in and day out and could not settle down to productive work. It had become very difficult for them to get a living. If we kept on like this, we might all perish. It was clear that we must not act on impulse and let a hundred armed revolutionaries and thousands of people in the soviet area die to no purpose.

When the meeting resumed we found that those who were in favour of evacuation were still in a minority. With great patience we explained our reasons for an evacuation, and we were in complete agreement on the wisdom of this course when the debate ended.

We went in small groups into the small villages to persuade the people to move away. The enemy troops were then concentrated in the big villages.

It was a dim moonlight night as I proceeded with my group towards Wangchialiao Village. The new graves by the roadside were dimly outlined in the pale moonlight as our fighters, meditative and speechless, trod on with heavy, hurried steps.

We covered a distance of twenty-five kilometres and reached Spring Water Pond behind Wangchialiao Village. There in a bamboo grove we took a rest, waiting for the meeting to start. Rustling in the wind, the bamboos threw intermittent shadows on the ground. The silence was broken by the sound of bubbling as some of the comrades smoked their pipes. At dawn we saw Wang Shu-fen and five Party members approaching. We learned later that they were the only Party members left in this village. There had been eleven, the other five had died for the revolutionary cause.

It was not easy to convince these Party members that it was necessary to evacuate the village. We answered their questions, cleared their doubts and obtained their agreement to persuade the people to move.

We slowly followed Wang Shu-fen towards the head of the spring. Suddenly he stopped and explained that this was the site of the hospital which he had helped to build. He was a skilled maker of bamboo articles and made tables, chairs and beds, and even erected the hospital buildings. When the hospital began to treat the wounded, he went to other localities to raise funds for provision and to buy medicines. Thanks to his efforts, quite a number of comrades fully recovered. Now only some charred remains by the stone wall were to be seen; very soon this would become a desolate place. He sighed, then smiled at us and led us into the village.

The villagers were called to a meeting when it was dark. It was held in the courtyard of Chiang Liu's home at the northern edge of Wangchialiao Village. Our voices guided the villagers in the darkness. They greeted us warmly.

A light breeze heralded a drizzle but no one left the meeting. As I talked, everyone listened attentively and with great emotion. Excitement reached a high pitch when I brought up the question of evacuation. An old woman shouted, "Commander,



we've been together for a couple of years, and we've always got on well together. All of us know that the Communist Party and the Red Army are good. Do you mean to say you don't want us any more?"

Her outburst roused the whole audience and protesting voices could be heard all over the place. An outspoken voice was heard to exclaim, "For generations we have lived in Wang-chialiao. We are born here and we'll be buried here. We'd rather die than leave here!"

Some girls began to sob.

Wang Shu-fen hastened to calm the audience. "Please, please," he pleaded, "wait till the commander has finished speaking and then you can say what you think."

I continued my explanation. I told the villagers about the general situation in the nation-wide struggle and gave the reasons for the proposed evacuation.

I then informed them how the evacuation would be carried out and explained how to work secretly against the enemy. I also spoke on the ways and means by which the villagers could maintain their contact with us.

When I had finished talking, comrades from the plain-clothed platoon and village Party members went amongst the crowd making further explanations.

Discussions followed, at the general meeting, and in separate groups. Meanwhile the rain drizzled, stopped, drizzled again, and stopped again. The people got wet, dried out, got wet again and dried again. It was getting late and children had fallen asleep in their parents' arms. After many explanations the villagers understood the situation and finally agreed to our proposal.

Wang Shu-fen addressed us on behalf of the villagers, saying: "Comrades of the guerrilla force, our whole village has agreed to evacuate. We wish to assure you that we will continue to



Bidding Farewell to the Villagers

An oil painting by Yin Jung-sheng



maintain contacts with you after the evacuation, we will supply you with provisions, and we will leave our produce in the fields instead of taking it with us. Then you will be able to get it at any time. Finally, we declare that we will always support the revolution and never betray it!"

The audience applauded in approval. A few of the bolder villagers stepped out from among the crowd, saying, "We fully agree with Comrade Shu-fen. No matter what kind of torture we may suffer, we will keep contact with you and persist in our struggle until final victory. We hope you'll wipe out the reactionaries as soon as possible!"

It was almost daybreak when the meeting ended. A whole night of consultation had brought the Red Army and the people much closer to each other. When the hour of departure drew near, the villagers were reluctant to leave. Parting words were exchanged again and again.

"I . . . I'm afraid I won't live long enough to see you again!" said an old man sentimentally.

I went over to him taking his wet, trembling hands in mine. His emaciated hands were covered with tears and rain-water, and I was deeply moved.

"Take good care of yourself, Granddad," I managed to say. "We will certainly come back and see you again. These White bandits — their days are numbered!"

Slowly we left the courtyard, followed by a score of villagers who wanted to see us off. Then I thought of Wang Kuei-tsai's son. He might have returned from his errand of delivering provisions for the Red Army. I sent someone to look for him. A little while later he came.

He was a sturdy young fellow eighteen or nineteen years old and taller than me. He embraced me.

"Commander!" he cried out loud. "I'll go with you. I want vengeance!"



All around lowered their heads. I thought for a few minutes, then tried to comfort him and said: "Lift your head, young Wang. Vengeance we will take, not for you alone, but for all. It's our common grievance. You want to join the Red Army? That's good! You have the necessary courage, but we have to go into action right away and need well-experienced fighters. You have not yet had combat experience and in addition we have no arms to give to you. So you'd better stay here with Comrade Shu-fen, take his orders and continue to work for the revolution."

Other comrades also advised him to stay behind and asked Comrade Shu-fen to look after him, because the young fellow was now one of us. Young Wang bit his lips and put his head to one side. Shu-fen hastened to take him aside.

"Young man," he said, "take the advice of the comrades. Nothing'll go wrong. We need you here to fight the reactionaries." Then he turned to speak to us: "Don't worry, comrades. Leave him to me." We talked as we walked, stopping now and then to explain things. The sun was shining brightly when we finally said goodbye, and promised to keep in touch with them.

New struggles began. Before evacuation the inhabitants of Wangchialiao, following the example of other small villages in the soviet area, buried their salt, edible oil and grain in pits. They then sent word to us about the secret signs which marked the hiding places. When we returned to our mountain hide-out, messengers from Hsiaoluhsi, Pingkeng and other villages around Chinfeng Mountain also came to contact us. We added a number of secret marks to our maps. We knew that they marked the locations where we could find provisions whenever we needed them.

Such well-executed mass assistance gave us full confidence in final victory as we prepared for more intense and complex struggles after the evacuation.

## NIGHT RAID ON LUNGYEN

YU PING-HUI

### TACTFUL ENTRY INTO THE TOWN OF LUNGYEN

In autumn 1935, Chiang Kai-shek stationed a large force in western Fukien to "mop up" the guerrilla bases in that area. Some of the base regions were forcibly disrupted and a number of our men lost heart and surrendered to the enemy. Li Mo-an, enemy commander in the town of Lungyen, jubilantly declared: "The National Army has scored a victory in the bandit-suppression campaign, and is going to drive northward to chase and destroy the Red Army." Li sent out his agents to collect "victory levies". The people were greatly distressed by this unfavourable turn of events.

One night in August, Commander Chiu Chin-sheng of the Red 8th Regiment led his troops back to Shanpei Village near the town of Lungyen. The village was the old base of the regiment and the news of their arrival spread like wild fire. Men and women came to raise problems with the Red Army men, telling them how badly they had been treated by the enemy. The villagers wanted the Red Army to redress their wrongs. Commander Chiu could not suppress his fury when he learned of their sufferings. He realized that in order to maintain a foothold there and encourage the people to rise, the Red Army must strike back and hit the enemy hard. He was fully aware that the regiment had only a few armed units and

was running short of ammunition. This made it difficult for him to reach a decision on where and how to start an operation.

Commander Chiu chain-smoked throughout the night. The soldiers knew his habits and when they saw that the floor was littered with cigarette ashes, they knew that he was racking his brains for ideas.

After breakfast, Secretary Wu of the county Party committee and seven or eight cadres met in the commander's room. Secretary Wu gave a detailed survey of the prevailing situation and told us that Li Mo-an intended to hold a "victory celebration meeting" in a few days' time. The cadres bristled with anger. "Strike him! A funeral party is what he deserves!" Angry shouts burst from the room. "Comrades, keep cool! Anger and abuses will not defeat Li Mo-an," said the regimental commander, calm and smiling.

All eyes were centred on the commander. "What shall we do about it?"

"What shall we do?" he deliberately repeated. "We had better send a message to Li Mo-an, telling him that the Red Army still exists, and in force too." "Right!" The cadres responded in chorus, "Right! Let the enemy know that the Red Army is not to be bullied." The commander waved his hand for silence and continued, "But we will not trust this message to anybody. We will take it ourselves, and it will not be written in black and white. It'll be delivered by pistols and hand-grenades!" Saying this, he tapped Lungyen on the map and said, "We are going right into the town for the celebration meeting!"

"Enter the town of Lungyen!" It sounded easy, but was sure to be a tough proposition, for Lungyen had been Li Mo-an's stronghold for quite a long time. A whole regiment guarded it, and it was surrounded by numerous sentry posts and pill-boxes. How were we to push through? And even if we did,

how was the battle to be fought? How were we going to make a safe return after the operation? . . . While everybody was mulling over these problems, Commander Chiu again spoke. He gave the group a detailed description of his plan. His words were like a fire, warming our hearts.

### AN ENEMY OFFICER LEADS THE WAY

The disguised fighters left the base separately on the evening of the third day. Commander Chiu and his thirty men headed towards the south gate. A bright moon lit up the road, but the tall paddies in the fields obscured their shadows. Silently, the Red Army men penetrated into the very centre of the city and surrounded the army hospital.

The main street leading from the south gate, the busiest section of the city, was brightly lit in readiness for the "victory" celebration. Enemy soldiers, carrying rifles, swaggered along the street, watching the busy scene. Not one of them had the faintest idea that dozens of Red Army men were almost rubbing shoulders with them. The big army hospital building was agog with the sounds of two-stringed fiddles and gamblers at mah-jong games. The gate was closed but the lights by the entrance were on. The gate was high, thick and reinforced with iron-work. A section of guards was stationed at the right side of it. "We've got to find a way to make them open the gate," Commander Chiu whispered to Squad Leader Lei.

As night set in, people began to leave the street, which soon looked deserted. An enemy officer, hoarsely chanting a Peking opera tune, staggered down the south gate bridge towards the hospital. "Bravo!" thought Commander Chiu, as he nudged the squad leader. The squad leader leaped out from the side lane, stuck his pistol against the officer's back and, in a low voice, rapped out the command, "Don't move!"

The enemy officer was completely taken by surprise and, after a pause, cursed, "You bastard! Stop your tricks!" The squad leader seized his shoulder with a jerk and pressed the pistol into his back. "One more word and you die," he said. "Turn round and look who's here!"

Stifling a cry, the officer sobered up and begged in a trembling voice that his life should be spared. Lei said, "I'll spare your life all right but go and tell them to open the gate!"

The enemy officer had no option but to make his way to the gate and seek entrance. A guard poked his head from a wicket, flashed his torch and asked, "Who's behind you?"

"Signalman from divisional headquarters," answered Lei loudly.

As soon as the gate was half opened, Squad Leader Lei's Mauser was pressed against the guard's chest, and our group rushed through the gate like a gust of wind. The guard flopped to the ground with a groan. Another guard stuck his head out and queried, "What's the matter there?" A prompt thump on his skull by the butt of a gun and he reeled and dropped to the ground. The guard house was in a panic.

Commander Chiu was standing at the foot of the stone steps, gun in hand, directing another unit to break into the main building. An enemy soldier in the guard-room pushed open a window in order to attempt an escape. Bang! Commander Chiu fired. The guard flopped across the window-sill, limp as a dead hog.

### THE RED ARMY MEN STORM THE TOWN

The shot in the army hospital led off our operations in other parts of the city.

Our men went into action at the enemy's blockhouse situated by a bridge, about a *li* from the hospital. It was usually held

by an enemy squad which guarded the streets to the northwest. That evening, most of the guards had left their arms in the blockhouse and gone to a Peking opera. Only one guard was left on duty, two others were fast asleep. When the duty guard saw several country people walking by the blockhouse, he did not pay much attention to them at first. He grew suspicious as we passed several times. He shouted at one of our men, a stout fellow, "What are you coming here for?" The man replied, "I've come to town to settle an account!" "You dirty dog!" cursed the guard, stepping forward to seize him. There was a shot, and the guard fell to the ground.

Our men rushed into the blockhouse and seized the two other guards before they could get out of bed. We collected all the rifles and rigged up a brand-new Browning machine-gun at the embrasure facing north, in readiness to engage any enemy reinforcements that might come from the blockhouse further east.

The stout man was our Platoon Leader Li Lo-shan. He had obtained all the necessary information about the blockhouse on the previous day. His task now was to lead his squad to take the blockhouse and provide cover for our men attacking enemy forces inside the hospital.

Another unit penetrated into the eastern airfield. The enemy soldiers were blockaded in their barracks and could not get out. The Red Army men threw hand-grenades at the airplanes. Fires blazed in the midst of explosions. A mystery of the parked planes was exposed. They were shams, replicas made of wood, used by the White troops to impress and frighten the people!

There was complete confusion at the street crossings in the city. The people were running in all directions. Gunshots and explosions were heard everywhere. The people were clamouring, "The Red Army has come!" "The Red 8th Regi-



ment has broken into the city!" Before long, fires were burning by the side of Li Mo-an's headquarters.

#### DRESSING DOWN FOR THE ENEMY COMMANDER

The army hospital was a scene of great excitement.

When the shooting at the entrance gate started, the enemy soldiers in the main building fled in all directions. Some jumped out of the windows, others dashed towards the back door. Our Staff Officer Wang was blocking the back-door entrance with a group of men. The occupants of the building were like rats in a trap—they couldn't get out. Those lying on the sick-beds adopted a better attitude than the rest. As soon as the Red Army men entered their ward, they put up their hands, hastening to declare, "I'm only a private soldier and haven't done anything against you people!" "I was forced to join the army and have never fought the Red Army!" . . . As a matter of fact, those left in the ward were either patients or medical personnel, and the Red Army would not have dreamed of doing anything to harm them.

Meanwhile, Commander Chiu led a few men upstairs to search for the hospital superintendent. The commander, knowing that he was one of Li Mo-an's right-hand men and an anti-Communist die-hard, had been waiting for a long time for a chance to meet this fellow. There were seven or eight doors in a row on the second floor and he was not sure which one was the superintendent's room. "Search!" ordered the commander. The men searched the rooms one after another but the door at the end of the row was locked. One of our men smashed it open with the butt of his rifle. He was just crossing the threshold when he was hit by someone inside and staggered back. Commander Chiu rushed forward just in time to

see a tall man on the point of firing his pistol. Chiu dodged and fired two shots into the man, who clutched at the air and then fell to the ground, where he remained motionless.

A man in a corner of the room, apparently a secretary, was in the midst of a telephone call. The gunfire scared him out of his wits, and he stood there speechless. Commander Chiu stepped towards him and, pointing to the body, asked, "Is that your superintendent?" The man nodded. Chiu ordered, "Take up the phone and call headquarters!" The secretary staring at him stood as if struck dumb. The commander repeated in a loud voice, "Call headquarters! Now listen! Say what you are told, sentence by sentence!"

"Y-yes," answered the man who then hastily picked up the receiver.

The regimental commander said briefly, "Headquarters? This is the 13th Hospital reporting. The Red Army has occupied the hospital. Their men are too numerous to count. Tell Commander Li to be careful and not to blow his horn wildly. This time the Red Army is just issuing a warning. . . ."

Through the open windows, Commander Chiu could see fires blazing in many parts of the city and could hear a steady succession of explosions. He knew his men had started action at the airfield and in the town. In order to gain time to cover the removal of captured weapons, medical supplies and men, he sent a messenger to Platoon Leader Li Lo-shan at the block-house near the bridge, with strict orders, "No matter how many men the enemy sends, stop them at the bridge at all costs until the last of our troops have been withdrawn from the hospital."

The Red Army men were as busy as bees on the first and second floors. Some were explaining the Red Army's policies to the prisoners and some were writing posters. The majority of them were busy removing the captured medical supplies

and weapons. The enemy medical personnel, impressed by the behaviour of the Red Army men, offered them cases of valuable medical supplies.

#### A POPULAR RHYME

The enemy fell into his trap as anticipated by Commander Chiu. Li Mo-an lost his head completely as gunshots resounded throughout the town and suburbs. He had no idea of the objective nor size of the Red force. He did not know where to direct his men. He had even no guarantee that his headquarters could be held.

Day broke before the enemy's pursuing forces emerged from the south gate. The fire in the airfield had burned out, the hospital was quiet again, and shooting had almost ceased. The enemy forces hurried from one sector to another, but no Red troops were in sight. It was full daylight when the enemy troops arrived at a junction of three roads. They were again fooled by Commander Chiu. They saw empty cartridges and medical kits scattered on the centre road, and judged that the Red troops had gone in that direction, and so they followed along it. They were unaware that Commander Chiu and his men had returned to Shanpei Village by way of a narrow track, and that the Red Army troops were already celebrating the victory with the village people.

His plan for a celebration meeting completely frustrated, Li Mo-an had not the audacity to collect any more "victory levies". He blamed the people for his defeat and tried to work off his anger by closing the city gates and conducting a thorough search for the next three days. He sent troops to the nearby villages on a "mopping-up" campaign and stationed three companies at the south gate to guard the hospital from possible future attacks. The people in the surrounding vil-

lages were now able to hold up their heads. The bogus district chiefs became very submissive and were even afraid of going to the villages. The people composed a rhyme based on the episode. It spread far and wide in our base areas.

*Li Mo-an the Number One bluffer  
Said that the Red Army was through.  
He called a rally and levied a "victory tax".  
He dreamed of wealth, and promotion too.  
Heroes of the Red 8th Regiment  
Mapped out a plan and entered Lungyen.  
They burned the airfield, took the hospital,  
And sent the enemy trembling with fear.  
His men dead and properties gone,  
Li Mo-an has surely lost the round.*



## THE AMBUSH AT CHINMU RIDGE

HUANG CHUI-MING

The White bandits received information in July 1937 that over sixty of the East Fukien Independent Division were fighting a guerrilla war along the Lienkiang sector. They sent a reinforced company to "annihilate" us, hoping to stamp out the revolutionary flames in the area. We were under the command of Yeh Fei, and moved from the Lienkiang sector to Ningteh, an old soviet district, to await a better chance to wipe them out.

The enemy were hot on our heels, with only a distance of five or six *li* between us. "Wipe out the Reds and get an award!" shouted the swell-headed enemy. The peasants who heard their boast angrily said, "The Red Army will send you to hell!"

We reached Hsipien Village in Ningteh County in the dead of night on July 12. The people of this old liberated village, in slippers and with jackets slung over their shoulders, came running out of their houses to greet us. They told us how they had missed us after our departure. The young ones got out their home-made guns and wanted to join us. A white-haired old man raised his lamp to take a careful look at our comrades and holding their hands said, "We've been harassed to death by the White bandits' pillaging and killing! We'll never let you go again!" None of the soldiers and people

slept that night. The villagers stayed up to prepare food and mend our clothes and shoes. Our comrades, exasperated by the enemy's arrogance, were eager to fight back and, at the request of the local people, were determined to test the issue with the enemy.

Next day we continued the march. We climbed the Yellow Mud Hill and reached the top of Chinmu Ridge. Yeh Fei suddenly issued an order to halt. Pushing back his sun-scorched straw hat, he wiped the perspiration from his forehead and looking down into the valley murmured, "An ideal ground for action!" We looked in his direction. Facing the ridge was the Yellow Mud Hill; a stream flowed through the basin-shaped valley which was surrounded by mountains. The enemy approaching from the Yellow Mud Hill would be forced to go along the path down the valley to reach us. "What a nice graveyard for the enemy!" someone exclaimed.

Yeh Fei and some comrades decided to station three Kuo-mintang local officials who sympathized with us at the three passes leading to Ningteh, Hotung and Yangchung for the purpose of passing on false information. Local people were dispatched to the surrounding mountain tops to chop firewood, whilst they actually served as sentries. The contingent of riflemen were lying in ambush in the forest of pines at the head of the ridge. The pistol contingent lay on the left wing of the Yellow Mud Hill. Hundreds of villagers from Taohua Township came to join the battle. They brought home-made guns, shotguns, spears, oil cans and firecrackers, and hid themselves on the surrounding mountains. Chinmu Ridge was a huge network of snares to trap the enemy.

At noon on the 14th all was quiet on Chinmu Ridge. Not a man was to be seen. With the sun directly overhead and the scorching rocks under our feet, sweat streamed down our cheeks, but we ignored the heat as we gazed towards the

horizon where the enemy was expected to appear at any moment. Suddenly a voice was heard shouting from a hilltop to the east of the ridge, "The ox is out crunching the potatoes!" It was a signal from the hoary-headed old man of Hsi-pien Village. Before he had stopped shouting through cupped hands, we had shifted the cartridges into the chambers of our rifles and released the safety catches of our pistols.

The enemy soldiers were too cock-sure to pay any attention to a bawling old man. Climbing up the Yellow Mud Hill, they tumbled down the near-side as if they were drunk. When the advance guards arrived at the stream, some sat down in the shade to cool themselves, others stripped off their clothes to take a bath. When the rear troops had caught up, they began to climb the ridge at a snail's pace, opening their jackets and fanning themselves as they did so. They slung their rifles upside down over their shoulders or used them as carrying-poles for their cartridges and knapsacks.

A volley of fire burst out from the left of the Yellow Mud Hill. It was our pistol contingent firing from the rear. Just then the contingent of riflemen, lying in ambush on the ridge, opened fire, thus throwing the enemy into a great panic. Attacked from the front and the rear, they rushed to the left and right in great confusion. The villagers in the surrounding mountains went into action. Home-made cannon and shot-gun fire spurted out, firecrackers, exploding in oil cans, sounded like jets of machine-gun fire, whilst the hills resounded with battle cries. Utterly confused and unable to judge our strength the enemy turned to charge again towards Chinmu Ridge. Many fell before our barrage of fire, others losing their balance crashed headlong down the mountain and were killed. Our men on the ridge and the hill dashed down to the attack, and the villagers also charged down from the mountains. Battle cries shook the valley, terrifying the enemy.

While we were in the thick of battle, the enemy, as anticipated, had dispatched reinforcements from Ningteh, Hotung and Yangchung. The local officials stationed at the passes feigning great sincerity, hastened to report to them, "It is terrible! There are more than four hundred Reds there and our forces have been routed!" Hearing this the enemy reinforcements quickly withdrew.

In the valley battle cries continued to roar. The people and soldiers swarmed down from the mountains, crying, "Lay down your arms and save your skin!" Kneeling down on the ground, the frightened White bandits raised their rifles over their heads and asked for mercy. It was like catching fish in a wash bowl. The soldiers and people rounded them up, including their commander, Tsao.

The battle lasted three hours. Forty enemy troops were killed or drowned, more than seventy were captured, and only three managed to escape. We also captured 108 rifles, 2 machine-guns, 5 pistols, 200 hand-grenades and 2,800 rounds of cartridges.

As soon as the battle ended the old folks from the villages of Taohua Township brought us steaming food. One of our soldiers asked an old woman, "How is it that you've cooked the food so quickly?" Patting the young man's shoulder she replied, "We had the food ready a while ago, and brought it here as soon as the fighting stopped." "What if we had failed to win?" he asked. "The food would have been wasted!" "Those bandits could never win!" the old woman stared angrily at the captives squatting by the side of the stream. Our comrades broke into laughter and the captives bowed their heads.

At dusk we escorted our prisoners triumphantly to Tao-huachi Village. The villagers followed, carrying the captured arms and ammunition. We sang merrily as we marched:



*We, forces of the workers and peasants,  
Are growing stronger in battle.*

.....

*Whoever dares to attack us  
Are bound to perish before our eyes.*

The captured Kuomintang company commander was puzzled. He looked timidly around and asked, "Are you Red Army soldiers or the people?" The old man from Hsipien Village, who was polishing a captured rifle with his sleeve, raised his head, curled up his grey moustache and, looking at the Kuomintang commander from the corner of his eye, replied, "The Red Army soldiers are the people and the people are the Red Army soldiers. Don't you see?" The Kuomintang commander dared not raise his head again.

This victory made the enemy very uneasy. From that time on whenever the enemy forces were on their way to Ningteh, they avoided Chinmu Ridge.



*An oil painting by Tai Tse*

*Captured Enemy Officers*



## LOYALTY AS DEEP AS THE SEA

WU LI-PI

Part of the Red Army which was stationed in eastern Fukien Province was encircled by the Kuomintang reactionary forces in the mountainous areas north of Fankeng in January of 1936. Our training corps had been detailed to provide cover for the leading organization in a breakthrough.

In the thick of battle I was seriously wounded. My superiors decided to leave me behind in the home of a local inhabitant till my wound should heal. The head of the household was a poor carpenter named Chou. Both he and his wife were about fifty years old. They had two sons. The elder had been conscripted by the reactionaries to act as guard for the local Kuomintang government office. The younger worked at home. It was past midnight when I reached this carpenter's home. After telling Chou why I had come, I waited anxiously to see what kind of a reception I should get. I had heard that the reactionaries had slaughtered many good people for hiding Red Army men. "Will this family dare to keep me here?" I wondered. The old carpenter agreed, without the slightest hesitation, to shelter me. "Good!" he said. "Do stay with us. My wife and son are here, and so long as any one of us is at home there will certainly be shelter for a Red Army comrade!"

Dawn was just breaking and the White soldiers would soon be along on a probing mission. I was still wearing my blood-soaked muddy uniform and the red-star military cap. Straw sandals protected my feet. The old wife hastened to help me



change my clothes, giving me her husband's suit and the shoes from her son's feet. The next day she tore apart my uniform, washed it clean and dyed it black. Then burning the midnight oil, she took some bits and pieces of cloth and painstakingly patched and stitched them together into a whole suit of clothes.

The old carpenter found a cave for me to hide in during the daytime. He carried me there very early each morning, and back each evening. He covered the cave floor with a thick layer of dry grass so that it was soft and warm to lie on. He did everything very carefully, hiding his tracks and spreading dry tree leaves at the mouth of the cave. Wolves and tigers roamed the mountains, and the old carpenter did not feel easy about leaving me there alone. So the old wife would come to see me and keep me company, comforting me and telling me of her own troubles. She told me how her elder son had been conscripted by the Kuomintang. She had secured two goats, a pig and six hens in preparation for his wedding as well as grain and clothing. All these things were stolen by the White army. Now the family could hardly eke out a living. The old woman looked broken-hearted as she poured out her sad story. I felt as if her troubles were mine and became impatient for my wound to heal so that I could get back to my job fighting the reactionaries.

My wound remained swollen and inflamed for a long time. The old woman would cry whenever she thought of it, and one day she urged the old carpenter to find a way to help it heal. He thought and thought, and then went out. Some time later he returned with herbs, which he roasted and ground to a powder, and then applied the powder to my wound. When the old carpenter was not at home all the work of helping me about and applying the powder fell to the old woman. The remedy he had made was compounded according to a secret formula and was very effective. In less than three weeks the inflam-

mation subsided and new tissue had grown over the wound. Before long it would be completely healed. I was reluctant to leave the old carpenter and his wife, but anxious to rejoin the troops as soon as possible. The White army had been mercilessly ransacking the people's homes and doing them a lot of mischief for several years past. The old carpenter's business was in a bad way and the family of three had little to eat except a bit of sweet potatoes and some tree leaves. Their food position became much worse with an extra mouth to feed. The old carpenter would go off wherever there was work to do and would eat sparingly in order to bring back most of his earnings to buy sweet potatoes for me. He and his family ate only wild roots and tree leaves, and they were often beaten and harassed by the White bandits. Once when the White bandits came to the mountainside and forced the old woman to lead them to try and find the Red troops she railed at them: "There are no Red troops here; I'll take you to see for yourselves." She led the enemy a chase around the mountain till they felt fit to drop. Fairly bursting with anger, the White soldiers beat the woman. When she came back with her hair dishevelled and her face cut I could not hold back my tears. She only said, "Remember, child, when the Red Army returns they'll have to answer for all they've done."

The old carpenter understood what was in my heart and went everywhere in search of news of the Red Army. One day his elder son came back, and the old man, pretending to engage him in casual conversation, said: "Haven't heard anything of the Red Army for ages. The Central Army's wiped them out, I suppose."

"Far from it," the son said, shaking his head. In feigned surprise the old carpenter asked, "Well, where are they then if they're not wiped out?" To which the elder son replied, "They have been seen near MUYANG and FUAN." The old carpenter

took mental note of this remark and came to consult with me that night. "Your wound isn't healed yet and you can't do much walking, but if we wait for it to heal completely we won't know where to contact the Red Army. It's better for me to go and look for them. If I find them I'll come back for you. I'll bring back a little rice too."

"But how can you manage without money?" I asked.

"I can ply my trade as carpenter as I go looking for the troops," came the reply.

Early the next morning he went down the mountainside with his tools and was gone for nine days. When he returned, I winced at the sight of him. The colour drained from his wife's face. He was haggard, and his face and arms were scarred. His clothes were torn and dirty, and he walked with a limp. As I listened to his story I felt a deep respect for him and a deep thankfulness for his boundless loyalty to the Red Army.

He had tramped more than two hundred *li* in his search, working as he went, before he finally found them on a mountain slope near Shekou. Their officer personally received him and gave him five silver dollars after asking him to send me to an appointed spot on a small hill north of Muyang. Since he had no pass, he was detained on his way back by the Kuo-mintang militia, who questioned him, "You say you're a native of Shouning? What then are you doing here in Fuan? If you aren't a Red Army man, what on earth are you?" The carpenter smiled as he replied: "You see this long beard of mine and these thick calluses on my palms. If I'm not a carpenter, then what would you say I am? Or, if you still don't believe I'm a carpenter, you can bring a bucket here and I'll repair it before your eyes. There has not been much work at home, so I thought I might as well try to find something to do outside. Wherever there is work, there I will go. Fuan is in the same province as Shouning, so I thought why shouldn't I go here?"

The militiamen searched him and found the five silver dollars. At that time, people were eating grass and the bark from trees and five silver dollars was a considerable amount of money. At the sight of so much money the militia chief's face reddened and he looked like a famished wolf about to pounce on a fat sheep. "Hey, how is it that an ordinary carpenter has five silver dollars? He's a spy for sure. Truss him up!"

The five silver dollars were confiscated and the carpenter was led to a fortress where he was beaten consecutively for three days and nights. The carpenter said to himself: "I've lived for more than fifty years and am fit only to die; but if I die now my mission for the Red Army will not have been accomplished!" He would have to lie about the five silver dollars, so he blinked his eyes and wiped his nose as he said to the militia chief: "I've been out on the road working since last September and I've skimmed on meals. The folks back home are waiting for the money to buy rice. Think it over, officer, and let me go!" The carpenter told his story so convincingly that the officer was completely fooled and decided to let him go. He even gave back one of his own silver dollars.

When the carpenter got to this part of his story, with the dollar still in his hand, he seemed as happy as a child. One would never have guessed that he had gone through such an ordeal. Laughing, he said: "Just call it luck, getting a silver dollar from out of the tiger's mouth! I can still buy some rice." Hearing that he had found my detachment I was very happy too, but I was thinking of the hundred *li* between me and Muyang. Quite a lot of enemy posts dotted the way there. How was I to go? When I discussed this with the carpenter he immediately replied: "I have already made a plan. We'll pose as master and apprentice. We'll take a pass and work as we go. The enemy won't know who you are."



But where could we obtain a pass? The carpenter had another idea. He would enlist the services of his elder son. So he went to see him at the local government office and said: "Last time I went out I earned a dollar. Chances are better on the road. The White troops have all gone away, and I hear the Red troops will soon be here." He also made up a story about the defeat of the White troops by the Red Army. He spoke animatedly and with a seeming basis for his remarks. The carpenter had already told me: "My elder son is in the reactionary forces and he's not to be trusted even though he is my own son." Thus I had lived in the carpenter's home for more than a month without the elder son being aware of my existence.

Seeing that his story of the Red Army had scared his son, the old man said: "While I was on the road, working, I met a young Red Army man who had been badly wounded. I'm thinking of escorting him back. What do you say to that?" The son was terrified and blurted out: "Have nothing to do with him!" The carpenter stared at his son in anger and solemnly said, "Why? Aren't you willing to do a man a good turn? Wait till the Red Army returns and just see what you'll do then!" The carpenter then added: "I want this Red Army man to go along with me as my apprentice. Only we have trouble getting a pass, so you'll supply us with one." The elder son could do nothing but agree.

Two days later, armed with the pass, we shouldered our load and started down the mountainside. The carpenter's wife had tears in her eyes as she took me by the hand and said: "Be careful on the way, and come back to see us when there's a chance." I could not restrain my own tears and said: "Old Mother, I shall certainly be back to see you!"

We did not encounter much difficulty on the way. We found the commander on the hill northwest of Shekou. When I re-

ported to him, he patted the carpenter on the shoulder and thanked him. The old man smiled, very much moved. After the midday meal he wanted to go back and so I saw him past the guards. As we walked along he said to me: "Be a good Red Army man. Carry on the revolution to the end! If you can, come back and visit us. I may be able to come and see you again."

"Old Father," I said to him, "I will certainly heed your words."

The carpenter stopped after passing the guards, looked at me for a long time and then said: "Mama will always remember you; you must come back." I grasped his hand firmly, but I seemed tongue-tied for I could not utter a single word. I watched the old carpenter vanish into the distance. He turned to wave me a parting farewell.

After that I had been with the troops in battles in the north and in the south. I had no chance to return to the home of the old couple, but through all the years I have never forgotten their encouragement and their loyalty to the Red Army.

## THE UNQUENCHABLE SPARK

WANG YUNG-HSIN

### THE LAST THREE

There were only three of us left. Where was our unit? Where was the Party? Which way were we to turn?

No one said a word as we sat in a coconut grove, but each one of us was trying to puzzle out what our next move should be. We had broken out of the encirclement at Mt. Mujui that day. Our rations had been exhausted six days before. The comrades of the Chiungai Independent Division had but a single thought: to break through—to break through at all costs. If only one of us managed to break out of the enemy encirclement, the flame of the revolution would continue to burn!

This was the kind of confidence we of the First Company had. With only a few tree leaves and roots to eat, we were enfeebled by hunger. Under the leadership of our Company Commander Hsu, we dragged ourselves to a lightly guarded place and, under cover of wind and rain, slipped quietly out of the encirclement. Unfortunately we encountered the enemy at Pientsun Hill in Chiungtung County and a battle ensued in which more of our beloved comrades fell. Before Company Commander Hsu gave up his life he said: "Remember, comrades, only by following the Party and uniting with the masses can victory be assured!"

Now, however, the enemy was all around us and the White terror was everywhere. Where were we to go in search of the Party? Where were the masses which we were to rely on?

After long thought Chen Mei-shen suddenly jumped to his feet and whisked a dagger from his belt, saying as though taking an oath: "I must avenge our comrades!"

Chen Mei-shen, scarcely twenty, had been a slave to a landlord from his childhood and had known nothing but humiliation and abuse. He had an irreconcilable hatred of the landlords and the ruling classes. In our company he was known as the giant, but now he too was weak from hunger and anxiety. Before he had finished his sentence his head swam and he nearly collapsed. I hastened to help him into a sitting position and consoled him. "Mei-shen," I said, "be patient. Some day we will take our revenge!" Chen Yung-tai also comforted him by saying: "This is not the time to rush things. 'So long as there is a green mountain nearby there will always be firewood,' as the old saying goes. We'll think of a way out!"

Chen Yung-tai, a man of about thirty-five and hired farm-hand origin, was a deputy platoon leader in our company. Mature, and always master of the situation, he was completely loyal to the revolution. His policy was: No matter how difficult the situation, we must seek help from the masses without delay. After thinking matters over, we decided to go to Huangyang Village.

Hunger and fatigue dogged our footsteps and our legs seemed filled with lead. Trudging on and on, Chen Yung-tai suddenly fell and, though Chen Mei-shen and I called him many times, he did not answer. Chen Mei-shen then lifted him onto his back and started off, but he became unsteady on his own feet and also fell. In an effort to rouse them from their senselessness I called loudly, but my voice seemed to trail off. I can



only remember that the trees appeared to sway and the ground to move beneath my feet, before I too lost consciousness.

When I revived, the three of us were in Huangyang Village, lying in the home of a Sister Huang. We subsequently learned that the Party branch secretary of the village, Liang An-hsien, and Sister Huang heard that the Red Army had fought an unfavourable battle nearby, and assumed that there must be comrades in the vicinity. The two had secretly set out to look for straggling Red Army fighters. Sister Huang found us in the coconut grove and had us carried to her home under cover of night.

There in Sister Huang's home the three of us Party members formed an interim small Party group. At our first meeting, the entire membership agreed that no matter what difficulties arose we must keep up the fight while trying to contact the leaders. Our first task was to let the masses know that the Red Army had not been wiped out, that the Red Army was still fighting.

### ON "GHOST HILL"

The three of us in one village was too big a target for the enemy to miss. So after talking things over with Secretary Liang, we decided to ascend "Ghost Hill".

The real name of "Ghost Hill" was Pientsun Hill. It was an elevation, the burial place of some girls who had been killed by local bullies. It was said that the girls' spirits haunted the place. In the daytime a gale would blow people off their course, and at night a vaporous phosphorescent fire glowed. The local inhabitants did not often go there and even the enemy avoided it. Trees shut out the sky, and dense and tall weeds grew all about it. It was a favourable site for guerilla warfare.



The Rescue

*An oil painting by Wang Teh-wei*



and when it rained and we did not go out to work, Chen Meishen would play on the flute and we two would sing to our hearts' content. We would sing of our longed-for victory and our hatred for the enemy. We would sing of our unbending determination in the fight and of our regard for the Party.

### PARTING AT LI VILLAGE

Just as we were preparing to help the peasants with the summer harvest, Comrade Liang An-hsien sent word that he had contacted the higher Party organization and that we were ordered to move immediately and carry out a new task. With a feeling of elation like going back to a mother's embrace we accompanied the messenger, Ho Ta-kuei, to Li Village.

Li Village was our first stop-over and also Ho Ta-kuei's home. When we arrived there the morning star had not yet appeared. Ho Ta-kuei took us to the home of a certain Sister Liang, where we were to meet again in the morning to talk about our route of travel that night. Ho went home.

When we awoke and saw the sun's rays flooding half of the room we feared that the appointed time of meeting had already passed, but Ho Ta-kuei was not about. Chen Yung-tai, well-experienced in battle and constantly on the alert, reminded us: "Though we should not suspect our comrades without basis, we certainly should never relax vigilance. We must remain in hiding just to be on the safe side." We exchanged a few sentences with Sister Liang and left her to cope with the situation. Then, going out the back door, we rounded the mountain.

Behind the mountain we saw Ho Ta-kuei, with four White guards in tow, making straight for the house. When they en-

tered we heard Sister Liang's shouts and wails: "You heartless creature, bullying a widow. You brought these fellows in, in the middle of the night and took them out again before daybreak. Now you are trying to curry favour with the regimental command, asking me to hand them over to you." The voice of Sister Liang kept ringing in our ears. After a while the renegade and the four White guards left.

It was dangerous to remain and so after paying our respects to Sister Liang we set out again during the night. Not many days later we heard the sad news that Party branch secretary Liang and Sister Huang of Huangyang Village had been betrayed by Ho Ta-kuei. The bastard, however, got his just deserts. The enemy thought Ho a double dealer and shot him too. We now had no contact with the Party branch. What was to be done?

One night when the moon was high we held a Party small group meeting on the crest of a hill and decided that each one of us should go back to his own region in search of the Party, whoever found it first should contact the other two. Thus, we parted.

### BACK INTO THE ARMS OF THE PARTY

After leaving Li Village, I travelled fifty *li* and arrived at my home that night. I'll never forget the shock I got as I stepped into the courtyard. The roof of the house was gone; the windows were broken; kettles, bowls, ladles and plates were strewn about. A warrant for my arrest was posted on the door. I pushed the door open. There, crouched on the bed were my mother and 6-year-old son, Chiu-sheng. When Mother heard my voice she reached out and pulled me into the room with a little cry. My father had been murdered and



my wife arrested. Mother and Chiu-sheng had been beaten. The house lay in ruins. I was furious when Mother and Chiu-sheng told me the whole story. I told Mother why I had come home and she agreed to help me find the Party organization. She would hide me on the hill behind the house.

I controlled my wrath and waited for Mother to bring me some good news. The first day passed and she had not found the Party organization; the second day the same — not a sign.

I sat on the hill looking at the ruins in the village, anger eating into me until I could no longer control it and decided to face the *pao* chief,<sup>1</sup> Mo.

That night I confronted the villain, who fell on his knees and beseeched me to spare his life. I could have finished him off with one shot, but what was the use of killing one *pao* chief? So I spoke to him seriously: "You now have two roads open to you — one is to turn over a new leaf, in which case I'll let you go. But if you continue to act in a tyrannous manner, I'll show you no mercy." Upon hearing that, he readily promised, "If you'll only let me go I'll never forget your kindness." I also warned him not to tell the enemy anything about our situation and laid down some rules for him to observe, to which he agreed. Finally I took a Mauser and an ammunition belt from his bed saying: "I want to borrow this gun for a while." The villain spluttered out a string of "certainly's".

After this encounter the *pao* chief was more docile, but I continued in hiding. I worked on my mother's plot of land during the daytime and at night stole back to the village for talks with the poor peasants on possible methods of dealing with the enemy. I also went visiting round the neighbourhood in the hope of establishing contact with the Party. But the days

<sup>1</sup> See note on page 10.

passed and though I searched every mountain nook and cranny I could find no trace of the Party.

One day near the Spring Festival of 1934, by chance I met Lin Tien-kuei, one of the members of the Chiungtung County Party committee and also its propaganda officer. I was moved beyond words at the encounter.

Not long after that I was ordered to find Chen Yung-tai and Chen Mei-shen. It was easy to find Chen Yung-tai, but difficult to locate Chen Mei-shen. His home was in the White area, so he seldom went there. I eventually learned that his sister-in-law had a sweet potato patch. I was thinking of finding out the whereabouts of Chen Mei-shen from her, and since I did not want to run the risk of visiting her in her house, I lay in wait for her at the potato patch. But without waiting till I could tell her what I had come for, she turned and ran. I went there a second time. It was night and I groped my way to her house; the door was shut tight, so I shouted my message through the window. I talked my mouth dry, but the sister-in-law insisted that she had not seen Chen Mei-shen.

One day I was strolling over the arched stone bridge outside the village and saw a Kuomintang officer and his orderly approaching. I hastily hid in the grass. The two were about half-way across the bridge when a youth rushed out and kicked the orderly into the stream. The officer turned around and the youth stabbed him. The act was forceful and quick and I knew at once that the youth was Chen Mei-shen. The orderly crawled out of the water and shot at Chen Mei-shen, hitting him in the leg. I leaped up, lifted Chen on to my back and ran.

At the county committee headquarters on Mt. Shanpu we three who had parted at Li Village again returned to the Party and settled down to new battle life.



## THE GIRL KU MO ACTS AS MESSENGER

Under the leadership of the Party committee at Chiungtung, we first of all organized the people and led them in mass struggle. In the village of Houpo lived two local tyrants, one called Big-Head Fu, "joint defence" chief; and one, Chen Chih-ho, who was captain of the local guards. Although these two villains were both anti-Communist, contradictions existed between them. Big-Head Fu looked upon Chen as an outsider and never trusted him, while Chen, being a ruffian soldier and good at sword-play, treated Fu with disdain. The county committee decided to make use of the differences between them in order to catch them both.

One day we ambushed Fu at the East River ferry landing and killed twenty-four of his men. Big-Head Fu was furious and started searching about for us, hoping to "annihilate" us. We thought we would add a little fat to the fire and push Fu to the limit. The task was given to Ku Mo.

Ku Mo was previously a child bride from Houpo Village. Skin and bone and clad in tatters from top to toe, she did not look like a young girl of eighteen. After the Red Army came and implemented the policy of equality between men and women, a great change took place. Ku Mo was no longer subjected to abuse, and with the happier life she looked much younger and prettier than before. On the day when Big-Head Fu again arrived with his men from the county to "annihilate" us, Ku Mo was carrying a shoulder pole with two baskets of pineapples. When the bandit soldiers saw the pineapples they swarmed around the girl, grabbing at the fruit till she cast the baskets aside. The bandits found a letter under the pineapples and handed it to Big-Head Fu. Fu opened the letter and read:

"Chief Chen,

Day before yesterday we fought a victorious battle at the East River ferry landing. Without your help we could never have won that battle so easily. Your letter came just in time. We extend our hearty thanks and hope we can co-operate even more closely in the future. We'll work together to kill Big-Head Fu. . . ."

*Signed:* The Communist Party Secretary  
of Chiungtung County and  
the Red Army Representative

This letter really did put the fat in the fire. Big-Head Fu was now furious and next day there was news that Fu had buried Chen alive. Not long after that Ku Mo joined the Communist Party, the first recruit in her district. Then her husband, Su Ying-fen, and another comrade also joined. The Chinese Communist Party branch of Houpo Village, Chiungtung County, was thus founded in the midst of battle.

## GIVING TIT FOR TAT

In the spring of 1935 we decided to carry our work into the White areas, our first base was established in the village where Chen Mei-shen was reared. The work did not proceed smoothly. When we sent Ku Mo and Su Ying-fen to contact Chen Mei-shen's sister-in-law, the two young Party comrades and the mother and son of the Chen family were all killed. The murderers were two brothers of Lower Tienyin Village, the elder a township chief and the younger a military officer. This evil pair were slippery wolves and knowing that we would take our revenge they hid in their fortresses day and night. We had to rein in our fury and await our chance.



On the eve of the Spring Festival (Chinese New Year) in 1935, surmising that the pair would go home to spend the holidays, Hsiao Huan-hui, the Chiungtung County Party secretary, took Chen Mei-shen, Chen Yung-tai and me — five in all — to ambush the Ho brothers.

We climbed coconut trees and waited far into the night. Just as we were wondering whether the murderers had got wind of our plan, the scout, Fu Ming-fa, came running up to report that the two had by-passed the path where we had laid our ambush and were already fast asleep in their beds. We decided to go after them.

The morning star was high in the western sky and the popping of firecrackers welcomed the New Year as we rushed up to the house. As soon as the front door was open we crowded in. Chen Mei-shen, another comrade and myself, acting according to the pre-arranged plan, ran into the chamber of the elder brother. The murderer was behind the door washing his face. A tweed jacket was thrown over his shoulders and he was wearing wooden clogs. Chen Mei-shen, shouting "Tit for tat!" finished him off with one bullet. At Hsiao Huan-hui's direction, the younger Ho was also killed.

The popping of firecrackers went on uninterrupted, greeting both the New Year and our first victory of 1936.

#### FOUNDING THE THIRD DETACHMENT

After several years of bitter struggle the Party organization was revived. The Chinese Communist Party's Special Committee for Hainan Island instructed us to organize the Red Army units in preparation for the ushering in of the high tide of the revolution. Shortage of guns was the gravest difficulty at that time. We solved this problem by helping ourselves with Big-Head Fu's supplies.

The Special Committee knew that we wanted to attack Big-Head Fu and sent Su Chueh-hsing, a girl comrade, to explore his position. I had been a committee member of a district soviet when Su Chueh-hsing was but a slip of a girl working as a messenger in the district soviet, but had not seen her since 1930. Four years before she had married someone who was a neighbour of Big-Head Fu, and had lived right under his nose ever since. He had never found out that she was a Communist. Su Chueh-hsing knew the enemy situation very well and told us that after he buried Chen Chih-ho alive, Big-Head Fu had moved from the city to the countryside. There were sixty-eight men under him in the village. Thirty local guards with twenty-five guns, originally under Chen Chih-ho, were stationed in the fortress west of the village. Half of Fu's "joint defence" corps guarded the fortress east of the village while the rest watched his house. The county committee decided that Su Chueh-hsing should win over some of the local guards, urge them to desert with their guns, and thus decimate the ranks of the local "defence".

Su Chueh-hsing was a capable girl and in a few days won over Big-Head Fu's slave, Kuwa, to her service. It was Kuwa who persuaded one of the local guards to help in our plans. Once the county Party committee understood the situation it decided to lure more of the local guards to our side. After a few days, Su Chueh-hsing again came to report and told us that the first local guard had contacted his two cousins, who were in his unit. It seemed as if Fu had got wind of what was going on for he suddenly detained a number of the local guards, amongst them was one of our men. The time had arrived for the county Party committee to take quick action. It was decided to capture the twenty-five guns at the west fortress and to kill Big-Head Fu.



About one o'clock in the night, when the west fortress was under guard by two soldiers whom Kuwa had won over, these two led the thirty of us straight into the enemy fortification. Chen Mei-shen and a dozen other comrades crept up to the fortress and got all the guns. The soldiers slept through this intrusion. Chen Yung-tai and I took about a score of our soldiers to Fu's back door, Su Chueh-hsing leading the way. Kuwa flung open the door and led us straight into the villain's chamber. We groped our way into the room, only to find that his bed was empty. Where had the old fox got to? We were puzzling over the answer to this question when we heard footsteps in the courtyard. Big-Head Fu saw us, yelled "Aiyah!" and then turned to run. He had only gone a few steps, when he tripped over the door-sill and fell to the ground with a thud. Chen Yung-tai grabbed him and rained blows on his head with a pole. Kuwa followed up and with two quick slashes of a knife the dog lay dead.

News of this victory spread like wildfire. The Special Committee sent a messenger to congratulate us. Subsequently the Committee proclaimed the establishment of the Third Detachment of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army of Chiungai County, with myself as commander and Chen Mei-shen as deputy commander. Hsiao Huan-hui, Party secretary of the Chiungtung County committee, was appointed political commissar and Chen Yung-tai was sent to another place to work. The detachment consisted of thirty-two men in all, with twenty-nine rifles and pistols. All this happened in the month of August 1936.

The low tide of the revolution in Hainan Island had passed and the unquenchable revolutionary fire leaped again into bright flame.

## FIGHTING IN SOUTHWEST CHEKIANG

YU LUNG-KUEI

### UNEXPECTED VICTORY

The Second Column of the Red Army's Forward Division was ordered to attack Chuchow City in July 1935. Our troops moved quickly day and night, climbing over a big mountain east of Chiangshan County and arriving at a small village on July 28. The men were rather tired and our column commander decided that we should then take a rest.

Some of the troops set about the preparation of lunch whilst the remainder went in groups to talk with the local inhabitants whom we were meeting for the first time. The column commander called on several villagers to try and find out the disposition of the enemy forces and the topography of the neighbourhood.

I remained with the cooking squad. We had just started cooking the rice when several villagers sweating profusely ran over to us. Pulling us by our hands, they clamoured excitedly: "You have arrived just in time. This is perfect. They are still there, they haven't gone yet. . . ."

We could not make head or tail of their talk, and asked them to explain themselves. It soon became clear that a local White force of forty odd men was billeted in a temple on the other side of the mountain. The villagers had just come from there.

One said, "They've got brand-new rifles and plenty of ammunition!"



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"They've no idea that the Red Army is here. They're either playing mahjong or playing the two-string fiddle. Their guns are all hung on the walls!" another added.

The villagers told us everything they knew, obviously trying to talk us into giving the enemy a sound beating.

We put away the cooking pot after obtaining a clear picture of the enemy's position and started out for the temple. Several young men volunteered to act as guides.

We climbed over ten *li*, and looking down from the mountain peak, we saw the enemy soldiers loafing about in twos and threes outside the gate of the temple. They were stripped to the waist, some were in shorts and were squatting against the wall or lying on the ground. I pointed my heavy machine-gun at them and fired.

Completely taken by surprise, they offered no resistance but scrambled for life towards the mountains. In a few minutes, they had either fled or been killed. We captured a good supply of guns and ammunition, an unexpected and welcome addition to our dwindling stock.

#### "RED ARMY MEN HAVE WINGS"

We closed in on the air-strip near Chuchow on July 31. We kept up the attack for twenty-four hours and disrupted the enemy's telephone wires. The mission completed, we withdrew to Chiangshan County.

On August 2, we started on a night march. We had only travelled a short distance when the vanguards abruptly changed course. This change was quickly followed by another. We all knew from experience that this changing of courses indicated that enemy forces were around. The Second Column consisted of a little over a hundred men and could manoeuvre with ease, but that night, we seemed to have run into a labyrinth. There

were enemy forces wherever we turned. We spent half the night circling around the same spot.

As we moved in the dark, we saw several houses at the foot of a mountain and decided to go there for a rest and to try and find out the situation thereabouts. As we entered the village we saw that the enemy troops had arrived before us. Many of them were snoring by the roadside.

Someone called out to us grudgingly, "What are you doing there? Why don't you go to sleep?"

Fortunately they could not see our uniform. We quietly pulled out of the village.

There were enemy troops in all the villages in this area. The key points on roads and mountain paths were guarded. We were encircled and had to spend the rest of the night on the top of the mountain.

The enemy had massed ten thousand men around us. They obviously knew that the Red Army troops were somewhere in the mountains. Unaccustomed to night operations, they were holding up the attack until daybreak.

Our column commander called the platoon and squad leaders together and it was decided that we should try to break through the encirclement and get out as many men as possible. Those who got out would carry on the revolution. Those who failed to break out would fight to the death. The situation was clear to us all. There was no alternative.

Just then, one of our comrades came up accompanied by a guide. We could not see who he was, but we could hear him whispering to our column commander, "I know of a path. Let me lead you away from here." We found out that he was a huntsman who often came to this part of the mountains. He said that the path was only known to the hunters and if we followed it we would arrive on the mountain opposite.



We at once set out with him, descending along a ridge over a trackless path. We slipped through the enemy sentries both on our left and right. What a trek it was! We ducked under the bushes and hurried over the uneven surface of the path, following closely one behind the other. The guide was familiar with the path. He walked for ten *li* without a stop. Before daybreak, we had left the enemy's encirclement behind us and were well on our way towards the other mountainside.

At daybreak, as we had anticipated, the enemy closed in on the peak we had deserted. The villagers were very worried about the Red Army when they heard the sound of rifle and cannon-fire. The enemy troops finally charged towards the peak, to find only some odds and ends of trash and some worn-out straw sandals left behind by our men.

The news that the enemy campaign was a complete failure soon got around. The villagers pretended to make innocent inquiries of the enemy soldiers, "Did you capture any Red Army man?"

"To hell with your questioning!" they angrily retorted. "Surely they were on the peak during the night, but somehow they all got away by daybreak."

"We told you that the Red Army men can fly. Now you've seen it for yourselves."

Even the enemy troops began to say that the Red Army men seemed to have wings.

### ENCOUNTER WITH THE ENEMY ON A MOUNTAIN TOP

The 18th Army under the notorious anti-Communist Lo Choying arrived in southwest Chekiang in early November. Since the main force of our Forward Division had been moved to the

southern part of Chekiang, it opened an attack on the Second Column.

We shifted our position every day to avoid head-on clashes with the enemy who greatly outnumbered us. Our men were tired, as they had been marching for nights on end. One day, we wearily climbed to the top of Hsiangkung Mountain. Our vanguards had issued a warning that enemy troops were at Hutaikow not far ahead. We halted for a rest. The commander then ordered me to guard the mountain top with a squad. The rest of our column retired to a mountain village.

We climbed to the peak, took up strategic positions and rigged up a machine-gun. I then made another study of the lay of the land. The peak was surrounded by deep valleys. There was only one steep path leading up to our position. Our position was perfect. The ascent was clearly within the range of my machine-gun.

I felt tired and the moment I sat down, my eyes grew heavy. Despite myself, I was soon fast asleep.

I woke up suddenly and found that my comrades were lying about in all directions, some had their mouths wide open and were snoring noisily. I quietly got up and made for the sentry post, my legs aching as I did so. The sentry, squatting, gun in hand and head forward, was also sound asleep at his post.

I ran to wake him, as I did so, I heard noises below. The enemy soldiers were swarming up the path and were only two to three hundred metres away. I sprang to the machine-gun and fired.

Panic-stricken, the enemy scurried back. We pulled out from the peak unnoticed while they were still in a state of confusion. We had not gone far when intense fighting was heard in the direction of Hsiangkung Mountain. The enemy troops, who had closed in towards the mountain top from different



directions, were fighting among themselves in utter confusion. The sound of shots continued throughout the morning.

I had used up a third of the two hundred rounds of our stock of ammunition during the operation on the peak. Later we were told by the villagers that several dozens of enemy troops had been killed or wounded. The ammunition was not wasted, and I felt much better.

### A SHARP BLOW

The enemy's 18th Army was transferred, and the fighting in southwest Chekiang slowed down a bit at the end of March 1936, but the enemy's local security forces still occasionally carried out "mopping-up" operations.

We were billeted in a mountain village situated between Suichang and Hsuanpin Counties. Shortly after our arrival, we received word that enemy forces had been spotted on a nearby mountain. We took immediate action and dug in on the outskirts of the village.

The enemy did not venture from their hidings but kept firing in our direction. Our column commander watched them for a while and then declared: "These must be local troops. They have no machine-guns. We'll leave things as they are." So our men went about their business as usual. The cooks started to prepare a meal, other soldiers rested while I guarded the village entrance with a machine-gun. The enemy soldiers, afraid to expose themselves, finally turned back at dusk.

Our men were well rested by then and we followed the enemy into the mountains. Completely unaware that they were being trailed by the Red Army, they entered a large village.

The enemy soldiers were thoroughly tired out, having walked sixty *li* during the daytime and plodded another twenty *li* in the late afternoon. We slipped by their sentries, broke into the village and found them in deep slumber. They were captured, many of them as they slept.

The little resistance they managed to put up was quickly stamped out. We billeted in the village and began to screen the prisoners and examine the supplies we had captured. One of our men heard some strange sound below the latrine. He flashed his torchlight, and there was a man, completely submerged except for his head. He was dressed in an officer's uniform, a Mauser still hung by his side. He stank so much that everybody avoided getting near him. One of our men held his breath and escorted him to a stream for a bath. The stinker was found to be a company commander. After his bath the whole room still stank unbearably as we cross-questioned him.

The Second Column was reduced to a dozen men after months of continual fighting. We were in an extremely difficult position, but we never doubted that the main force of our Forward Division would return. The Red Army was indestructible; the revolution was bound to go forward.

Divisional Commander Su Yu did eventually bring his troops back to southwest Chekiang. A few days after their arrival, we joined forces with the rest of the Forward Division near Tanghsi.



Winter 1934—Autumn 1937





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